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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Weibo commentators joke that Elon Musk is “promoting Chinese culture” through his new approach to Twitter:**
Twitter is a hot topic on Weibo this week, with many Chinese commenters thinking Musk’s new strategy for Twitter must have been inspired by China’s strenuous 996 work culture. Although Twitter is officially blocked in mainland China, recent Twitter developments have become a topic of interest on Weibo. Twitter, an American social media platform founded in 2006, was acquired by the business magnet Elon Musk for \$44 billion. Ever since, there have been controversies regarding new features such as making Twitter users pay for their Twitter ‘blue check’ verification marks, and Musk firing half of Twitter’s workforce. He is under fire again for setting new standards for employees, demanding they commit to an “extremely hardcore” working culture. When Twitter office buildings were temporarily closed and employee badge access was disabled until Monday, the hashtag “RIPTwitter” trended on the platform. Many users announced their departure from the platform and predicted that Twitter will soon shut down. Projections at the San Francisco Twitter headquarters building played a loop of spiteful comments against Musk (#推特公司员工大规模辞职#). On Weibo, where Elon Musk is commonly referred to as 马斯克 (Mǎsikè), the hashtag “Musk warns Twitter staff: they can beat it if they can’t work overtime” (#马斯克警告推特员工不能加班就走人#) received over 95 million views. Some wondered about the new Twitter working conditions and compared them to the notorious ‘996’ work schedules in Chinese tech companies (996 = work from 9am to 9pm, six days per week).

Video of two Chinese women tied up after violating Guangzhou's anti-epidemic rules goes viral:

An [incident](#) involving two young women in Guangzhou went viral which showed the two women forced to the ground, with their hands and feet being tied up. In Guangzhou's Haizhu District, where most of the city's COVID-19 cases have been reported, the two women, both 23-year-olds from Heilongjiang, allegedly did not comply with local anti-epidemic measures and tried to force their way out of a COVID-19 checkpoint to pick up a food delivery order. One of them was not wearing a mask. Videos show the women raising their voices, arguing with anti-epidemic staff and pushing them, while yelling profanities. As the altercation got worse, local anti-epidemic staff and volunteers pinned the two women to the floor, tying up their hands behind their backs and tying up their feet. Local police responded to the incident on November 18, stating that both women had not had an updated nucleic acid test since October 30 and therefore had a 'yellow code' on their health code app. The two women reportedly received administrative penalties, and the matter between them and the anti-epidemic workers has since been settled. A related hashtag received over 260 million views on Weibo. (#广州警方回应2名女子手被反绑跪地#)

NEWS IN CHINA

- On Sunday, China said that it is "[open](#)" to a defence ministers' meeting with the US at a regional security forum, in another apparent signal that Beijing wants to revive lines of communication after a spike in tensions. Chinese Defence Minister Wei

Fenghe and his US counterpart Lloyd Austin will both be in Cambodia for the five-day Asean Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), where China and the US are "dialogue partners". The annual security talks, which started on Sunday and are hosted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), usually feature its eight dialogue partners, which also include Russia, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Beijing had suspended a range of exchanges with the US in August, after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi defied its warnings against visiting Taiwan. However, the in-person meeting between presidents Xi Jinping and Joe Biden ahead of the Group of 20 (G20) Summit in Bali last week has prompted efforts on both sides to prevent further escalation. Bilateral talks on trade, the economy and climate change followed soon after that meeting, which Biden described as "candid and clear".

- On Sunday, top Chinese climate negotiator Xie Zhenhua [announced](#) that China and the United States have held "constructive" talks on climate change and the exchanges will continue. Xie met his US counterpart John Kerry at the 27th UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Egypt as formal bilateral talks resumed after being suspended for months over the Taiwan issue. "Discussions between China and the US ... [were] very candid, friendly, active and positive, and very constructive," Xie said, according to Chinese state broadcaster CCTV. Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi, also commented that the first face-to-face meeting between the heads of state of the two countries over the past three years was constructive and strategic. Wang said Xi stressed that China-U.S.
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relations should be viewed and handled from the perspective of grasping the general trend of the world, abandon the zero-sum mentality of "you lose, I win," and "you rise and I fall," and set a tone of exchanges featuring dialogue rather than confrontation and win-win rather than zero-sum relations.

