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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Chinese singer entangled in controversy after deliberately infecting herself with COVID-19 virus:** Renowned Chinese singer [Jane Zhang](#) caused a public outcry after she deliberately admitted herself of getting infected with the COVID-19 infection. She overtly stated on the Chinese social media platform Weibo, that the singer herself desired catching the virus so that she would not be at a high risk of infection when the preparations of the Christmas Eve concert would be held at the end of December 2022. Zhang shared her details of being infected on Weibo and had demanded confirmation from the netizens on whether her short period of illness was considered to be a positive signal of the COVID-19 infection. Such comments on social media by Zhang angered the Chinese netizens who criticised her for misleading the public amidst the serious situation emerging in China after an upsurge in the COVID-19 infections across many parts of the country. Following the public criticisms, Zhang deleted all her controversial posts and comments from Weibo and apologised for her actions by explaining the reasons for such behaviour.

NEWS IN CHINA

- China is all set to restructure its [Sinosteel Group Corp Ltd.](#) to improve upon the business structure of the Chinese steel industry in order to achieve the goal of bringing about price stability of the commodities. Under the reform, Chinese Sinosteel has been merged with the Shanghai-headquartered China Baowu Steel Group Corp which is considered to be the

world's biggest steel conglomerate. In accordance with the approval of the State Council, Sinosteel after integration will no longer be a centrally-administered state-owned enterprise. Furthermore, restructuring of Sinosteel will boost up the industrial chain resilience of China's Baowu and would facilitate the production of 200 million metric tons of crude steel annually by 2025. The integration of both the entities will provide fruitful profits to each other. Sinosteel's subsidiaries, spanning mining, engineering techniques and logistics management will enhance China Baowu's business profile in general. Similarly, strong financial assets of China's Baowu would also enrich the financial earnings of Sino Steel.

- On December 21, 2022, in the space of 'Heart Power' studio situated in the second area of the Second Oil Production Plant of Daqing Oilfield, which is considered to be the first employee mental health service studio, certain psychological related group activities were conducted in order to provide relief to its employees from their physical and mental pressure through psychological guidance. The ambience of the studio consists of various psychological elements which focuses on improving the mental health of its employees while driving on the motive of providing mental healthcare to the employees by exploring the in-depth mental health related problems of its workers. The studio has adopted various techniques of telephonic consultation, face-to-face interactive sessions and other forms of employee guidance methods to help relieve anxiety from the employee's workplace. The studio has been guiding its employees on various

issues related to marriage, interpersonal relationships and social interactions. Amid the pandemic also, the studio initiated with its 'Employee Growth Salon' activity which provided consultations on children online education to the employees who are parents and also motivated them to become smart parents in this changing global scenario.

- The China Democratic League (CDL) convened its 13th National Congress in Beijing on December 22, 2022. Ding Xuexiang, Director of the General Office of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee expressed his congratulatory message on behalf of the CPC Central Committee. In his message, he acknowledged the vigorous development of the united front and the multi-party cooperation that had been witnessed over the past few decades. He mentioned the role of the CDL in conducting meticulous research and study on issues of promotion of high quality sustainable development; technological innovation and poverty alleviation. He also mentioned that the CDL will continue to contribute in the domains of educational development as well as would support in building China a self-reliant state in all its aspects. In addition, the CDL would help in realising the second centenary goal of building China into a modern socialist state and would also contribute in reviving the Chinese cultural confidence within the Chinese people.
 - A recent guideline was released by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of National Development and Reform Commission in order to promote best
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environment friendly travel experiences and to expand tourism in general. Under this guideline, tourism authorities are required to plan out appropriate camping sites which have to be well equipped with scientific infrastructural facilities. Furthermore, golf spaces and rural guest houses have been encouraged to offer camping services to the tourists on their respective lands. Tourism authorities had also been instructed to provide tourists with various Chinese cultural elements and trends in their services to widen up the experience of equipping the tourist site with Chinese culture in order to facilitate China's cultural outreach to the foreign tourists. The guideline has also specifically demarcated the management requirements where tourism operators are obliged to look out for the personal safety of the tourists in terms of food and accommodation. Camp site operators are also obliged to provide their products and services in accordance with the market prices.

- On December 22, 2022, Chinese President Xi Jinping exchanged his congratulatory message with his Australian counterpart Governor General David Hurley and Australian PM Anthony Albanese to mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states. In his message, Xi emphasised upon the maintenance of diplomatic relations based on mutual respect and supported the sustainable development of China-Australia comprehensive strategic partnership. David Hurley also made similar remarks to Xi and asserted his support for maintaining a stable and constructive relationship between the two.

On a similar note, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, stressed upon deepening exchanges and cooperation between the two in the domains of economy, military and polity to promote a stable development of relations to bring forth benefits to both Chinese and Australians.

INDIA WATCH

- India and Australia signed their comprehensive strategic partnership in 2009 itself. Amid the growing concerns in terms of China's meteoric rise over the Indo-Pacific region, the bilateral relationship between the two has somewhat strengthened in the past few years. Although assessing the practicality of the changing global scenario post pandemic, Beijing's activities have incurred losses for Australia in terms of loss of nearly \$3 billion in exports but it might be a misjudgment that Australia is considering India to be a better replacement market instead of China. India and Australia still face a wider trade deficit which amounts to approx. \$12 billion. Such asymmetry in trade gains has somewhere affected the bilateral economic relations between the two. However, the Ladakh standoff between India and China and Beijing's aggressive actions in the Indo-Pacific have only strengthened the partnership between India and Australia. From the security perspective, both India and Australia have attempted to establish a relationship which is more based on cooperation in the domain of critical technologies. Apart from the business relations, India and Australia still benefit from each other when it comes to consolidating partnerships over security
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related domains. China may be an indirect factor that creates friction between the two countries, but moving forward there is a higher possibility of India and Australia sustaining their partnerships. By taking into consideration the common factor of China, both the countries can build upon their own economic strategy by conducting exchanges of business programs between each other to fill up the trade deficit between the two. Therefore, it is the need of the hour that both India and Australia gear up their partnership not only at the economic front but also at the strategic front so that both the nations could lessen China's inroads to the Indo Pacific region.
