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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA



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NEWS IN CHINA

- China's space programme achieved new heights as its [first civilian astronaut](#), Gui Haichao reached the orbit on Tuesday. This marks a historic feat in aerospace engineering, as two other astronauts along with him lifted off on the Shenzhou-16 mission. On the aircraft were Gui along with Major General Jing Haipeng and Colonel Zhu Yangzhu. After take-off, the spaceship was placed in lower Earth orbit, around 400 kilometres above the planet. The Shenzhou-16 crew members plan to stay in Tiangong space station for 5 months before returning in November. The latest mission marks a departure from previous manned space flights which have consisted only of military personnel. This mission, dubbed "the third generation of astronauts" comprises of civilians as well as members from the PLA. Zhu is the spaceflight engineer and Gui is the mission's payloads specialist, they are the first members of the aforementioned third generation space mission.
- [Hebei province](#) rolled out a special plan for curbing pollution by 2025. The plan has been launched by the province's group office on air pollution control. Hebei, a coastal province and home to several industries, has been at the receiving end of intense of smog and air pollution over the years. Last year, it was recorded that Fine Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM2.5) which is a key metric to gauge the region's pollution was at 36.8 micrograms per cubic metre. This was a marked improvement from previous year's accounts according to the provincial Department of Ecology and Environment. The new plan aims to keep PM2.5 under control while also curbing ozone leaks. Several steps to curb smog include enforcing sustainable measures for industries, emission controls and alternatives to diesel-powered exhaust vehicles.
- Tesla CEO Elon Musk [arrived](#) in Beijing, his first trip to China in three years. In lieu of his visit, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin

Gang assured Musk that the country would seek to maintain business-friendly relations with foreign companies. He stated, "China will continue to unswervingly promote a high level of opening up to the outside world and is committed to creating a better market-oriented, rule of law and internationalised business environment for enterprises from all countries including Tesla." The meeting was held in the backdrop of sustained contentious relations between the United States and China. Earlier in May, Beijing imposed a partial ban on the sale of semiconductor chips made by the American-based chip-making company Micron Technology. The meeting was also significant because China is Tesla's second-largest market after the US. Moreover, the car-making company also contributed to one-quarter of Shanghai's total car production value in 2022.

- Renmin University of China (RUC) along with China Media Group (CMG) established an institute to enhance China's international communications sector. The institute, named New Era International Communication Research Institute was unveiled by CMG president Shen Haixiong and Zhang Donggang, the secretary of the RUC Party committee. The new institute is set to strengthen China's ties with the rest of the world via international communication techniques. This is to be achieved by the institute's ethos that combines CMG's practical experience with the RUC's theory-based methodology. The institute also aims to expand the scope of Chinese discourse and narratives while simultaneously improving communication and interaction techniques.

- Deep earth exploration began for China as its first project went underway in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region. A borehole, over 10,000 metres deep, was drilled in the Tarim Basin. This project provides a new entry point into uncovering areas deep below the earth's surface. The equipment aims to penetrate over 10 continental strata, hopefully reaching the Cretaceous system. Wang Chunsheng, a technical expert stated that "a borehole over 10,000 metres is a bold attempt to explore the untouched territory of the Earth." He also stated that through this project, human understanding of the civilisation will only expand with newly added knowledge.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Debate on the right to punish family members of scamsters takes social media by storm:** A debate was sparked online as the government of Fujian Province plans to impose punishments on family members accused of fraud and scams. The resulting debate on Weibo was on whether this plan is an infringement on personal rights and liberties. Spouses, parents, and children of individuals involved in fraud would be subjected to expulsion of welfare benefits such as insurance coverage. This led to netizens arguing whether it is right to punish family members committing such acts of fraud in the first place.

INDIA WATCH

- While China has wholeheartedly opened its doors to Tesla, India seems to be treading on the same path. Although Tesla accounts for a significant number of Shanghai's car
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production output, Tesla is yet to break ground in India. If Tesla plans to escalate operations in India, this may mean several things. Firstly, Rajeev Chandrashekhar, India's Deputy Minister for Information Technology has been reported as saying that Tesla is "very seriously" looking at India as a potential production and innovation base. The autocar company has proposed establishing a factory building electric vehicles (EV) and manufacturing EV batteries as well. If Tesla does manage to set up a production base in India, it could be a potential obstacle for Shanghai, which houses its largest factory outside of the US. Shifting manufacturing bases could also mean a division of profit that may impede Shanghai's bid for being the first and only Tesla production unit in Asia. India stands to gain from the profits that might generate from such a proposal. However, talks on the Indian side have also stalled since the government is keen on manufacturing cars locally while Tesla aims to import cars first as a way to gauge demand. With the looming trade war, several American companies such as Apple have sought to move beyond China in terms of production hubs. Such a step may be a long and arduous process, however if one considers Apple's total production value in India it stands at about 7 per cent, which has tripled since 2021. Tesla may be considering a similar path, with establishing a production base in India, given constant import tariffs imposed by the Chinese government. American companies making a move towards India, only legitimises its image as a responsible stakeholder and a frontrunner in economic growth and progress.

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