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# DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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## SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **The 'Mysterious' Disappearance of China's Lipstick King:** It is not news that China's media censorship is stringent, but recent news on the 'mysterious' disappearance of China's most beloved live-streaming star, Li Jiaqi has raised questions about this censorship on popular platforms like Weibo. So what does the Chinese State have to do with the disappearance of China's beloved 'Lipstick King'? A popular streaming star and celebrity, Li is known for his ever-so-popular makeup streaming videos on popular media platforms, having sold products worth billions of dollars in one of his streaming sessions. So it came off as a shock when this beloved and popular persona disappeared from the face of social media for over three months following what netizens claim was a "peculiar incident". During a June 3rd live stream on the popular platform Taobao, Li and his co-host introduced a cake that seemed to resemble a military tank, however the sudden end to the live stream and Li's disappearance from making regular content, cited as "technical problems", made many netizens speculate restrictions from the State. Putting two-two together, many took to Weibo to highlight the events of the night— the 'cake tank incident' took place on 4th June midnight, on the Tiananmen massacre day and the tank symbolizes the state-led massacre on students. As Tianmen continues to be a sensitive topic for the Chinese Communist Party, the sensitive incident might have instigated a channel ban. As netizens flood Weibo with "move on, it's a tacit mutual understanding", a large section has been excited for Li's return last week, flooding praises and congratulations.

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# NEWS IN CHINA

- Last week's UNGA's general debate session saw many topics pertaining to peace and development being brought up by major State officials and representatives. Amongst a list of big states, permanent member China was seen laying the grounds for hope and peace, especially in bleak times of conflict and economic crisis. As opposed to their economic and ideological counterparts, Foreign Minister Wang Yi highlighted the necessity for development in small power states and developing-underdeveloped states, exuding an aura of confidence towards peace development. US president Joe Biden, on the other hand, was seen highlighting the brutalities of the ongoing turbulence in global politics. Wang delivered a speech on the theme "Making Every Effort for Peace and Development, and Shouldering the Responsibility for Solidarity and Progress" to elaborate on China's stance on Global issues. He also introduced China's five roles as a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development, a defender of the international order, a provider of public goods and a mediator of hotspot issues. The latter of which was demonstrated through its neutral stance over the Russia-Ukraine crisis, which was met with respect and understanding from both parties. China also aimed to propagate the strong message for development and multilateralism as well as cooperation for the overall benefit of Geopolitics, amidst rising bloc-power sentiments and sanctions. With China aiming to connect countries rather than dissociating them, its positive stance was met with much appraisal from major countries post the UNGA session through increasing bilateral talks and support for China's peaceful visions.
  - As mainland China continues to struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic, the country and its officials have dug deep in trying to reduce the health crisis in the best possible way. With ongoing and recurring lockdowns in major cities and provinces of the country, heightened security and strict rules for curbing the growth of the virus, new laws continue to be implemented. With China's most awaited National Day looming round the corner, large mobilization of people and heightened population in public transports is expected, hence China has adopted provisions to put mandatory testing labs on train stations, highway exits and airports. On site testing through a check of travel history and further an antigen test if histories are found "abnormal". As observers believe that traveling during the National Holiday will risk epidemic outbursts, health officials laud the new directive as a good way to curb contagious variants such as the omicron, while efficiently "detecting cases at an early age to nip emerging epidemics in the bud".
  - With news on human rights violations in the Uyghur dominated Xinjiang province in North-West China, Xinjiang has become a sensitive topic for the Chinese Government. Earlier this year, the Uyghur Forced Labor Preventions Act was adopted in full force in America that took a strong stance against all imports coming from China as a product of forced labor. However, amidst the height of the busy import season due
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to lined festivities, the USA saw an import high of 56.8 million USD in the last 10 months from production companies based in Xinjiang. With the record jump, the US became the province's fifth best exporting partner, standing behind countries from Central Asia. While China struggles to gain momentum in trade, surging numbers from Xinjiang prove otherwise. Despite the new labor laws, the actions of the USA might come under scrutiny for violation of their own laws and promoting forced-labor conducive products as more than 82% of products produced in Xinjiang is a result of human rights violation and forced labor.

- Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov brought up the ongoing Taiwan issue while accusing the United States for subjugating and trying to "divide Asia based on its Indo-Pacific strategy". In a 24-minute-long speech, Lavrov accused the West of its hegemonistic tactics of trying to proclaim themselves as the "self-masters" while trying to invoke a fire on the turbulent Taiwan strait, and meddling into China's national problems. "The West is introducing dividing lines everywhere along the lines of confrontation with blocs," Lavrov said. "You are either with us or against us. There is no third option. There are no compromises." Russian Foreign Ministers assertive words towards the US came days after Biden's interview where he asserted that the States would provide with any help and send troops if Beijing were to attack Taiwan's National Sovereignty. With rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific and the development of the QUAD, and NATO shifting more West, Lavrov believes that the false portrayal of security being "indivisible" is just a way to

feed USA a strategy to uphold its superpower status.

- Chinese smartphone brands have been major players in the tech market of India for its affordable prices, durability and astonishing features. However, with rising tensions between India and China during border disputes in 2020, the Government of India had implemented high scrutiny on imported Chinese goods and shifted towards a 'Made in India' focus. With Chinese exports hitting a bump in its otherwise profitable market in the South Asian country, India's focus towards 5G amidst the country's growing digital revolution can be seen as a new way of opening doors to Chinese tech houses. The Indian telecom ministry said that high-speed 5G service will be operative from 1st October in over 12 major cities of the country. With the official announcement, analysts believe that the upgrade would bring in a surge of sales in the Indian market, leaving enough room for the development of opportunities for Chinese tech firms that already occupy two-thirds of the India market. To meet expected demand, Chinese firms have been working hard in developing innovative technologies with a range of new device launches. While political restrictions curbed the involvement of Chinese companies to participate in the 5G network construction, the heightened consumer demand will help mobile companies to be a significant part of the new revolution.
  - With most countries adapting to living with a pandemic and some shifting to pre-pandemic, regular testing and testing booths lining the streets of China is the
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new normal for the Chinese people. Ever since major city Shanghai went under strict lock down in April-May of this year to contain the highly contagious Omicron variant, regular testing has been adopted as an effective strategy to help contain the virus. With more than 50,000 booths erected on the streets of major, populous cities of Shanghai, Beijing and Shenzhen, operating 24 hours a day. The regular testing policy requires every citizen to take a PCR test once every few days and the prerequisite of a negative test is required from all locals to guarantee access to all public venues or places of work. This move is made to ensure fast and effective detection of infection and quarantine highly infected areas.

## INDIA WATCH

- Indian Foreign Minister, Mr. S. Jaishankar in the new UNGA session held last week laid out the plan for the country's turn at the G-20 presidency by leading developed and developing nations in December. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said India's approach would be "based on principles of mutual respect and national ownership with a commitment to sustainable development for all." While India has brought up issues of conflict and ongoing economic crisis in current geopolitics, like China, it holds a neutral stance towards the Russia-Ukraine crisis. On India's stance, Mr. Jaishankar has emphasized that the country will remain neutral and always side with peace and development, however, India will not revoke its economic relations with Russia and join Western-led sanctions. The Indian external affairs minister, held a strong stance towards cross-border terrorism with its neighbors, without

explicitly mentioning either China or Pakistan. "Having borne the brunt of cross-border terrorism for decades, India firmly advocates a zero-tolerance approach," he said. "In our view, there is no justification for any act of terrorism, regardless of motivation. No rhetoric, however sanctimonious, can ever cover up bloodstains." The comment came as a supposed jab to Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's speech at the UNGA on Friday last week, accusing India for sponsoring terrorism. At the same time, Jaishankar highlighted India's strong position in helping its neighbors namely Afghanistan and Sri Lanka through economic and political aid, as well as its function as a "bridge on some serious but divisive issues" during its term in the Security Council.