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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Is Tibet Being Forgotten? China's COVID Prevention in Tibet Belies Reality:** As Mainland China continues to bore pockets of COVID outbreaks, the Global watch on how the Government tackles the situation has never been so punctilious. Amidst such murky situations, the Government hasn't left any stones unturned in tackling them, however recent viral posts on Weibo on Chinese authorities' neglect over handling Tibet's recent outbreak have brought in much demur from the citizens. Some took to Weibo to share stories and pictures of the current COVID crisis that has gripped Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. People from Lhasa communities are being deported to quarantine centres in overcrowded buses, mixing positive patients with negative ones and being pushed to live in make-shift housing with bad conditions during the Central Government leader's visit, to cloak the harsh realities. While risking censorship, netizens on Weibo didn't shy away from criticizing the management of local authorities while also speaking on the unfair treatment Tibet is getting with the lack of exposure to the current crisis in national news.
- **'Cuànfǎng': What Does It Have To Do with US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi:** Since US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's controversial visit to Taiwan, China hasn't shied away from expressing its deep disapproval over the 'diplomatic visit'. With over 1 Billion Chinese citizens flouting the visit as an 'Interference on China's Sovereignty, the term 'Cuànfǎng' has been trending all over Weibo. The relatively new term was first used in the official statement released by the Foreign Ministry, using 'Cuànfǎng' for Pelosi's visit. While the term has no literal translation, the new derogatory term is closely related to a sneaky visit, indicating the Chinese's strong

contempt. According to research, the “term invented in recent years, specifically for the purpose of maintaining national security and unity, and condemning and exposing the national separatists” and “demonstrated the big wisdom of Chinese diplomatic discourse users; vividly described the image of the separatists, that they go on the run sneakily, just like thieves and mice”. Weibo turned into a “collective carnival” as disagreeing citizens made fun jokes about Pelosi’s visit. “Taiwan has been preparing for your cuànfǎng ‘sneaky visit’, are you coming or not tonight?” some netizens wrote.

NEWS IN CHINA

- With China’s ongoing COVID crisis, the onset of a new health threat has been detected— a case of Monkeypox in South-West China’s Chongqing municipality. This is the first time a case of Monkeypox has been identified in the Mainland, while Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan have reported many cases of the new virus. The patient was an International arrival and has been kept under quarantine and is receiving treatment. While the situation had been tackled, Wu Zunyou, chief epidemiologist with the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, had warned of the rising susceptibility to contracting the new virus in Mainland China amidst rising cases in peripheral territories. While the diseases pose little threat, high medical officials and doctors have suggested stringent directives to control a new endemic.
- Heavy censorship on free speech isn’t a new topic of discovery in the Chinese media. With State control on media platforms all across Mainland China, and rising policies against individual data

privacy, many Chinese citizens and netizens have raised their concerns. As videos of state-aided violence and human rights violations have constantly been blocked and removed from media platforms Weibo and douyuin to avoid public backlash, one such platform, far from the censorship of the Government, has seen a surge in Chinese users. Mastodon is an open-source blogging platform created by German developer Eugen Rochko. The decentralized version of Twitter is difficult to censor or block and is witnessing a rising number of Chinese citizens criticizing the Government on the platform. However, speech censorship isn’t the only reason for many users to flee regulated media platforms, rising concerns for data privacy and leaking user information has aided to more than 9 Million posts by over 150,000 Chinese users in just six months of 2022, which deal with political discussions that usually exposes the truth, unlike in Weibo and WeChat. With data privacy and free speech being rising concerns among the more radical Chinese youth, it will be interesting to see China’s take on controlling the fastest-moving information sector.

- With South Korea’s new Government constituting the conservative People Power Party, led by Yoo Suk-Yeol, all eyes have been shifted to the new President’s role with China and South Korea’s bilateral relations, after a period of tension brought by the US THAAD. Aiming to corroborate the 30-year anniversary of bilateral relations, President Yoo and top Chinese legislator Li Zhanshu on Friday, last week, stressed the need for close communication to prevent THAAD from being a hindrance to bilateral ties and talked on development and economic cooperation, hinting at the

re-establishment of better relations between the two countries. Ever since the new presidency, China-South Korea relations have gone through a period of adjustment and bilateral talks only hint at China's role in establishing strong ties and regional cooperation through neighbourhood diplomacy.

- The ongoing meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization of member states at the historic city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan is a clear indicator of China's strategic role in expanding stronger multilateral ties with Asia, especially Eurasia through political trust, equality between nations and a win-win cooperation. Deng Hao, secretary-general of the China Center for SCO Studies, said that the spirit of the SCO is more towards representation and development and heavily criticized the US-led West strategy of bloc diplomacy and building a Cold War-style alliance based on ideology through containment of China and pressure on Russia. He goes on to demonstrate the fruitful results of the SCO meeting, through demonstrated interests of more states to join the SCO and calls it a "big family". Through bilateral meetings with member states and President Xi, and the overall agendas of the meeting, it was clear that China is being seen as a regional power by the majority of the developing states who live in fear of economic crisis and security threats and look up to the country for security and protection. With countries now looking from the West and towards the East and Global economic dominance shifting towards the East, it is a matter of time to position China as a supreme regional power.
- As technology continues to advance, Space travel has been a new topic of debate and

discussion as of late; we have indeed come a long way from the Space race in just 60 years. China, though late to the business, is quickly catching up with making space travel an achievable fantasy for ordinary people. Yang Yiqiang, the founder of commercial space launch enterprise CAS Space, partially owned by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, envisions commercial space travel to fully bloom and function by 2027 in China. With a quick 10 min travel to the edge of the Earth's atmosphere, the Kármán line and a hefty price tag of 475,000 USD. CAS Space is wishing to market commercial space launch with state-owned China Tourism Group in full momentum, hoping to help elevate China's "spring" of commercial space travel.

- Another tragedy has hit China this week. As the country tries to add remedial measures in Sichuan, a bus carrying 47 people (all covid positive) from Guiyang, Guizhou province to Libo, to a quarantine centre crashed in South China on Sunday morning killing 27 passengers and leaving 20 injured and in critical condition. This devastating news has appalled the citizens of Guiyang who have heavily criticized the authorities for their strict and aggressive COVID rules, citing that Guiyang to date didn't see covid related deaths or casualties because of covid remedial action. Guizhou Communist Party secretary Shen Yiqin and governor Li Bingjun ordered an investigation team to be established and severe punishment for those responsible. Meanwhile, the local authorities continue to transport infected patients to quarantine centres located outside the main city and try to find out the epicentre of the virus outbreak.
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INDIA WATCH

- As Sri Lanka's economy continues to plummet, causing a devastating economic emergency in recent times, many countries and International organizations have offered immediate economic support and sanctioned loans to stabilize its economy. Out of the many countries, Regional neighbours and SAARC members, India has not shifted away from providing support to the Island-Nation, with total economic help amounting to 968 Million Dollars in four months of 2022 in loans, even higher than what China has offered, among all bilateral lenders. In addition, India has handed over 21,000 tonnes of fertilizers to help boost the agriculture sector and fight the rising food crisis. The High Commission of India to Sri Lanka in Colombo called this step a great initiative to boost regional friendship and cooperation between the two nations. On the other hand, China is often seen as the last nail to the coffin when assessing Sri Lanka's flattering economy. Despite being the largest lender to Sri Lanka with strong bilateral ties since the end of the Civil War, China turned a blind eye to the crisis and blamed it on the borrowing nation. The country became a hostage to Chinese investments which eventually worsened due to a badly structured economy and weak policies.
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