

3-4 DECEMBER 2022

DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

Prepared By: Sae Vaidya | Research Intern



writetous.orca@gmail.com

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SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Rise of social anxiety among Chinese youth sparks debate on Weibo:** A recent college graduate's decision to become a cemetery custodian has ignited a [heated discussion](#) on social media about how young people nowadays can deal with social anxiety and benefit from genuine interpersonal relationships. The Generation Z student from Chongqing said she is very pleased with her job because she only has four colleagues and does not need to worry about any complicated relationships. Moreover, her office, dormitory and canteen are in the same building, the pace of work is slow and she almost feels as if she has retired early. As a result, "retirement-style work" was on the hot list in an instant, and many "post-00s" even left messages saying: "Graduating soon, is there a shortage of people? Isn't this my dream job?" Her decision became a trending topic on Sina Weibo, with many netizens saying they envied her position. "Young people would rather work in a cemetery than network," said one comment, which received more than 10,000 likes. Some netizens even commented that the new generation was #比起墓地更怕社交# (More afraid of socialising than cemeteries). According to a [survey](#) conducted last year by China Youth Daily, more than 80 percent of nearly 5,000 college students said they had mild social anxiety disorder or "社恐" (social terror). According to Wang Wenda, a psychology lecturer at Ningxia University's Xinhua College in Yinchuan, the disorder is not trivial. Severe social anxiety can lead to panic attacks and trigger other psychological problems as a result of a lack of contact with other people, Wang said. Some people are very socially active online but timid in real life because face-to-face

communication requires more social skills than texting, he added.

NEWS IN CHINA

- The [China-Laos Railway](#) which went into operation a year ago has shown great vitality according to recent data. According to figures released by China Railway on Friday, passengers have made 8.5 million journeys since it opened, with 7.2 million on the Chinese side, and 1.3 million in Laos. Meanwhile, a total of 11.2 million tonnes of cargo have been carried, covering some 1,200 categories, including fertilisers, electronics, PV products and farm products. At this stage, cross-border services are still only available for cargo, not passengers. Various company managers in import and export enterprises said that the railway has lowered transportation costs significantly, and related services such as customs clearance have been continuously optimised. The mega project is said to be a landmark cooperative result of the Belt and Road Initiative, which has turned Laos from a landlocked country to a land-linked hub, making its products more accessible to the global market. When Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Lao counterpart Thongloun Sisoulith met in Beijing earlier this week, they agreed that the two countries should work closely to better operate and maintain the railway, and "create a high-standard, sustainable, and people-friendly economic belt along the line." Experts said as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) went into effect early this year, the railway will play a bigger role, as ASEAN is a major part of the free trade agreement.
 - China's Shenzhou-14 astronauts, or taikonauts, Chen Dong, Liu Yang and Cai Xuzhe, [returned to Earth](#) safely on Sunday evening after a six-month mission in the country's orbiting space station. The re-entry capsule carrying the trio touched down at the Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region at 8:09 p.m. Beijing Time after a journey of about nine hours. China declared the Shenzhou-14 mission a complete success after the medical team waiting on site confirmed that all three taikonauts were in good health. During their six-month stay, the trio welcomed the Wentian lab module in July and Mengtian lab module in October, witnessing the basic T-shaped three-module "space home" taking shape. They conducted three extravehicular activities (EVAs), and set up an out-of-cabin "bridge" that links the three modules of the space station during the last spacewalk. They also welcomed the Tianzhou-5 cargo vessel and the Shenzhou-15 manned spaceship in orbit for the first time, and conducted China's first-ever in-orbit crew rotation with the Shenzhou-15 taikonauts. "The three taikonauts did very well during the mission, showing their extraordinary mental and physical qualities. I think these well-trained taikonauts set a good example," said Huang Weifen, the chief designer of the taikonaut system of China's manned space program.
 - A forum on [China-Myanmar economic cooperation](#) was held here on Friday to further enhance economic and investment cooperation between the two countries. to further enhance economic and investment cooperation between the two countries.
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The forum, with the theme of "China's New Development and China-Myanmar Cooperation," was organised by the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI). Speaking at the forum, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein said Myanmar hopes to attract more Chinese investment. China is Myanmar's largest trading partner and plays a major role in Myanmar's trading sector, Soe Thein said, stressing the need to boost economic cooperation between the two countries. Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Chen Hai said that China's modernisation drive will inject impetus into cooperation between the two countries. Noting that China and Myanmar had a long history of commercial and cultural cooperation, U Zaw Min Win, president of the UMFCCI, hopes to further boost relations between the two countries. According to Myanmar's Ministry of Commerce, during the first half of the 2022-23 fiscal year, China was Myanmar's largest trading partner.

