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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **COVID-19 related searches peak in Beijing, Baidu data shows:** According to [Baidu's](#) data, online searches for the word "fever" by people in Beijing have peaked offering a hint at how the capital's COVID-19 outbreak is developing. The rise in Baidu searches for "fever" climbed from the beginning of this month to Dec 12 which coincided with long lines observed outside fever clinics in Beijing and reports of a shortage of fever medications in the city. Similarly, searches for the term "dry and sore throat" peaked on Friday in the capital. The data was released as China has suffered a surge in infections since lifting some of its toughest COVID-19 restrictions earlier this month.
- **16-year-old Qatari becomes the latest online sensation in China:** Abdulrahman Fahad-al-Thani went [viral](#) on Weibo for his animated facial expressions during FIFA World Cup. Netizens have even called him super-cute and dubbed him "dumpling wrapper prince". Amid all the buzz, Abdulrahman created an account on Douyin, the China's version of TikTok. He amassed more than 15 million followers in less than a week. This is way beyond the entire Qatari population of 2.8 million.

NEWS IN CHINA

- This year marks the 40th anniversary of the enactment of China's current [Constitution](#), which was adopted at the fifth National People's Congress session on Dec, 1982. President Xi Jinping stressed better leveraging the important role of the Constitution in State governance in order to provide a



solid guarantee for building China into a modern socialist country in all respects. Since its enactment, the Constitution has been revised and improved five times, which Xi said were “necessary and very important revisions” that have played a significant role in improving the Constitution, developing the socialist rule of law and enhancing the Party’s capacity as the ruling party to pursue law-based governance. He called for efforts to take the opportunity of the 40th anniversary raise awareness of the Constitution, carry forward the spirit of the Constitution and promote the implementations of the Constitution.

- After four years of construction a major tunnel connecting Tsokha and Jinling townships in Penba county, Tibet autonomous region, was completed. The tunnel is located in Shargongla in the county, where altitudes ascend to 5,200 meters above sea level. The mountain is steep and in 2000 was connected with nothing but off-road vehicles. The tunnel has laid a solid foundation for the completion of the G349 Highway. It is 4,392 meters long, with the altitude of one entrance at 4,750 meters above sea level. The tunnel is expected to shorten the journey by 300 kilometres between Chamdo city and the regional capital, Lhasa after it begins operation. Local farmers and herders will no longer have to climb over the Shargongla Mountain. It is also expected to contribute immensely to the local economy in the future.
- On Dec 19, Heilongjiang Pilot Free Trade Zone held a Guangdong investment promotion conference. Five years ago,

Heilongjiang and Guangdong provinces began in-depth counterpart cooperation to jointly build China’s northernmost new highland of opening to the outside world. In August 2019, the State Council approved the establishment of the Heilongjiang Pilot Free Trade Zone, which is China’s first pilot free trade zone laid out in border areas and is China’s “northernmost pilot free trade zone”. A total of 6 projects were signed with a project amount of 2.55 billion yuan, including 3 projects of 1.5 billion yuan in Harbin area, 950 million yuan in 2 projects in Heihe Area and 100 million yuan in Suifenhe Area.

- On December 19, the Federation of Trade Unions of three provinces and one city in the Yangtze River delta region gathered to jointly hold the Ideological and Political Work Salon for Non-public Enterprises to strengthen exchanges and mutual learning in the ideological and political work among employees. The centre brings together resources from all parties to carry out ideological investigation, theoretical research, and subject research of the industrial worker team, then apply the findings to the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta cities and provide data analysis, material support and decision-making suggestions for the construction and reform of the industrial worker team in Wuhu City and even Anhui Province.
 - Shanghai Metro has adjusted its operation plans to cope with the new situation following the easing of COVID-19 pandemic measures, Shanghai Shentong Metro Group announced on Tuesday. The adjustments include cancellation of short-distance
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trains running on parts of the full lines, expanding interval between trains and extension of working hours of its staff. With pandemic prevention and control measures eased, there has been a surge in COVID-19 infections across China, including in Shanghai. As a result, some Metro staff members have been infected, the metro group noted, adding that it's trying its best to ensure stable operation of Metro services.

INDIA WATCH

- From airports to high-speed rail, China has been ramping up efforts to build a complete transport system in the Tibet Autonomous Region, an area situated on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau where transportation has long been a bottleneck inhibiting its development. With China escalating the infrastructure development, India is also building new border infrastructure. One of the most significant developments over the last few years for both India and China has been the visible infrastructure build-up alongside the Line of Actual Control (LAC) to facilitate their military capabilities in the rugged terrain. Considering the difficult topography, this construction has the potential to offer an additional advantage in launching an offensive and counter-offensive in the event of conflict for both the countries. The recent Tawang clashes highlight the probable attempt of China to change the status quo in the region. It is to be noted that China's position in the plateau is lower, giving Indian forces a commanding position. However, this has led to heavy investment in the region by China in building new roads and other

infrastructure over the past years. Furthermore, the development alongside the LAC calls for concern in India as it increases the risk of escalation (Thucydides trap) and potential military conflict stemming from incidental or deliberate encounters between Indian and Chinese troops. These ongoing tensions, and clashes, deserve more attention from regional governments, global policymakers and international organisations. It's time for India to canvass its international opinion through forums like G20 and UN to pressurise China to come to the negotiating table.
