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# DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

Prepared By: Praveen Krishna | Research Intern



[writetous.orca@gmail.com](mailto:writetous.orca@gmail.com)

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## NEWS IN CHINA

- According to a report released by Dalian University of Technology, [China's expenditure on basic research](#) surpassed 195.1 billion yuan (approximately \$28.35 billion) in 2022. According to the report, China's overall R&D expenditure in 2022 reached 3,087 billion yuan (\$455 billion), the first time that it surpassed 3 trillion yuan and registered 10.4 per cent increase over the previous year. However, China spent comparatively less on basic research in 2022 than other major countries. France, Italy, and Singapore all invested more than 20 per cent of their total R&D funds in basic research last year, while the United States and the United Kingdom invested more than 15 per cent. The report indicates that R&D expenditure in eastern China is significantly higher than in other areas, accounting for 64 to 68 per cent of the country's total, while central and western China account for 15 and 13 per cent, respectively, and north-eastern China accounts for 4 per cent.
- According to official data, [China imported coking coal](#) worth US\$23.7 million and thermal coal worth US\$18.2 million from Australia in February after Beijing lifted an informal ban on imports of these items that had been put in place in 2020. According to data released by the General Administration of Customs on Monday, the amount of Australian coking coal entering China reached 72,982 tonnes last month, while roughly 134,254 tonnes of thermal coal were purchased by Chinese consumers. The volume of imports is significantly lower than it was prior to the worsening of diplomatic relations in the mid-2020, even though the imports indicate warming relations. China brought in 3.4 million tonnes of thermal coal and 3.9 million tonnes of coking coal in February

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of that year.

- Guangdong Province recently released the first batch of 9 policies to boost confidence and encourage the high-quality development of businesses. Guangdong is using this policy "combined punch" (组合拳) to prioritize high-quality development. "These nine policies include a package of comprehensive policies aimed at promoting the improvement of the overall economy, as well as special measures encompassing key areas and key links such as industry, agriculture, finance, investment, and foreign trade, as well as reform measures to implement major national strategies to speed up the construction of the Hengqin Cooperation Zone." Guangdong Province intends to increase social financing by 4 trillion yuan in 2023, an increase of 500 billion yuan from the previous year. It is expected to add more than 70 domestic listed companies in manufacturing and technology innovation fields. Ni Quanhong, the deputy director of the Guangdong Provincial Local Financial Supervision Bureau, stated that this year's strong financial factor guarantees Guangdong to achieve the economic growth target of more than 5%. Guangdong will organize 242 'Guangdong global' exhibitions to promote foreign trade and also organize 133rd Canton fair this year.
- National Supervisory Commission of China has begun a comprehensive anti-corruption operation with the codename "Sky Net" which aims to develop its integrated system for tracking down fugitives, preventing escape, and recovering stolen assets. The Central Anti-

Corruption Coordination Group's fugitive repatriation and asset recovery office met on Monday and announced launch of this special programme with other concerned authorities. The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) will launch the "Fox Hunt" campaign to repatriate economic fugitives who have fled abroad; the People's Bank of China will collaborate with the MPS to address disguised transfers of misappropriated assets overseas; and the Supreme Peking University will lead the anti-graft effort. The National Supervisory Commission will lead a targeted campaign to combat duty-related crimes, track down corrupt officials who fled overseas, and recover stolen assets.

- Following media reports that the United States was attempting to dissuade Honduras from formally establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Monday that the United States should drop its antiquated Monroe Doctrine and respect other nations' rights to make their own foreign policy decisions. On the basis of the one-China principle, the United States established diplomatic relations with China more than 40 years ago. Wang emphasised that the fact that 181 nations have established diplomatic ties with China on the basis of the one-China principle fully demonstrates that this is the best decision that is consistent with both the historical and contemporary trends. According to Wang, China appreciates the encouraging comments made by the Honduran government and is prepared to establish and advance bilateral ties with Honduras on the basis of equality and
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respect for one another. Recently, diplomatic ties between China and Panama, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua have been established or resumed. The people have benefited greatly from the actively promoted bilateral pragmatic cooperation, according to Wang.

## SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Gender discrimination against female workers caused heated discussion on social media:** Legal Daily newspaper recently started a hashtag #不得因怀孕辞退女职工, to create awareness about rights of female workers at workplace, especially during pregnancy. This issue has been in news due to a case in Wuhan where a female worker was terminated from her job when she declared about her pregnancy, citing reason of 'inability to do her job'. Initially, the company had offered the woman salary reduction and demotion when she informed about her pregnancy in early February. When she declined the offer, company sent her a termination letter. However, special provisions on labour protection for female employees in China prohibit such arbitrary actions by employers during pregnancy and also guarantees basic maternity leave of 98 days. In response to this, one Weibo user criticised private companies for their unwillingness to hire female employees in order to avoid maternity leave related issues altogether. Thus, Chinese women have been facing hiring issues despite the protection of laws. Another user also pointed to a recent incident where the employer cancelled company registration

overnight to avoid paying maternity benefits to female workers. The employer even formed a new company with all former employees except the pregnant worker. Some users also mentioned instances where pregnant women were indirectly harassed at workplaces to force them to resign voluntarily. Amid falling birth rates in China, workplace discrimination against pregnant women may further discourage Chinese women to have children which can worsen demographic situation in the country.

## INDIA WATCH

- When compared to other major economies, India's research and development (R&D) expenditure-to-GDP ratio of 0.7 per cent is extremely low and falls well below the global average of 1.8 per cent. India is currently ranked 46th in the world in terms of innovation, far behind smaller nations like Iceland and Estonia. The corporate sector's low R&D investment is the primary cause. The Central government state governments, Public Sector Industries, Private Sector Industries, and Higher Education Institutes constitute as contributors to India's R&D expenditure. Spending on R&D is a reliable indicator of a country's innovation, economic development, and technological advancement. India can develop low-cost domestic solutions and lessen its reliance on imports, particularly electronic ones, by making significant investments in R&D. Through centrally sponsored schemes that are socially designed, the states and the centre can collaborate to jointly fund research and innovation programmes. The private sector and state governments need to contribute more to India's overall R&D
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spending, particularly in the area of application-oriented research and technology development. According to the Economic Survey 2021-22, the private sector should increase its contribution of R&D spending from 37 per cent to 68 per cent to match other high spenders. For a developing nation like India, which has a sizable domestic market, R&D is extremely important. India can replace the foreign-dominant products with locally developed technologies by advancing and creating new ones. R&D is essential to Atmanirbhar Bharat's goal of making India self-sufficient.

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