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# DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA



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## NEWS IN CHINA

- Earlier this weekend, the first phase of the much-anticipated [China-Europe](#) freight train route was opened, with a train from Langfang in Hebei Province leaving for the capital city of Uzbekistan, Tashkent. The train will cover a distance of around 6000 km in 15 days, travelling via the Horgos Pass in Xinjiang, and passing through Kazakhstan. The train is carrying more than 1400 tonnes of cargo, like cotton goods and furniture, worth over 14.5 million yuan. According to Zhang Chao, deputy director of the Langfang Municipal Development and Reform Commission, “The new China-Europe freight train route will effectively reduce transportation time and costs of goods between Langfang and Central Asia, smoothen enterprises’ industrial and supply chains, and provide a strong guarantee for local international logistics channels and export-oriented economic development.” This train route serves as an important component of the Belt and Road Initiative.
- This year’s edition of the [Shanghai Double Five Shopping Festival](#) was launched on Saturday in Shanghai, by the Ministry of Commerce, in association with the China Media Group and the Shanghai Municipal People’s Government. This event is part of a series of initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Commerce, which will take place between May and December, with the aim of increasing domestic consumption and revitalizing Shanghai’s economy. The main attractions of this year’s edition include twelve benchmark activities, such as debut launch of global products and fests themed on nightlife, imported products, coffee culture, etc., along with activities hosted by the 16 districts of Shanghai. Alongside this, the second edition of the Shanghai Green Consumption Festival, and the Shanghai May 5 Shopping Festival of the Yangtze River Delta Demonstration Zone was inaugurated on Sunday. Various international consumer and e-commerce brands, such as L’Oreal, Alibaba and Tencent

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participated in the opening ceremony. All these events set out with the objective of making Shanghai a global consumption metropolis.

- Recently, the Happy Hong Kong campaign took place, with senior officials of the city-state government handing out free festival passes and discounted film tickets. This objective of this campaign, announced in this year's Budget in February and spanning ten months long, is to bring the Hong Kong economy back on track, which was struggling due to the prolonged effects of the pandemic-induced three-year lockdown. The highlights of the Happy Hong Kong campaign this week were the two-day food fair, in which local and international culinary outlets were serving food at steep discounts, and a film day on Saturday, with tickets priced at just HK\$30. As many as 58 films were scheduled to be screened for 1600 showings in all the cinema theatres of Hong Kong city, numbering around 61, through the day. Paul Chan Mo-po, the Financial Secretary of Hong Kong, hoped that through increased local consumption and spending, there would be a positive impact on the economy, as well as bring smiles to the residents.
- In the backdrop of the ongoing conflict in Sudan, the Chinese government undertook a major rescue initiative to evacuate its citizens and personnel from the war-torn country. The Peoples' Liberation Army and Navy took the lead in executing this evacuation, with assistance from Chinese embassies and consulates of countries from the surrounding region. Tan Kefei, spokesperson of the Ministry of National

Defence, gave the update that the evacuation programme, which began on April 26, was successful. Two PLA Navy ships, Nanning and Weishanhu, were sent out, and around 940 Chinese citizens and 231 foreigners were rescued. They were then taken from Port Sudan to Jeddah, in Saudi Arabia. From Jeddah, the Chinese citizens were then airlifted to their home country, with the first batch of the evacuees landing in Beijing on Saturday morning. The spokesperson concluded the statement by saying that the PLA "will always be the guardian of the people, a staunch force to defend national sovereignty, security and developmental interests, and serve to build a community with a shared future for mankind."

- On Sunday, the National Bureau of Statistics and the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing released the economic data for the month of April. According to the data, there has been a slump in manufacturing in April, with the official manufacturing purchasing managers' index, or PMI, being 49.2. This was a drop of 2.7 points, from 51.9 in March. The PMI serves as an indicator of economic trends in the manufacturing and services, and it ranges from 0 to 100. A PMI of above 50 indicates expansion in activity compared to the previous month, while that below 50 indicates contraction. China's PMI of 49.2 for April was the lowest since the post-pandemic reopening last year. There was also a dip in the new exports orders index, falling from 50.4 in March to 47.6 in April. Zhao Qinghe, who is a senior economist at the NBS, remarked that insufficient market demand and the high base effect caused due to recovery in
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manufacturing in the first quarter were the reasons behind the slump. The Bureau, in a separate statement, highlighted that production in the chemical fibre, ferrous metal mining and processing sectors reduced because of weak demand, while there was growth in electrical and mechanical equipment sectors.

## SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **May Day and 'Golden Week' festivities trend on Weibo:** 1st May, known as May Day or Labour Day, is a major holiday in China, for it is accompanied by a weeklong break, often known as the 'Golden Week.' This year, with the pandemic restrictions relaxed, the celebrations are going to get even bigger, with people making travel plans for the period. Scores of people are flocking to numerous tourist destinations within mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, as well as in southeast Asia, like Thailand and Malaysia. The hashtag [#今年的五一疯了](#) is trending on Weibo, which roughly translates to 'This year's May Day is crazy.' Netizens are talking about famous tourist spots which one can visit during this time, such as the Hongya Cave in Chongqing. Many people have also observed that the number of people travelling this time around is way more than the pre-pandemic figures, and this period could be very important for China in terms of the health of its economy, for there would be enhanced domestic consumption.

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## INDIA WATCH

- In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the prolonged lockdowns, China is seeking to get its economy back to normal, and domestic consumption plays a crucial role in reviving economic growth. The coastal regions of China and the Yangtze River Delta region are China's economic hub. Hence, it is pertinent for Beijing to revitalise these economic hotspots, for their healthy functioning is necessary for keeping the Chinese economy on track. The Double Five Shopping Festival, and other associated shopping festivals in Shanghai, like the [Xujiahui Shopping Season](#), are innovative ways of [attracting domestic spending](#) and consumption, as well as foreign investment. Moreover, the intent behind these events was to make Shanghai an international consumption hub. India can also look to use such innovations to further speed up domestic spending, which has been on the upswing in the post-pandemic period. In addition, cities like Mumbai, Gurugram, Noida and Bengaluru have a vibrant shopping mall culture, and they also serve as economic and technological hubs for their respective states, as well as the country. The Union Government, in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce and the relevant state governments, can look to organise such Shopping Week Festivals, wherein quality products from renowned brands are made available at huge discounts, thereby attracting consumer expenditure. Such arrangements could also lead to top international brands entering partnership deals with the Union/state government(s), resulting into foreign investment inflow in India.
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