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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **China's Social Media Cheerleaders Question COVID Zero:** Critiques from key pro-China commentators, questioning the country's Covid Zero policies, have largely avoided censors on Chinese social media. The commentaries come from people such as Zhou Xiaoping, once praised by Xi for spreading "positive energy," and Lu Kewen, reported to have millions of followers across several social media platforms in China. The commentators weighing in on the COVID-19 policies are often anti-West, nationalist and pro-Han. Writing on WeChat this week, Lu said it was no longer possible to "keep in contact with the outside world" while also pursuing "complete, thorough dynamic clearance" of the COVID-19 virus. "At least one thing has to change. It's adding up to an "inflection point" for the government's approach." The shift comes with China making significant changes to a policy that has undercut economic growth and even fueled sporadic public and online protests. The fact that they aren't being censored suggests a tacit approval from the government. Zhou also downplayed concerns about long Covid, saying it affects a small number of people, and told his followers not to believe rumours that thousands of people had needlessly died in Singapore, South Korea and Japan when they opened. Still, he took a swipe at the U.S. for accepting more than 1 million deaths from the virus, echoing a criticism frequently made by Chinese diplomats who want to show the superiority of Covid Zero.

NEWS IN CHINA

- The 2022 World Internet Conference (世界互联网大会) Wuzhen Summit (乌镇峰会) concluded on Friday. This three-day summit



held in east China's Zhejiang Province, which ran from Wednesday through Friday saw the participation, online and offline, of a record 2,100 guests from over 120 countries and regions. The summit has been held for nine consecutive years. This year's event is the first annual meeting of the World Internet Conference following the WIC's inauguration as an international organisation earlier this year. Apart from various sub-forums, this year's Wuzhen Summit featured the WIC Member Representative Symposium for the first time. The symposium attracted more than 30 WIC member representatives from international organisations, leading global internet firms, industrial bodies and organisations. A total of 12 Outstanding Cases of Jointly Building a Community with a Shared Future in Cyberspace and 15 World Leading Internet Scientific and Technological Achievements were commended at the summit. The event also saw the release of the World Internet Development Report 2022 and the China Internet Development Report 2022 and featured the display of numerous applications, the introduction of cutting-edge technology and vibrant discussion forums. 6G, human-computer interaction, industrial internet and cybersecurity have emerged as the buzzwords at the 2022 WIC.

- On Friday, the State Council's Comprehensive Group of the Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism for the New Coronary Pneumonia Epidemic issued the "Notice on Further Optimising the New Coronary Pneumonia Epidemic Prevention and Control Measures to Scientifically and Accurately Do a Good Job in Prevention

and Control". The 20 new measures announced by a State Council task force include steps that will make it easier for overseas travellers to enter the country – including a reduction in the time they must spend in a central quarantine facility from seven days to five, the suspension "circuit breaker" rule, and allowing overseas arrivals showing just one negative PCR test, instead of two, within 48 hours of boarding. The measures address the rising discontent among the Chinese public over protracted lockdowns and compulsory PCR tests, especially after the deaths of people in quarantine have sparked a public outcry online in the past few weeks. According to Wang Liping, a researcher with the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, "[The measures are] not to relax epidemic control but to reflect a more scientific and precise approach so as to minimise the impact on economic and social development and people's livelihoods."

- China's cargo spacecraft, Tianzhou-5, will be ready for launch on Saturday morning, according to the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site under the Xichang Satellite Launch Center, in south China's Hainan Province. The launch of Tianzhou-5 will be the 200th launch mission for the Xichang Satellite Launch Center this year, as well as the last one for the Wenchang launch site this year. The site has conducted the final preparation and rehearsal for the launch, which covered all systems involved, including fueling up the cargo craft and transferring the spacecraft-rocket combination to the launching area. Zhong Wen'an, a chief engineer at the Xichang Satellite Launch Center, said they had completed the most extensive rehearsal
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before launch, the final joint rehearsal. The combination of the Tianzhou-5 and a Long March-7 Y6 carrier rocket was transferred to the launching area on Wednesday. The country will carry out three more missions – the launch of the Tianzhou-5 cargo craft and the Shenzhou-15 crewed spaceship, as well as bringing the Shenzhou-14 crew back to Earth – before it completes the in-orbit construction of the space station by the end of this year.

