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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **New COVID-19 protocols create confusion on Chinese social media:** Chinese social media revolved around the discussion of COVID-19 under the new set of rules after the paradigm shift in the government's Covid policy. As society comes to terms with the ease in lockdowns, people took to social media to share stories of their struggles amidst the now intensifying outbreaks. Stories from small towns, particularly [Baoding and Dazhou](#), attracted the attention of the internet. Authorities, too, grappled with the new situation, posting messages to comfort scared people and spread awareness. Professionals [advised](#) people with mild symptoms to stay at home and self-isolate. More generally, the government said that the citizens must now take up individual responsibility for their condition, creating a popular WeChat hashtag "the government has protected the people against the virus for the past three years, and that it's now every man for himself" ("保护了我们三年国家尽力了以后得靠自己了"). The state media also widely circulated infographics and instructions to follow under the new rules.

NEWS IN CHINA

- Many cities and provinces [issued new guidelines](#) for the COVID-19 pandemic as China moved away from its 'Zero-Covid' policy after mass protests. Measures were aimed at public health interventions as well as economic recovery and support. For example, authorities including the Shenzhen city government issued bailouts or partial disbursements for struggling firms as well as consumer subsidies. Governments

are also looking at tourism and cultural events to boost economic activity. The city of Beijing, too, has reduced taxes and fees to help the public. In light of the rapidly changing situation after the Covid lockdowns have largely been lifted, governments are focusing on better stimulus policies to boost growth.

- The ashes of China's erstwhile president Jiang Zemin were scattered in the Yangtze river on Sunday, according to the wishes of him and his family. After the leader's death last week, his remains were cremated on the 5th of December, followed by a grand memorial meeting in mourning as well as in the praise of his legacy. The rituals were overseen by members of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee, who also escorted Jiang's relatives to the venue. Jiang, who was hailed by the Party as a prominent Marxist and great leader, had died of natural causes on 30th November.
- Experts from the Chinese media industry, academia as well as think tanks held a seminar about improving China's international communications strategy. The experts met online to discuss better ways of representing China's perspective in international media and influential forums. Promoting Chinese culture and highlighting China's strides in technological innovation were said to go hand in hand. With the advent of artificial intelligence, the rise of short video content and availability of platforms such as Metaverse, the conference stressed the need for improving education and training in the media sector. The members highlighted a wide range of opportunities

the country could leverage to improve its standing in the international discourse.

- In Hong Kong, the Tseung Kwan O Cross-bay Bridge was opened to transport on Sunday. This is the first major bridge built exclusively by a mainland company in Hong Kong as well as the first structure with a 'float-over method' of construction. With an aim to decongest traffic in Area 86 of the Tseung Kwan O district, the bridge is part of the Cross Bay Link project, an ambitious infrastructure initiative of the China Road and Bridge Corporation. The inauguration was welcomed by the chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).
 - The first Global Digital Trade Expo kicked off in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China on Sunday. The expo has attracted around 800 leading trade companies from around the world, who will showcase their products and technologies. Enterprises from more than 50 countries have been invited by authorities to discuss the latest topics in trade and cooperation. The expo has been themed 'Connecting Digital Trade to the World'. "Digital trade [...] is a new engine for global trade growth," the head of the trade development bureau of China's Ministry of Commerce was quoted as saying. The event signifies the central as well as provincial governments' push towards the digital economy in channelising growth.
 - The 7th Global Biodiversity Summit of Local and Subnational Governments was hosted at Kunming, capital of Yunnan province, China on 11th and 12th December. An official event parallel to the COP 15
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summit recently held in Montreal, Canada, the conference invited local and provincial governments to discuss and take action on biodiversity conservation. The aim of the Summit was to share practices and promote the mainstreaming of conservation in cities and provinces. The United Nations Environment Programme noted that the event showed the unprecedented contribution of local and subnational governments to the Global Biodiversity Framework and the larger biodiversity agenda.

may not be possible for India. The absence of Indian competitors to the likes of Huawei and Alibaba is also among the major factors making digital competition unfavourable for India. Although both the countries try to avoid becoming either the world's "warehouse" or "back-office," one is likely to succeed faster than the other.

INDIA WATCH

- The Chinese government's increasing focus on promoting digital trade and commerce corresponds with the Indian government's efforts for digitisation. However, there are three key differences among the two countries: China's digital push is enabled by a developed infrastructure, digital literacy and innovation. Since India lags behind in these factors, the Indian government's efforts are focused on creating these prerequisites for digital progress. India is trying to operationalise the potential of its young population to spur innovation, which requires incentives and accessibility. At the same time, the Indian government is trying to increase digital literacy, which is also a catalyst for achieving economic growth. In this sense, China is in a different position than India. The main objective of the current push for digital in China seems to be to strategically accelerate the economy after the setback of the COVID-19 epidemic. The already prevalent accessibility and literacy leaves fiscal space for spending on firms and enterprises to increase their activity, which
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