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# DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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## SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Zero tolerance on streets of Guangzhou as protests over COVID-19 rules erupt:** Videos of a large number of protesters chanting slogans and walking on streets in large numbers have gone viral on different social media platforms. The protest turned violent when people refused to go to the quarantine center. In many [videos](#), protestors were seen tearing down barricades that were intended to stop the public from coming out of their home in public. Many protesters were seen fighting with the police and other security forces officials. Moreover, police vans were upturned by a few of them during the clashes. In some videos protesters even broke public properties and even quarantine centers. "No more testing" chanted the anguished citizens as they continued clashing with the police. Many were seen throwing stones and debris at police. It is worth noting that China is the only country across the world that has continued its zero tolerance policy towards COVID-19 till now. Guangzhou has been a center of protest against China's anti-COVID-19 policies. Along with massive lockdowns, the Chinese government has also implemented mandatory mass testing in nine districts.

## NEWS IN CHINA

- China is working on [digitizing](#) the medical records of its 1.4 billion people by using the power of big data to track the health status of everyone in the country. This has sparked fears among the country's citizens that the planned "universal health code" will become yet another tool for controlling the

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public. This means that the information will be linked to their national ID card number and integrated with a unified health code that can be widely shared among hospitals, clinics, and, potentially, government agencies. This move can violate the patient's confidentiality. Chinese media outlet Caixin.com quoted people close to the health ministry as saying that there was a difference between the proposed unified "health code" and the Health Code COVID-19 prevention app, which currently tracks people's movements and COVID-19 test results as part of the Communist Party leader Xi Jinping's zero-COVID policy. It will enable confidential and fully detailed healthcare information on anyone to be shared between first- and second-tier hospitals, while third-tier hospitals will gain access to "core information" on patients shared nationwide. The report didn't specify which details would be included in a person's "core information."

- Participants of the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP14), met in Wuhan after more than 2 years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Wuhan is extending its international influence and competitiveness with an open mind and a resilient economy as evidenced by the approximately 300 companies from the Fortune Global 500 that have bases in the city and a series of major international events held there. When Wuhan was one of the hardest hit cities by the virus, sent a signal to the world that the painful memory of struggling against COVID-19 has not stopped it from further opening up. Wuhan residents were also actively

participating in the event's volunteer team, with 300 Wuhan college students coming out in support. Some guests at COP14 told the Global Times how they were impressed by Wuhan's increasingly high level of internationalization and its growing ability to host global events. The UAE Ambassador to China Ali Obaid Al Dhaheri told the Global Times that it is not easy for Wuhan to host such a great event amid the global COVID-19 pandemic, and he felt excited to see the city recover and join a global mission to protect the wetland.

- Positive signs have emerged in improving China-Australia ties, the two countries pledged on Tuesday to properly address each other's concerns and make steady efforts to improve their relationship. During a phone call with State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said Australia is willing to properly deal with concrete issues between the two countries in a responsible manner and make steady efforts to improve and strengthen its ties with China. Bilateral ties have been strained over various issues concerning trade disputes, human rights, and geopolitics as some political forces in Australia have viewed China as a rival, not a partner. The ties between Australia and China have been strained over various issues concerning trade disputes, human rights and geopolitics as some political forces in Australia have viewed China as a rival, not a partner. Signs of resetting bilateral ties have emerged since Australia's new government took office in May. Prior to the call, the two foreign ministers met in person in July and September. The defense ministers of the
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two countries have also held talks. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Australia. The positive progress in bilateral relations is encouraging, said Chinese Consul-General in Brisbane Ruan Zongze in an article published in The Global Times, adding that important consensus reached during high-level exchanges is of great significance to the next phase of the development of bilateral ties.

- Wei Fenghe is expected to lead the resumption of dialogue with his US counterpart Lloyd Austin before Li Shangfu takes over in March. Li was sanctioned in 2018 over Russian arms sales and resolving the issue is set to be an important early test for future relations between the two sides. He was sanctioned over China's purchase of Russian Su-35 combat jets and S-400 air defense missile systems when he was director of China's Equipment Development Department. When the two countries were to resume talks on various issues including military, at the G20 meet in Indonesia, Bali. China suspended the dialogues on defense, climate change and cooperation on fighting the international drug trade after the US House speaker's visit to Taiwan in August, which China regarded as a major breach of its sovereignty. "Both sides will feel embarrassed if Austin needs to talk with Li, who is still barred from conducting business with American officials," said Zhou Chenming, a researcher from the Yuan Wang military science and technology think tank in Beijing.

## INDIA WATCH

- Australia's escalating tensions with Beijing have highlighted its reliance on China trade and propelled a push to increase links with Asia's other giant economy, India. Australia being the developed world's most China- dependent economy necessitates the need for Australia to diversify its trade portfolio. This has led to Australia looking to its democratic, cricket-loving ally to fill the void. Prime Minister Scott Morrison held a virtual summit with his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, in June 2020 and the two signed a defense agreement and upgraded ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The trade ministers of Japan, India, and Australia have also agreed to work toward achieving supply chain resilience in the Indo-Pacific region. "For Australia, China is our largest trading partner and so is for India... For Australia, China is our largest security anxiety. That is also the same for India. How to reconcile these two things is not obvious," said Australian Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles, the first senior leader to visit India after PM Anthony Albanese, at a media interaction on the fourth and final day of his visit to India. Marles said Australia is also "anxious" about the growing defense ties between China and Russia, and emphasized the importance of democracies protecting the rules-based order.
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