- Chinese Megacities like Wuhan are said to be emerging as wetland paradises. In the 1950s, Wuhan Iron and Steel Group settled in the Qingshan district, making the city China's second-largest steel producer at the time. For many years, the Qingshan riverside had over 20 wharves for handling cargo ships and heavy-duty trucks carrying steel, chemicals and other industrial output of the "city of steel." This affected the surrounding water bodies in Wuhan, which was dubbed the "city of rivers and lakes." Today, it has transformed the state of its wetlands. With the closure of wharves and remediation of the environment over the past ten years, some riverfront areas in Qingshan were transformed into a park, while more parks are under construction in the area. Now it is a popular leisure site for local residents as well as waterfowl. Between 2017 and 2021, Wuhan invested 965 million yuan (133.7 million U.S. dollars) in wetlands protection and formulated another 12 laws and regulations to extend protection to the city's main rivers and lakes. "Integrating wetlands protection into urban planning is a more sustainable approach. I think this is the most important experience of Wuhan," said Lei Gang, a senior adviser with World Wild

Fund for Nature. Apart from improving the city's environment and citizens' well-being, Lei noted other benefits of well-preserved urban wetlands, including alleviating the urban heat island effect. "Wuhan used to be one of the top four 'furnace cities' in China, due to its long-lasting and hot summer. Now it is rarely considered by such ratings," Lei said.

- On Friday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying announced that Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend the 17th Group of 20 (G20) Summit in Bali, Indonesia, from November 14 to 17, at the invitation of President Joko Widodo of the Republic of Indonesia. He will attend the 29th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, as well as visit Thailand from November 17 to 19, at the invitation of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha of the Kingdom of Thailand, Hua said. According to Hua, on the sidelines of the G20 Summit and the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, Xi will hold bilateral meetings with French President Emmanuel Macron, U.S. President Joe Biden, Senegalese President Macky Sall, Argentine President Alberto Fernandez, among others, upon request. Supporting the work of the Indonesian Presidency, China hopes all parties will focus on the theme of "Recover Together, Recover Stronger," and build a consensus and boost cooperation in the fields of promoting global economic recovery and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Zhao said. He added, noting that the economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region is facing new challenges; President Xi will deliver an important speech at the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, which will
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expound China's proposition on deepening Asia-Pacific cooperation and promoting regional and global economic growth.

INDIA WATCH

- India is set to assume the presidency of the G20 Conference on December 1, 2022. This offers a unique opportunity for India to contribute to the global agenda on pressing issues of international importance. As the forum for International Economic Cooperation, G20 represents around 85 per cent of the global GDP, more than 75 percent of the global trade and about two-thirds of the world population. India is keen to play the role of a "leading power", and there are plenty of challenges to find solutions to, including climate financing, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the US-China contentions. The theme of G20 India 2023, "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: One Earth, One Family, One Future", entails that she will have to move the world away from polarisation towards a greater sense of solidarity. With the 2022 summit beginning on November 14 next week, it was announced President Xi Jinping would attend the 17th Group of 20 (G20) Summit in Bali and meet President Joe Biden of the United States and French President Emmanuel Macron. Xi's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains unconfirmed. China has opposed India's leadership at the G20 through various means. In June, China also opposed India's plan to hold the next year's meetings in Jammu and Kashmir, stating that it was a "unilateral move to complicate the situation" and politicise the issue. When asked whether China would attend the

meeting, Chinese spokesperson Zhao Lijian said, "whether we attend the meeting, we will look into that." The responsibility of resolving these differences and ensuring that the credibility of the G20 is not diluted further due to internal rifts is now in India's hands. With India's G20 priorities such as inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth, women's empowerment, digital public infrastructure, tech-enabled development, climate financing, global food security and energy security, India has to create a roadmap to reinvigorate the multilateral order from the stupor it has sunk into in the past few years.