- Most of the capital goods monitored by the Chinese government posted lower prices in late November compared with mid-November this year, official data showed. Of the 50 major goods monitored by the government, which include seamless steel tubes, gasoline, coal, fertiliser, and agricultural processing products, 35 posted lower prices. Thirteen saw price increases, and two saw prices unchanged, said the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Hog prices dropped 7.4 percent in late November to 22.5 yuan (about 3.19 U.S. dollars) per kilogram, NBS data showed. The figures, released every ten days, are based on a survey of nearly 2,000

wholesalers and distributors in 31 provincial-level regions nationwide.

- On Saturday, John Lee, chief executive of China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), said that the next five years are a critical period for Hong Kong to break new ground and make a new leap forward. The spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) bears significance to the future development of the whole country including Hong Kong, the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the enduring success of the practice of "one country, two systems," and the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, said Lee during an event on promoting the spirit. At the invitation of the HKSAR government, a central delegation interpreting and promoting the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the CPC held three special lectures in Hong Kong from Friday to Saturday. A lecture for representatives of the executive authorities, legislature and judiciary of the HKSAR was held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center on Saturday morning. Shen Chunyao, a member of the central delegation and director of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, interpreted in detail the report to the 20th National Congress of the CPC on "one country, two systems," and Hong Kong and Macao work.
 - Many Chinese cities have adjusted COVID-19 measures in the face of a new virus situation. In the southwestern municipality of Chongqing, where local officials said a growing tally of infections has been
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curbed, close contacts of people infected with COVID-19 have been allowed to quarantine at home if they fulfil certain conditions. South China's Guangzhou City, has also lifted temporary restrictions in several districts, adapted close contact classification, and begun to classify high-risk areas by buildings and units, which are given the designation if they report people infected with COVID-19 or that the risk of virus transmission is high. From Monday, Shanghai will no longer require passengers to hold a negative nucleic acid test result to take public transportation, including buses and subways, according to a municipal government announcement on Sunday afternoon. The same rule is also applied to the entries of public outdoor spaces such as parks. Shanghai is the newest destination to join other major Chinese cities to embrace the optimization of COVID-19 prevention and control measures to bring life and work back to normal after Beijing, Guangzhou and Chongqing, Shenyang and Taiyuan. The flexible measures are connected to diminished virulence of Omicron results from the changing nature of the virus, as well as expanding immunisation across the population and timely provision of treatment, said Chang Zhaorui, a researcher with the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

INDIA WATCH

- Global manufacturers have taken note of the current series of events that have weakened China's status as a stable manufacturing centre. After the economic slowdown brought by perpetual lockdowns, as well as violent protests at Apple Inc.'s most important iPhone

assembly plant in Zhengzhou, China, the search for risk mitigation is bringing companies like Apple to India, which is offering generous subsidies for making everything from semiconductors and solar panels to electric-vehicle batteries and textiles. Apple Inc. has accelerated plans to shift some of its production outside China elsewhere in Asia, particularly India and Vietnam. This is both for actively assembling Apple products, and for reducing dependence on Taiwanese assemblers led by Foxconn Technology Group. Apple's longer-term goal is to ship 40% to 45% of iPhones from India, compared to the current 5% to 7% range, according to Ming-chi Kuo, an analyst at TF International Securities who follows the supply chain. This is a great opportunity for India, however, there are some challenges that stand in the way of India becoming the next global manufacturer for the highest-valued company in the world. Even though India has a population nearly the size of China's, it lacks the level of governmental coordination enjoyed by China. Apple has found it hard to navigate India because each state is run differently and regional governments saddle the company with obligations before letting it build products there. According to Dan Panzica, a former Foxconn executive "India is the Wild West in terms of consistent rules and getting stuff in and out".
