

4 - 5 MARCH 2023

# DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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## NEWS IN CHINA

- The legislative planning work of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) began with the collection of legislative items from all sectors. The legislative focus this year will be on key as well as emerging areas and foreign-related fields. The NPC Standing Committee has arranged 35 bills for further deliberation and initial deliberation in eight areas, including building a strong socialist culture, promoting green development, and improving the legal system for national security.
- China has proposed a defence budget of 1.55 trillion yuan (\$225 billion) for the 2023 fiscal year, reflecting a 7.2% year-on-year increase, according to a draft budget report submitted to the national legislature on Sunday. This proposed expenditure will maintain single-digit growth for an eighth consecutive year if approved. The complexity of the security issues and the need for regional peace were cited as the reasons for this increase. Last year, the proposed defence budget was 1.45 trillion yuan whereas in 2021 it was 1.35 trillion yuan.
- Chinese scientists at the Wuhan Botanical Garden have discovered a molecular mechanism that enhances the cold resistance of kiwifruit. The team found that the AcePosF21 gene influences the concentration of vitamin C in kiwifruit, which in turn can reduce the production of highly reactive chemicals known as reactive oxygen species (ROS), and reduce oxidative damage caused by cold stress. The findings, published in Plant Physiology, offer valuable insight into the cold resistance of kiwifruit and provide potential for reducing cold-related crop damage.

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- Chinese researchers have successfully assembled the genome of Antarctic krill, a breakthrough in understanding the environmental adaptations and population evolution of the marine animal. According to the paper published in the research journal Cell, the enormous biomass of Antarctic krill is vital to the Southern Ocean ecosystem. However, the large size and complexity of the genome have so far prevented its assembly and hindered research on the genetic underpinnings of Antarctic krill adaptations. By adopting new sequencing technology, the researchers achieved the assembly of the 48 Gb chromosome-level Antarctic krill genome. The newly discovered genome assembly reveals insights into the species' adaptations to the cold and the highly seasonal Antarctic environment.

- The central government of China declared on Sunday that this year it would boost expenditure on science and technology by 2%. This follows US export restrictions on different types of telecommunications devices and other equipments with various Chinese companies. The central government's spending on science and technology is anticipated to hit 328 billion yuan (US\$47.55 billion) in 2023, which is just slightly more than the 318.7 billion yuan spent last year, according to a draught budget report published by the Ministry of Finance on Sunday. The sum is small compared to China's total spending on research and development, and it excludes funding from regional organisations and businesses. China is the world's second-biggest spender on R&D. Its total expenditure on research and development surpassed 3 trillion yuan in

2022, 10.4 percent more than a year earlier and accounting for 2.55 percent of the national GDP, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

## SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Which is more difficult exam?** : On Weibo, a discussion sparked more than 240 million reads about which exam is more difficult: the post-graduate entrance examination or the civil service examination. The cost-effectiveness of both exams was also a matter of debate. In a video with more than 4 million views, the expert also talked about the approximate ratio of acceptance in the case of a postgraduate entrance exam, which is around 4:1. This ratio also differs from university to university, whereas in the case of the civil service exam, the ratio is 500:1 to 1000:1. But, in comparison to complexity, the post-graduate entrance exam was more difficult than the civil service exam.

- **Why young people not opt for long vacation?** : Why young people don't choose longer vacations is another popular trending topic on Weibo. "You apply for leave, work arrives one after the other, and you either go out with your computer or work from home," a user wrote in a comment. Another comment mentioned that it would be best to avoid taking lengthy vacations because doing so would require you to supplement it with your regular weekends. Netizens have given a variety of different explanations for not taking lengthy vacations, each one tailored to their circumstances. These explanations range from workaholics who do not see the

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need for prolonged vacations to weekend lovers who don't want to disrupt their regular weekends.

## INDIA WATCH

- India's defense budget for fiscal year 2023-24 has been increased by 13% to INR 5.94 lakh crore (approximately \$80 billion USD), with INR 1.62 lakh crore (approximately \$22 billion USD) allocated towards capital expenditure for the purchase of new weapons, aircraft, warships, and other military equipment. This constitutes an increase of 7% over the current fiscal year's allocation of INR 1.52 lakh crore (approximately \$20 billion USD). Whereas, China has proposed a defence budget of 1.55 trillion yuan (\$225 billion) for the 2023 fiscal year, reflecting a 7.2% year-on-year increase, according to a draft budget report submitted to the national legislature. India has been consistently increasing its defense budget over the years, with an average annual growth rate of around 7.8% from 2011-12 to 2020-21. In comparison, China's average annual growth rate for defense spending during the same period was around 8.6%. But, when we take a closer look at the defence budgets of both countries, a major portion of the budget allotted in India goes to the pensions and salaries and much less towards equipment acquisition and research and development, unlike that of China. This huge difference in the quantity and quality of budget allocation in defence between both countries has left India concerned regarding its neighbour. Though this difference in budget allocation is difficult to overcome in the near future considering the size of both economies, India could counter China's military might

by investing more in unconventional warfare technologies and focusing more on technologies that counter the existing Chinese advanced weapons rather than making the same weapons with the same existing technology.

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