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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Anxieties about the Postgraduate Entrance Exam sweep across Chinese social media:** The [discussion](#) about the Chinese Postgraduate Entrance Exam (中国研究生入学考试) which is to be held from December 24 to December 26 has gained almost 4 million views on Weibo. After the Chinese Education Ministry confirmed that the exams would be held during this period, dispelling worries that it would be delayed due to the recent COVID-19 outbreaks, students began to flock on the internet for advice or to express their anxiety. Soon, hashtags such #考研政策# (Postgraduate Exam) and 2023考研报考人数474万 (4.74 million students are appearing for the postgraduate exams) started trending on Friday. Netizens wished the candidates luck and there were numerous posts claiming to spread luck. One 'study influencer' instructed students on Weibo, "The moment you walk out of the #考研政策# examination room, please forget about it immediately." These exams have become highly competitive and stressful, as Chinese students increasingly opt to pursue postgraduate studies, as an undergraduate degree can [no longer guarantee](#) a satisfactory job. A worried candidate [expressed](#), "I have to work hard to succeed. Life is so hard and work is so hard to find. The postgraduate entrance examination is essentially contrary to the original intention. The situation is overwhelming." Even though the number of candidates was at a record high this year, the number was still lower than the earlier prediction of 5 million registrations. Some media sites [analysed](#) the trends in applicants, which noted that growth of enrollment in prestigious schools had stagnated, and the attractiveness of "double-non" colleges and universities had

increased. This reflects the changing attitudes of Chinese students, especially resonating with movements such as the “lying-flat movement” (躺平), which reject the societal pressure to overwork by lowering professional and economic ambitions and prioritising psychological health over economic materialism.

NEWS IN CHINA

- On Friday, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with the Chief Executive of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR), [Ho Iat Seng](#), as well as with the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) [John Lee](#). During the meetings, Xi heard reports on the current situation of Hong Kong and Macao, and acknowledged the work done by both Chief Executives. Xi Jinping stated that Ho has led the SAR government in exercising governance in a prudent and solid way while maintaining overall social stability, as well as in steadily advancing the amendment of the law on safeguarding national security in Macao; appropriately handling the revision to local gaming laws and a new round of gaming concession tendering; and making solid progress in the building of the Guangdong-Macao in-depth cooperation zone in Hengqin. He also lauded Lee’s work of uniting social sectors, safeguarding national security, and implementing the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC). According to Xi, Hong Kong has demonstrated a new atmosphere under the principle of “patriots administering Hong Kong,” and is advancing with solid steps on the right track of “one country, two systems”.
 - On Friday morning, a passenger aircraft [arrived](#) in Taxkorgan Tajik Autonomous County, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, marking the inauguration of the region's first high plateau airport. The airport, located at 3,258 metres above sea level, is China's westernmost transportation airport. Equipped with a 3,800-metre runway, the airport is designed to handle an annual throughput of 160,000 passengers and 400 tonnes of cargo and mail. Construction of the airport began in 2020, with an investment of more than 1.6 billion yuan (about 229 million U.S. dollars). The convenient air passage will bring a steady flow of people, logistics and information to the Pamir Plateau, promoting industrial development on the plateau, said Zapar Atawulla, head of the county government. “The airport will also play a positive role in improving the local transport, promoting local tourism and opening up to the outside world,”
 - Local governments [across](#) China have issued a new round of consumption vouchers to boost the recovery of catering, tourism, retail and other industries weighed down by the COVID-19 epidemic. The southern metropolis of Guangzhou issued coupons worth a total of 30 million yuan (about 4.3 million U.S. dollars), covering catering, e-commerce, retail and hotel businesses. Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has planned to issue more than 50,000 consumption vouchers for its 10 ski resorts from late December to February next year. The island province of Hainan has issued 53 million yuan of vouchers to potential tourists around the country since late
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October, which has achieved notable results. Over the past month, tourists from outside the island have accounted for 76 per cent. Several cities including Sanya, Changsha and Shenzhen have issued vouchers for purchasing new energy vehicles, with an average face value of over 1,000 yuan. Issuing consumption vouchers has proved effective in driving economic recovery. According to the data of the People's Bank of China Guangzhou Branch, in the first round of consumption promotion this year which ended in early May, Guangdong issued some 607 million yuan of vouchers, which helped to stimulate 3.58 billion yuan of consumer transactions. According to Cao Zhongxiong, director of the Department of Digital Strategy and Economics at China Development Institute, an optimised voucher system could effectively consolidate the foundation of economic recovery.

- According to the [Joint Press Release](#) of the 17th Round of India-China Corps Commander Level Meeting published by the Ministry of National Defence, the 17th round of India-China Corps Commander Level Meeting was held at Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Chinese side on 20th December 2022. Building on the progress made after the last meeting on 17th July 2022, the two sides exchanged views on the resolution of the relevant issues along the Line of Actual Control in the Western Sector in an open and constructive manner. They had a frank and in-depth discussion, keeping in line with the guidance provided by the State Leaders to work for the resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest which

would help in restoration of peace and tranquillity along the LAC in the Western Sector and enable progress in bilateral relations. In the interim, the two sides agreed to maintain the security and stability on the ground in the Western Sector. The two sides agreed to stay in close contact and maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels and work out a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest.

INDIA WATCH

- The 17th Round of India-China Corps Commander Level Meeting held on Tuesday was stated to be frank and constructive by both China and India. This is a positive step, especially after the clash at Tawang only 13 days ago, as it aided in keeping dialogue channels open. However, the meeting once again failed to reach a consensus. The question remains- Are perpetual border stand-offs the new status quo for the LAC? Various Chinese media reports on the Tawang clash [suggested](#) that Beijing is determined to accelerate the frequency of border standoffs. Thus, aside from ramping up military preparedness to counter China's war-like infrastructure and keeping diplomatic channels open, India must improve its political discourse at home, to ensure that it does not fall prey to China's grey warfare tactics as well. An insensitive treatment of the Tawang clash was rampant in Indian political [discourse](#), with accusations such as "The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation received a donation of ₹135 crore from the Communist Party of China" made by leaders in power, or that China is preparing for a full-fledged
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war from both Ladakh and Arunachal sides while the incumbent government is sleeping, made by the opposition. It is in China's interest to have a divided public opinion in India. The grey zone tactics employed by China enable it to create public fear and misinformation, with the goal of subduing the enemy beyond armed conflict. Thus, China's territorial aggression is not an issue upon which India must be internally disputing. Furthermore, misinformation should be avoided at all costs. This will require both an offer of transparency from the BJP government to the opposition and the public, and for the members of opposition to offer support on issues of national security.
