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# DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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## SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Chinese netizens mourn the loss of renowned composer Joseph Koo Ka-fai:** Joseph Koo Ka-fai, the Hong Kong composer synonymous with the golden age of Cantopop, died in Vancouver, Canada, on January 3, at the age of 92. Koo, who died, was known for his soundtracks to Bruce Lee films; hit songs for various pop stars, including the late Anita Mui Yim-fong and Leslie Cheung Kwok-wing; advertising jingles and compositions for television shows. He co-wrote some 200 hits with late lyricist James Wong Jim. The hashtag "Joseph Koo Ka-fai passed away" gained 260 million views on China's Sina Weibo on Wednesday. Many Chinese netizens expressed their condolences. "His great achievement in Cantopop is incomparable! His music could heal people's hearts and will be handed down to future generations. May he rest in peace," one Chinese netizen said.
- **"What kind of people are most likely to be cheated" trends on Weibo:** After the second episode of Xijude Xiju (gathering of comedy), a sketch comedy show was released, the hashtag "What kind of people are most likely to be cheated" was trending on Chinese social media platform Weibo attracting 52 million clicks, following a performance by the comedians Zheng Jian and Li Deng on the topic of scams. A variety show, Xijude Xiju aired once a week on Saturday nights on China Central Television is serving as a comic relief for viewers. The show is inspired by daily incidents and ordinary people in a skit-sketch comedy format. The show is based around 16 comedians who deliver their performances and are then ranked by the 150 members of live audiences.

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# NEWS IN CHINA

- The increased production of nuclear submarines has resulted in China building a new seaport. There is a major expansion of the Huludao (Bohai) shipyard on the Bohai sea in northern China taking place right now. Analysis by Open Source Intelligence shows that the new harbour started in early 2022. The port was partially built in June but it has only been easy to spot in recent months.
  - On Friday 6th Jan, Turkmen President Serdar Berdimuhamedov made his first visit to China after taking office. Friday also marks the 31st anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Turkmenistan. The two heads of state vowed to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation across the board and agreed to elevate bilateral ties to a “comprehensive strategy partnership”, noting that energy cooperation is a major pillar of pragmatic bilateral relations. Turkmenistan has the fourth largest gas reserves and is one of the biggest suppliers of natural gas to China and a key country in the China-Central Asia Gas Pipeline project.
  - Two oral COVID-19 drugs, Pfizer’s Paxlovid and domestically developed Azvudine are now available for most at risk in several districts of Beijing and Shanghai. According to health authorities, the drug can be availed by elderly or vulnerable patients who are in early stages of their infections. The price is 1,890 yuan and 270 yuan for Paxlovid and Azvudine respectively with Paxlovid being partially covered by medical insurance. "The drug is suitable for vulnerable seniors with underlying diseases or who are unvaccinated and have the potential to become seriously ill. We suggest for them to use it as early as possible, ideally within five days from first showing symptoms," said Chen Zhuo, a doctor with Laoximen medical centre in Huangpu district.
  - Apple is expected to sign its first big order with Luxshare Precision, a mainland Chinese Electronics manufacturer, to assemble its premium iPhone models. Luxshare Precision is a competitor to both Foxconn and Taiwan’s Pegatron and has already been producing small amounts of the iPhone 14 Pro Max at its plant in Kunshan, north-west of Shanghai, to compensate for lost production at Foxconn’s Chinese factory in Zhengzhou since November 2022. Foxconn, the world’s largest contract manufacturer, had previously been solely responsible for delivering new iPhone Pro models.
  - Gas companies in North China’s Hebei province have been required to take measures and coordinate with gas suppliers to ensure its supply to rural areas for heating and cooking. The move came after numerous residents of Hebei province complained on an online message board, about irregular gas supply in the rural areas. Purchasing restrictions for natural gas, power cut and interruption to the gas supply has left many rural residents of China’s Hebei province shivering without heat in subfreezing temperatures.
  - China's National Cultural Heritage Administration plans to start the fourth national survey of cultural relics later this
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year, and establish a national catalogue of immovable cultural relics. This is a move taken to further strengthen efforts on cultural relics protection, according to the cultural heritage authorities. The survey plans to take three to four years to investigate the amount, whereabouts, features, and conditions of immovable cultural relics in the country and establish a national catalogue of immovable cultural relics, providing the basis for systematically clarifying the cultural relics resources and scientifically formulating cultural relics protection policies. Li Qun, head of the administration, said at a meeting on Thursday. The survey will focus on re-examining the cultural relics already registered and identified, targeting immovable cultural relics on the ground, underground and underwater in the country's territory, according to the officials. Meanwhile, the work on relevant investigation and identifying newly found immovable relics will also be conducted. A list of the ninth batch of key institutions on cultural relics protection will be made public, according to the administration.

## INDIA WATCH

- The Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline covers 3,666 kms travelling from Gedaim, on the border between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to Horgos, in Western China Xinjiang province. Both the countries signed their first bilateral trade agreement in 2006 establishing the terms for construction and gas supply. The first pipeline is functional since 2009 named Line A. Three other lines (named lines B,C,D) are also there to ease the connectivity of natural gas into China, one

of which is under construction and the rest are operational. A similar project was discussed by India called TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) crossing four nations creating a direct link between India and Central Asia. In 2008, the first framework was signed resulting in commencement of construction in 2015. As of now, the project is stalled. However, in April President Ram Nath Kovind visited Turkmenistan and attempted to revive the much-delayed project. Strengthening connectivity through initiatives like International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and TAPI are significant for offering cooperation, connectivity and trade to bolster economic growth between India and Central Asia. Turkmenistan possesses huge reserves of natural gas. TAPI remains an important project for India because it can answer India's need for cheaper fuel and clean energy. Furthermore, it marks a presence of India in the Central Asian region to counter China's growing hegemony. Being a landlocked country, the vast gas reserves has the potential to transform Turkmenistan into a strategic player in the region. Investment from both China and India can help to further open up the isolated country and provide new economic opportunities for people in the country as well as foreign investors. India-China presence will also benefit its security needs in countering terrorism, security and law enforcement.

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