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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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NEWS IN CHINA

- The [Communist Party of China](#) (CPC) will hold a dialogue with political parties from around the world on Wednesday via video link. Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is also the general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, will deliver a keynote address at the opening ceremony of the event, which is themed "Path towards Modernization: The Responsibility of Political Parties." Leaders from various political parties and organisations from many countries are expected to attend the event. China held the first such dialogue in Beijing in 2017.
- The [first session](#) of China's 14th National People's Congress (NPC) concluded with a closing meeting on Monday, attended by Chinese leaders including Xi Jinping. During the session, NPC deputies passed resolutions through voting on various matters including the government work report, implementation of the national economic and social development plan for 2022 and 2023, implementation of central and local budgets for 2022 and 2023, and a revision to the Legislation Law. They also approved the national economic and social development plan and the central budget for 2023. Resolutions were also adopted on the work reports of the 13th NPC Standing Committee, the Supreme People's Court, and the Supreme People's Procuratorate.
- [China successfully mediated](#) a breakthrough agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, who have been in a state of confrontation for a long time. The agreement included restoring diplomatic relations, reopening embassies, and exploring ways to strengthen bilateral relations. This is seen as a significant achievement for Middle East diplomacy. As per reports, the Saudi-Iranian dialogue in Beijing underscored the

value of global security initiatives and set an example for resolving conflicts and differences through dialogue and consultation. The agreement is widely seen as a victory for dialogue and peace in China's domestic circles.

- Jiang Yanyong, a military surgeon who blew the whistle on a cover-up of the SARS outbreak in 2003, died in Beijing at the age of 91. He had worked for decades at the People's Liberation Army General Hospital, where he died from pneumonia and other illnesses. It is not known if his death was related to Covid-19, but he had tested positive for the virus in January. Jiang became a national hero in 2003 when he revealed that the Chinese authorities had covered up the extent of the deadly SARS outbreak in Beijing. His actions prompted a huge campaign to fight the epidemic, which ended up claiming nearly 800 lives worldwide. Despite being detained for nearly seven weeks in 2004 after writing to party leaders to condemn the deadly crackdown on the Tiananmen pro-democracy protesters in 1989, Jiang continued to emphasise the need for the truth throughout his life.
- The China Consumers Association, along with seven industry associations, has issued an initiative to stop food waste in the catering industry. The initiative proposes that catering operators practise a strict economy and better protect consumers' rights through three abilities: quantification, splitting, and clearly marking prices. The initiative requires catering operators to fulfil their duty of prompting to stop waste, improve their ability to save and guide service levels, and

implement anti-food waste standards and regulations. It also proposes improving the quality of catering in takeaway scenes, refining and humanising management in dining scenes and encouraging consumers to become pioneers, practitioners, propagandists, and supervisors in the fight against catering waste.

- Ant Consumer Finance, a subsidiary of Ant Group, has increased its registered capital to RMB 18.5bn (USD 2.78bn), after regulatory approval was granted. The capital increase was first proposed 15 months ago but faced delays, including China Cinda's withdrawal from the equity subscription in January. Hangzhou Jintou Digital Technology and Chongqing Rural Credit Investment joined the round of capital increase as new shareholders, while Qianfang Technology, China Cinda, and Chongqing Yufu Capital Operation Group withdrew from the originally planned capital increase. Ant Group, Hangzhou Financial Investment Digital Technology, Nanyang Bank, Sunny Optical, and Transfar Zhilian are among the top five shareholders of Ant Consumer Finance, with shareholding ratios of 50%, 10%, 6.49%, 6%, and 5.01%.
 - Premier Li Qiang of the State Council attended a press conference after the closing of the first session of the 14th National People's Congress. He answered questions from Chinese and foreign journalists regarding China's economic growth target, policies for sustainable high-quality growth, and achievements in dealing with systemic risks. China's expected economic growth target for this year is around 5%, and the focus will be on
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stabilizing growth, prices, and employment while making new progress in promoting high-quality development. The combination of macro policies, expanding demand, reform and innovation, and preventing and defusing risks will be deployed for economic development. China faces both favourable and unfavourable factors, but Premier Li expressed confidence in China's economy, which has shown a trend of stabilization and recovery in the past two months. The premier stated that the remarkable advantage of China's national system is the spirit of not being afraid of difficulties, fighting bravely, and striving for self-improvement.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Young girl saves to buy mother a ring, warms hearts of many:** A young girl in Shandong province, saved her pocket money for a year to buy her mother a gold ring as a gift. The girl, whose name is unknown, had saved 3 yuan (43 US cents) a day since March of the previous year. She and her uncle went to a local shopping centre where she tried on various rings before settling on one with a flower on top. When she found that she did not have enough money, the girl asked the saleswoman if she could pay 5 yuan daily until the outstanding balance was paid. Her uncle ultimately covered the shortfall, and the girl gave the ring to her mother. The story has warmed the hearts of many social media users in mainland China.

INDIA WATCH

- Saudi Arabia and Iran have agreed to restore their diplomatic relations. In a deal brokered by China, the two countries have agreed to reopen embassies, exchange ambassadors and so on. China has played a key role in bringing these two countries to the table and ending their diplomatic stalemate. Beijing has been involved in peace talks such as the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and is trying to actively engage in West Asia. China is the world's largest oil importer and enjoys good relations with both Riyadh and Tehran. After the talks, China's mediator Wang Yi said: "As a good-faith and reliable mediator, China has faithfully fulfilled its duties as the host", he further went on to say China would continue to play a "constructive role in handling hotspot issues in the world and demonstrate its responsibility as a major nation". While many countries have welcomed the move, India has been quiet on the issue. Experts say Saudi Arabia and Iran brokering a deal under Beijing's influence has been a little unsettling for India, given the turbulent India-China relations. This deal has certainly diverted India's attention to West Asia. While India has not been entirely absent from the region, it needs to rework its relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran. Recently, Iran's Foreign Minister cancelled his visit to India protesting over a video. India will have to look after the region to not lose its influence, and ought to revise its policies vis-a-vis West Asia. Furthermore, it will be interesting to see how far this peace deal takes Saudi-Iran relations if it really bears any fruit.
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