

29 MARCH 2023

# DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA



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## NEWS IN CHINA

- [China Daily published](#) a report which reveals that China has signed more than 200 Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) cooperation agreements with 151 countries and 32 international organisations. Between 2013 to 2022, China's trade with BRI countries has nearly doubled from US\$ 1.04 trillion to US\$ 2.04 trillion. In first two months of 2023, 2698 trains were operated on China-Europe route carrying 287,000 TEUs, an 8 per cent and 18 per cent increase year-on-year, respectively. By 2022, total investments by Chinese enterprises in economic and trade cooperation zones abroad has reached US\$ 57.13 billion, creating 421,000 local jobs.
- Hainan's Provincial Government has recently taken various policy measures to [support the private sector](#) in the economy. It adopted a policy of 'less arrest, careful prosecution and careful detention' to reinstate confidence amongst the investors. Many state officials have clarified that this concept doesn't exclusively focus on private entrepreneurs and it has to be applied in the general context where every citizen has to be treated in a fair, just and transparent manner. This new policy will help to protect personal rights and interests of private businesspersons. The primary aim of this policy is to standardise regulations for arrest, detention and prosecution and to prevent criminal coercive measures. Provinces like Liaoning and Shaanxi have also recently introduced new measures to boost the private economy in the respective regions.
- China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism issued a notice about [border tourism pilot zones](#) and cross-border tourism cooperation zones. The notice provides that the number of such pilot and cross-border tourism zones should not exceed one per province. These zones are also required to meet certain conditions such as port clearance security, public health facilities construction, and comprehensive supportive

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guarantees. The notice also prevents such zones from opening up casinos on the borders of neighbouring countries. Counties that are willing to open cross-border tourism cooperation zone are required to ensure that there is a certain basis for cooperative mechanisms with the neighbouring countries bordering those counties. Thus, such zones can be established only with the prior approval of the State and also, in the region where borders are already open to the outside world. Such border tourism pilot zones would be in line with the 14th Five Year Plan for Tourism Development.

- From 2013 to 2022, China's PM 2.5 concentration has fallen by 57 per cent, according to the data by Ministry of Ecology and Environment. Sulphur dioxide concentration in China has gone beyond 10 per cent, the amount of heavy pollution in China have decreased by 92 per cent. Also, China, as one of the leading producers of the coal in the world, has created the world's largest clean coal-based power generation capacity. In last ten years, China's thermal power plants power generation has achieved the level of natural gas power generation plants showing the competence of Chinese capabilities in the field of climate change. The Ministry of Ecology has been trying to integrate various programmes to fight climate change such as management of various types of pollutants according to law and aiming for better coordination for scientific pollution control.
- Putuo district was selected for the first batch of pilots for the development of science and technology service industry in

Shanghai. Putuo district had listed 'Research and Development Service Industry' as a key cultivation industry in Putuo and it also included the same in the "Shanghai Industrial Map" issued by Municipal Economic and Information Commission. Putuo has more than 6300 science and technology enterprises. Through its 'precise linking' model, it has been able to distribute business over large scale under five subdivided categories like 'new energy', 'new materials', and 'new design', 'new services'.

- Chinese Premier Xi Jinping had a telephone conversation with the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammad Bin Salman Al Saud. The call has a crucial significance in the diplomatic world where recently China brokered an agreement between two traditional enemies, Saudi Arabia and Iran, in the hostile West Asian region in the first half of March. According to the reports, Xi Jinping mentioned the 'easing of tensions in the region after Beijing led the dialogue between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Saudi Prince also conveyed greetings and congratulatory messages from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to Xi Jinping on Xi's election as President of the People's Republic of China. Saudi Prince also highly appreciated the role of China as a mediator creating a ray of hope for peace in the conflict-led region of West Asia. Xi also spoke about Sino- Saudi ties. He referred to the relationship as "the relationship is in the best shape of all time." Chinese commentators on international issues such as Su Xiaohui indicated the shrinking presence of the United States in the region and the
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consequent increase in the pace of China-led activities in the region.

## SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Moutai in the Bottle-Chinese social media goes crazy over price of China's 'Liquid Gold':** A popular Chinese social media platform, Weibo, got flooded with posts tagging Moutai/Maotai ( 茅台 ), a traditional Chinese drink and Li Guoqing, a supervisor of Rongsheng Petrochemical, a company specialising in petrochemicals. Li Guoqing's remark on a live broadcasting show went viral on March 29th. Reports on Weibo quoted Li Guoqing that manufacturing a single bottle of Moutai at Moutai distilleries costs 80 Yuan as per financial reports. Moutai is popularly known as the 'national liquor of China.' It is manufactured from red sorghum grain at Kweichow Moutai Co. Ltd. It is also served at all State parties and presented as a gift to foreign dignitaries. The recent reports after which Moutai became the trend on Weibo showed that while Guoqing was claiming that it takes 80 Yuan to make a bottle of Moutai, the starting price of Moutai exceeded 100,000 Yuan. He mentioned in the broadcast that high demand has mainly pushed the price upwards. Weibo users responded to this bit nervously and some were angry for mismatch between manufacturing cost and selling price. Some netizens blamed high advertising costs for pushing the prices upwards.

## INDIA WATCH

- Comments made by the Pakistani Minister at the Boao Forum in China about the utility of CPEC show the strategic penetration of China's economic might into India's neighbourhood. Despite India's protests, New Delhi cannot ignore the goodwill BRI has generated not only in India's neighbourhood but also in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, which have become new spheres of influence India and China are competing for. Staying out of BRI is in India's strategic national interests but the politico-diplomatic clout that China has been creating with its infrastructure projects has been putting pressure on India's foreign policy establishment to respond to China. India can seek a solution in two ways to this increasing 'All Weather Friendship' between Pakistan and China creating a threat of a two-front war. The first can be using multilateral forum like Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in an effective way to establish strong connections with Central Asian countries. This has to be supplemented by strong economic engagement with the regions such as Central Asia or Eastern Europe through business summits, and Track II diplomacy. The second solution pushing for India's soft power through initiatives like Operation Maitri during the pandemic and other efforts which can create India's goodwill. Further, efforts should be made to streamline stalled projects like the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline to compete with China's BRI investments

**Prepared by: Chaitanya Deshpande |**  
*Research Intern*

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