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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Discussions of the Lhasa COVID outbreak censored:** After netizens pointed out the government's lack of action over the outbreak in Lhasa, posts discussing this were quickly censored on Weibo. Moreover, journalists were restricted from publishing any news that covered the Lhasa outbreak. Additionally, foreign journalists were denied access to key information. Lhasa residents took to Weibo to highlight key problems of the COVID outbreak in the region, from the hiding of actual positive cases to food shortages, lack of medical access, bad conditions of quarantine facilities and the lack of responsiveness from government agencies to cope with other illnesses in the region. This brought attention to other unpleasant and dreadful conditions of residents of Lhasa, with increasing unemployment and income, leading to homelessness. Many have called this to be Tibet actual condition, with public announcements and information released by the government to mislead the public.

NEWS IN CHINA

- Xi Jinping stressed that he should thoroughly summarize and use the favourable outcome of reform and seek to build a new condition of reform and bolster the army when giving vital instructions at the conference on national security and army reform. He emphasized that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Central Military Commission have incorporated the tactic of reforming and strengthening the army with unparalleled determination and resilience since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, deeply cracked the institutional obstacles, structural contestations, and policy issues that have long restricted national defence and army construction, and

deepened the reform of national defence. The crucial directives from President Xi were communicated during the meeting. The significant accomplishments and lessons learned during this cycle of national defence and army reform were outlined by Xu Qiliang, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, and follow-up reform planning was implemented. Vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission and member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Zhang Youxia, outlined requirements for the Central Military Commission, including strengthening the strategy and ensuring that the reform is practical and effective.

- A renewed Cold War between Beijing and Washington would be catastrophic for their bilateral relations and for the rest of the world, according to State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who has pleaded with Washington to adopt a reasonable and practical China policy and to handle the Taiwan issue appropriately. On the eve of the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York, Wang made the comments on Monday during a conversation with Henry Kissinger, a former secretary of state of the United States. Wang asserted that the Taiwan issue should be handled properly right now as any improper handling would sour relations between China and the United States. President Joe Biden of the United States has pledged that his country will not pursue conflict with China, will not try to alter its political system, will not support "Taiwan independence," and will not direct its renewed alliances against the country, Wang added. But, he said, the American

side's actions and words all go against Biden's vow. Wang reaffirmed that "our best wish" is for Taiwan to peacefully reunite with the motherland. He issued a warning that China will act firmly to protect its territorial integrity and sovereignty in accordance with the law if the Anti-Secession Law is broken.

- In the Taiwan Strait, 4 Chinese naval ships followed the US and Canadian warships. On September 20, a U.S. Navy-directed destroyer and a Royal Canadian Navy frigate were followed by four Chinese warships and perhaps a Taiwanese military vessel while they patrolled the Taiwan Strait. The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Higgins (DDG 76) and the Halifax-class frigate HMCS Vancouver of the Royal Canadian Navy had "conducted a routine Taiwan Strait transit" that day "through waters where high seas freedoms of navigation and overflight apply in accordance with international law," the U.S. Navy's Seventh Fleet reported on Tuesday. The Ministry of National Defense (MND) reported that as of 5 p.m. that day, four Chinese military planes and four naval ships were circling Taiwan. Duan Dong, a journalist working for an independent publication, shared a photo shot by the Sentinel-2 satellite on Tuesday at 10:52 a.m. Taiwan Time and posted it on Twitter on Wednesday (Sept. 21). Four of the ships, according to Duan, were from the People's Liberation Army Navy, according to Taiwan News (PLAN). Two PLAN vessels can be seen in the photograph travelling on the side of the median line that is opposite the HMCS Vancouver and USS Higgins. Three other vessels may be seen behind the Higgins, two to the south and one to the east of the American battleship

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- Over the past ten years, China's regional development gap has been closing as a result of its efforts to integrate regional development. According to Xiao Weiming of the National Development and Reform Commission, rates of economic growth in China's central and western areas have long been higher than those in the country's eastern regions. China is a massive country with a sizable population, striking regional contrasts, and more developed eastern areas. To accelerate the economic development of its less developed regions, the government has made significant efforts. The GDP per person in eastern China fell from 1.69 times in 2012 to 1.53 times in 2021. The GDP per capita of eastern China decreased from 1.87 times that of western China in 2012 to 1.68 times in 2021. In central and western China, there are currently about 90,000 kilometres of operational railways or over 60 per cent of the total length of the nation. China has unveiled a number of plans in recent years that will help with regional development, including those for the adaptation efforts of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the advancement of the Yangtze Economic Belt, the growth of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and the environmental preservation and levels of engagement of the Yellow River basin.

INDIA WATCH

- Governments throughout the world, especially those in South Asia, are worried about the growing tensions in the Taiwan Strait. While Taipei has pushed to increase its commercial relations, Beijing has recently increased its presence in the region. India's stakes are particularly high due to its competition with China, its

covert efforts to improve its relationship with Taiwan, and its significance to U.S. Indo-Pacific policy. Due to its fierce rivalry with China, India has increased commercial ties with Taiwan greater than any of its neighbours. The majority of Taiwan's trade with South Asia—nearly 80%—is with India. In the past few decades, New Delhi and Taipei have explored collaboration in research and technology as well as signed a bilateral investment pact. India still ranks as one of China's top trading partners despite its pledges to reduce business relations. The "One China" policy, according to which Beijing claims jurisdiction over the mainland, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, has also never been contested by New Delhi. Additionally, it is prohibited from adopting official stances on the disputes of other nations by its guiding foreign policy tenet, strategic autonomy. India would probably adopt a passive stance if China invaded Taiwan, similar to how it acted when Russia started the conflict in Ukraine.