- On Sunday, the 419th Press Conference on the Prevention and Control of the Coronavirus epidemic was held in Beijing. China reported its first COVID-19 death on Sunday in nearly six months as authorities imposed new restrictions in Beijing, moved schools online, shut down offices and restaurants in the city's most populous district, Chaoyang, and again urged residents to avoid going out unless necessary. The Beijing Youth Daily reporter also learned that Liu Xiaofeng, deputy director of the Beijing Center for Disease Control and Prevention, reported the latest epidemic situation in the city. On Saturday, Beijing reported 621 new Covid-19 cases with 122 identified outside quarantine zones through community level test screening. "It is necessary to optimise various prevention and control measures in a strict, tight, scientific and accurate manner, strengthen the prevention and control of social aspects in key areas and key streets and townships, and further reduce the degree of crowd activity," said Liu.
- On Saturday, Taipei Zoo announced that the giant male panda Tuan Tuan, gifted by the Chinese mainland to Taiwan, passed away. Tuan Tuan's heart stopped beating at 1:48 p.m. under anaesthetic, said the zoo. The panda had suffered a spate of seizures

in the early hours of Saturday morning until 7 a.m. after veterinarians administered anti-seizure and calming medications. Tuan Tuan was ill in late August when he suddenly suffered seizures. A medical scan showed that he had brain edema and necrosis in September. Mainland experts went to the island to treat the panda earlier this month. Tuan Tuan and the female panda Yuan Yuan arrived in Taipei as a goodwill gift from the mainland in December 2008 and have been beloved by Taiwan compatriots.

- The annual Financial Street Forum will be held from Monday to Wednesday in Beijing with the focus on economic development and financial cooperation amid unprecedented changes, including significant economic growth slowdown in a growing share of economies, high inflation unseen in several decades, tightening financial conditions in most regions and the lingering COVID-19 pandemic. The Financial Street Forum will hold 27 activities on 39 topics this year. It has four parallel forums, namely real economy and financial services, global market and financial development, digital economy and financial technology, and governance system and financial stability. The forum was first held in 2012 and upgraded as a state-level and international industry forum in 2020. A decade later, it has been referred to as the guidepost for China's financial reform.

INDIA WATCH

- The White House has announced that US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will make his first trip to China early next year.
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Blinken in October had accused Beijing of planning to seize Taiwan “on a much faster timeline”. However, Biden on Monday said: “I do not think there’s any imminent attempt on the part of China to invade Taiwan.” In China’s formal summary of the meeting, officials gestured toward the contradiction, writing, “It is hoped that the U.S. side will live up to its words.” Xi clearly hopes to nudge relations with America back into a calmer era. According to international security expert A.B. Abrams, Beijing would not have high hopes for the meetings, given the consensus across the American political spectrum that China was an “imminent threat to US hegemony” and a hardline approach was needed. However, China’s openness to engage with the US on defence matters is still a positive step, especially because the stakes for India are high because of its rivalry with China, its quiet efforts to deepen engagement with Taiwan, and its role in U.S. Indo-Pacific policy. ASEAN is now a critical platform for the rivals to engage, with three multilateral meetings hosted successively – the bloc’s own summit in Cambodia, the G20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia, and the APEC summit in Thailand. This dialogue and easing of tensions between China and the US is critical for India. Delhi is more confident than ever before about the depth and stability in its partnership with Washington. Finally, like the rest of Asia, India has a stake in the “responsible management” of the US-China conflict for the costs of such a conflict could be devastating for the entire region.
