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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Films and games light up the festive mood of Chinese netizens:** Over the weekend, trending hashtags on Weibo were about upcoming films and ongoing game tournaments as part of the Chinese Spring Festival celebrations. Many new films are set to enter theatres next week, hence netizens ranked the films and discussed their expectations using a popular [hashtag](#) which got around 40 million views. The online game League of Legends launched a tournament to attract players during the holiday season. The hashtag "[2023lp!](#)" indicating the tournament received over 30 million views with posts featuring famous players and sports clubs posting videos of games played.
- **Billionaire's son Sicong Wang gets into another scandal:** After the police in Shanghai reportedly arrested billionaire Jianlin Wang's son Sicong Wang, Chinese netizens [made](#) memes and poked fun at the latter. Earlier this week, Sicong Wang was arrested with others for getting into a physical fight on Nanjing West Road in Shanghai. They were soon released on bail. Netizens claimed that Wang's money helped him get bail easily. Rumours were also circulating about Wang having settled the dispute by paying his opponents. Wang has been in several scandals before, including being banned from Weibo for questioning the efficacy of Chinese traditional medicine.
- **Tencent Games limits children's playing time; Goose Goose Duck trends on Weibo:** Tencent Games [announced](#) that it will be limiting minors' use of gaming platforms during

the Spring Festival holiday season for the second consecutive year. In a post on Weibo, the company urged minors to spend more time with their families.. Other gaming platforms are also expected to adhere to the government's guidelines limiting minors' gaming time to decrease addiction to gaming. Meanwhile, a popular video game Goose Goose Duck made a comeback after a few days of server malfunction. Similar to the globally popular game Among Us, Goose Goose Duck has become immensely popular in China and South Korea. Its servers had gone down after a sudden spike in users and cyberattacks.

- **Influencers criticise video streaming platforms for high fees:** Dozens of social media influencers criticised TV content platforms such as iQiyi and Tencent Video over exorbitantly high membership fees. Influencers and citizens alike expressed concern over pricing models in the industry using hashtags that eventually trended on Weibo, saying that before the rise of online streaming, TV was both cheap and easier to watch. People flagged the amount of advertisements and pop-ups, lack of competition and regulation in the market as well as lack of accessibility for the older, less tech-savvy population.

NEWS IN CHINA

- On Saturday, a week after the suspension of travel restrictions, 42.26 million Chinese citizens travelled across the country as part of the Spring Festival travel rush. Of these, 32.35 million travelled by road while 8.19 million used the national railways. A high-speed railway line from Hong Kong to the

Chinese mainland restarted its operations on Sunday. Domestic passenger flights also saw a rebound during the week with air traffic reaching 80% of pre-pandemic levels. Meanwhile, pre-sales for film screenings during the Spring Festival opened on Saturday with 6 films set to enter theatres. Star-studded films "Anonymous" ("无名") and "Mǎn Jiāng Hóng" ("满江红") led the box office in terms of sales and screenings respectively.

- Chinese Health Minister Xiaowei Ma remotely held a discussion with the Director General of the World Health Organisation, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, on Saturday. The officials discussed the ongoing measures for the containment of the coronavirus. Ma reiterated China's efforts and willingness to share information about the epidemic since the beginning. In a press conference on Saturday, officials from the National Health and Medical Commission said that the peak in the number of patients visiting the country's fever clinics had already passed. The highest number of visits occurred on 23rd December 2022 with 2.87 million visits and has since declined, according to the officials.
 - The Chinese State Council introduced 15 measures to boost the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) on Saturday. Of these, 7 measures aimed at policy support to increase demand, improve financing and ensure supply of raw materials. It was proposed that the government and large enterprises prioritise MSMEs in their procurement activities. Other measures aimed at structural changes to revitalise MSMEs for long-term
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growth. The policy said that the core competitiveness of MSMEs should be improved by leveraging digital technologies, introducing quality control, strengthening intellectual property rights and enhancing innovation at educational institutions.

- The Chinese stock market was bullish at the end of the second week of 2023. At the time of closing, the Shanghai Stock Exchange index had risen by 1.19% and the Shenzhen Component Index by 2.06%. The stock to see the highest growth this week was Electronic City (电子成), whose value grew by 58.23%. The market also witnessed large capital inflows from foreign investors.
- Over the weekend, 8 provinces elected new provincial-level Chairmen for the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (中国人民政治协商会议). The elections come ahead of the 'two-sessions' meetings of the Conference members in March. The newly elected Chairmen included Yimin Lian of Hebei, Wenrong Hu of Shanghai, Changsong Wang of Tianjin, Yijun Tang of Jiangxi, Xiaokai Liu of Yunnan and Shaomin Lan of Heilongjiang provinces.
- On Sunday, China launched 14 new satellites into space using a single carrier rocket. The Long March 2D rocket was launched from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in north China's Shaanxi Province. The satellites included Qilu-2, Qilu-3 and Luojia-14. Qilu-2 and Qilu-3 are high-resolution agile optical satellites and wide-field optical satellites respectively. They will aid agriculture and forestry, environmental monitoring, transportation, disaster prevention and mitigation.

- China's Qingchen Chen and Yifan Jia won the women's doubles while Siwei Zheng and Yaqiong Huang won the mixed doubles titles at the Malaysia Open badminton tournament on Sunday. The men's team consisting of Wei Keng Liang and Chang Wang finished runner-up in the men's doubles arena. On Saturday, the Chinese women's curling team secured a third consecutive victory at the 31st Winter World University Games (2023 Winter Universiade) being held in the USA. The team defeated Sweden 6-4 in the ice-based sport.
- A cold wave continued to lash China as the country's meteorological authority issued a blue alert on Sunday. Over the past week, the authority has increased the severity of the cold alert, first issuing a yellow alert and then an orange alert for the same. The authority said on Sunday that temperatures are expected to fall by 6 to 8 degrees Celsius till Monday morning, while strong winds are expected to affect Liaodong, Shandong and parts of Guangxi and Guangdong provinces.

INDIA WATCH

- China's MSME policy is in the same vein as India's, since the two countries have a very similar MSME sector profile. However, the latest rules in China talk about 3 distinct points which the Indian policy has so far ignored: matchmaking to large and overseas enterprises; quality control; and educational linkages. India can replicate these measures, while both countries can improve their economies by empowering MSMEs. In China, more than 98% of all enterprises are MSMEs, contributing to
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nearly 50% of tax revenue and 60% of GDP. Like India, China has focused on ensuring credit to these enterprises and promoting government procurement from them. Both countries also focus on legal frameworks for dispute resolution and talk about systemic changes in the economy. Although this has led to positive results, the full potential of MSMEs for growth has not been realised in either country - wealth and growth remains concentrated in the few large firms. Hence, bridging the gap between the small and large firms is necessary. Investment in and procurement from the MSME sector should be done by large companies, which will integrate the small companies firmly into the organised sector and support their growth. Sustaining this growth over time would require good returns on the investments, which can be gained by ensuring the quality of output. The matchmaking and quality control provisions in the latest Chinese policy are efforts in this direction. Further, opportunities for funding should be accessible for upcoming MSMEs, which is achieved by extending MSME regulation to educational programs having partnerships with industry. These measures, if applied to the Indian economy, will leverage the wealth in India's large enterprises and India's growing share of global trade to support the MSME sector. Instead of relying on government procurement, supply chain integration with large firms can help Indian MSMEs truly take off.
