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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Unique rabbit lamp triggers netizens:** Due to its unusual shape, the gigantic illuminated rabbit at the Three Gorges Square in Shapingba, Chongqing, attracted a lot of debate online. Some online users believe that the artist of this lamp featuring a rabbit is not particularly attractive and that the finished bunny is not attractive at all. Additionally, because of the uncanny valley effect caused by the rabbit's eyes being too similar to human eyes, people find them a little unsettling. However, some internet users believe that this rabbit's shape is really attractive. Even while it isn't particularly adorable, closer inspection reveals the exquisiteness of traditional Chinese art.

NEWS IN CHINA

- On 18th January, Zeng Yande, chief agronomist and director of the Development Planning Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, suggested that "one-on-one" guarantee interactions be made with important groups in rural areas to prevent and control the epidemic during the Spring Festival period. Key demographics include pregnant women, kids, people over the age of 65 years, especially those living alone, who are disabled and lack self-health management. In addition, the Chinese government aims at conducting special classes to prevent and control epidemics in rural areas, shifting some of the nation's medical resources to some weak towns and communities to bolster their technical capabilities and improve their capacity for treatment, and giving free equipment to every village clinic there.

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- On the morning of January 18, in Jinan, the 14th Shandong Provincial People's Congress effectively accomplished a number of agenda items and came to a successful conclusion. The 22 representatives comprising chief voters and scrutineers were approved by the meeting. The 14th National People's Congress' deputies were chosen among 173 candidates. The central government's nominees, Han Zheng and Zheng Jianbang, won the election. Lin Wu, the newly elected chairman of the Standing Committee, took the constitutional oath. Lin Wu stressed the need to carefully consider and put into practise General Secretary Xi Jinping's significant ideas regarding maintaining and enhancing the people's congress system and fostering people's democracy throughout the process.
 - On January 18, the most recent iteration of the National Medical Insurance Drug Catalogue was made public in Beijing. 111 more medications were added to the catalogue as a result of this change. On average, medicine prices decreased by 60.1%. Some of the medications in the catalogue now have lower prices. The recently added medications cover a wide range of topics, including novel crown treatment, anti-tumor, and unusual disorders. Consequently, a range of patients will gain from this. The National Medical Insurance Drug Catalogue now includes 2,967 different medications. For five years in a row, the national medical insurance drug catalogue has been adjusted.
 - A regular press conference was presided over by Wang Wenbin, spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry, on January 18. In this conference, the National Bureau of Statistics's data on China's national economy in 2022 was pointed out by a reporter. Following this, Wenbin was asked to comment on the assessment of China's expected economic growth in 2023 made by some foreign media. To this he responded by stating that unlike in 2022, this year China will successfully coordinate epidemic prevention and control with economic and social development, step up macro-control efforts, effectively handle unforeseen consequences, and stabilise the macroeconomic market. According to Wang Wenbin, many international investment institutions now anticipate that China's economy will grow quickly and steadily this year as the country improves and modifies its epidemic prevention and control methods.
 - On 18th January, Shenzhen Market Supervision Bureau issued a notice regarding some netizens reporting the sale of blue-ringed octopus in Shenzhen Futian Sam's Club the previous day. Through the official Weibo and official blog platforms, the Bureau has reminded consumers to be cautious of consuming dangerous aquatic items. It also suggested that consumers should refuse to ingest aquatic items of unknown origin. Practitioners were also advised to consciously avoid aquatic products that may contain toxicity. After a comprehensive inspection by the local market supervision department, the concerned retailer issued an official answer indicating that no anomalies were discovered in the food product.
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- Vice-Premier Hu Chunhua was appointed to the largest political advisory body in the nation on Wednesday. Despite being nine years younger than the required retirement age for someone in his position, Hu was unexpectedly removed from the ruling Politburo during the 20th Party Congress in October, prompting his appointment to the 14th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). Hu was a devoted enforcer of President Xi Jinping's massive endeavour to reduce poverty while serving as one of China's four vice premiers from 2018 until the present. Zhou Qiang, China's top judge, was also included in the list that was made public on Wednesday. He is anticipated to transition to a ceremonial status in the advisory council.

INDIA WATCH

- Despite economic downturns during the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic, China has offered a more promising economic future than India in recent years. However, India's relatively young and rapidly expanding populace has the potential to outpace China's GDP estimates, especially because its ageing population will hardly render any value to its economy. Additionally, India taking over manufacturing businesses that relocate from China can significantly boost its GDP. Nonetheless, the result of an estimated accelerated growth of the Chinese economy in 2023 is fruitful for India. Being the fifth largest economy, India is still heavily dependent on China for raw materials required for the automobile and electronics sector. Supply chains are likely to be disturbed in the event of an economic slowdown in China. As the world's largest producer and consumer of

steel, a downturn in the Chinese economy may result in volatile steel prices, which might therefore have a detrimental effect on the steel industry in India. Because of its outdated infrastructure, subpar educational standards and onerous red tape, India has a long way to go in catching up with China's economic development. To combat these drawbacks government initiatives like the "Make in India" initiative and the "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan" (Self Reliant India Campaign) have been instrumental in encouraging trade and domestic manufacturing in the nation, particularly MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises), commonly known as the "backbone of the Indian economy. Furthermore, Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Schemes across various sectors play crucial roles in increasing domestic production. At present around 100 MSMEs are among the PLI beneficiaries in sectors such as Bulk Drugs, Medical Devices, Telecom, White Goods and Food Processing. Even so, the government should take initiatives to further widen MSME inclusion in PLI schemes to boost the budding manufacturing units in the country. That being said, India steering for economic convergence with China at the moment will be more advantageous for the former.
