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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA



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NEWS IN CHINA

- The China Media Group reported on Friday that the Shenzhou-16 crew had successfully completed a [joint pre-launch rehearsal](#) and is now ready for imminent launch. He Pengju, the chief engineer of Test and Launch at Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center stated that the pre-launch rehearsal included tests such as configuring the spacecraft, performing functional inspections, and conducting electrical tests in the launch area. The spacecraft is set to transport three taikonauts to Tiangong; the Chinese Space Station (CSS) launched in 2021. The group reported that the new crew will join the three-member crew of the Shenzhou-15 already onboard. The older crew- which is already the fourth set of taikonauts to have been accommodated by the space station, is reported to be making preparations to return to Earth soon.
- President Xi Jinping held a [ceremony](#) on Friday to welcome the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) President Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Chilombo. Tshisekedi arrived in Beijing on Wednesday to begin a state visit, following an invitation from Xi. The afternoon ceremony was complete with a twenty-one-gun salute. Following this Tshisekedi and Xi inspected the PLA's guard of honour and held talks. Both sides have pledged to upgrade the bilateral relationship into a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership; Tshisekedi stated that the DRC adheres to the one-China policy and supports the Chinese reunification project. Xi reiterated Chinese support for development initiatives in DRC and expressed hope for the creation of a conducive business environment for Chinese firms.
- Chinese political advisor Wang Huning [called for efforts](#) to tell and circulate stories of ethnic exchanges, at a consultative forum in Beijing. Wang, a member of the Politburo Bureau Standing Committee as well as chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative

Conference (CPPCC), stated that it is necessary to have a profound understanding of forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation. He further called for efforts to counter erroneous statements against the current state of ethnic affairs, and instead heighten awareness about the Party's related theories and policies. Other members of the CPPCC National Committee and subject experts too, shared their views on the matter.

- The China International Big Data Industry Expo opened in Guiyang, in the southwest of China. Industry leaders showcased their latest breakthroughs in big data, which included a self-driving car and a smart healthcare system. The expo which will run till Sunday, is expected to bolster business exchanges between top big data ventures; contributing towards the trajectory of an industry expected to double in size by 2025. The event has also received media attention from attracting youngsters to cutting-edge technology developments. Representatives from firms such as China Electronic Corps. (CEC.) and Huawei were present at the exhibition.
- The Shanghai Science and Technology Award Conference was held on Friday morning. It aimed to commend individuals and institutions for their outstanding contributions in the science and tech sphere. Chen Jining, the Communist Party chief of Shanghai was present at the event. Chen stressed on Xi Jinping's scientific visions and the contributions of scientific innovations to the promotion of a Chinese-style modernisation. Recipients of awards included researchers from Chinese

Academy of Sciences, Fudan University, and Shanghai Academy of Aerospace Engineering- such as Zhao Dongyuan and Wang Polan.

- Chinese athletes Wang Chuqin and Sun Yingsha secured the mixed-doubles title at the ITTF World Table Tennis Championships (WTTC) Finals in Durban. The paddlers faced off against their Japanese opponents Tomokazu Harimoto and Hina Hayata, in a repeat of the previous final in 2021. Wang and Sun retained their title with 11-6, 11-2, and 11-7 on Friday. The bronze medal was shared by China's Lin Shidong and Kuai Man, and Wong Chun Ting and Doo Hoi Kem of Hong Kong, China.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Netizens discuss corporal punishment in schools on Weibo:** #你上学时被体罚过吗# trended as Weibo as netizens took to the platform to share their experiences of being on the receiving end of corporal punishments in school. Others shared their take on it. The conversation was sparked by the dismissal of a primary school teacher based in Quanzhou, Fujian- as a video of her inflicting violence on a schoolgirl who accidentally ran into her in the corridor, recently went viral on social media and invoked outrage. Media reports indicate that the Dehua County Education Bureau has dismissed the teacher in question. Several users praised the decision and described in detail the kind of corporal punishments they endured growing up; lashings with the ruler, squatting, and running laps. A minority of users continued
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to uphold the importance of punishments in imparting quality education. Presently, educators are legally barred from inflicting physical punishment and verbal abuse as per regulations of the Ministry of Education.

INDIA WATCH

- Developments in China's space explorations prompts one to ponder how well its neighbour- India, is faring on the same front. Tiangong is entirely Chinese-built and operated unlike the US-led International Space Station (ISS); indicating a policy of self-reliance as China expands its repository of space technology knowledge. However, it is open for collaboration in the future- imparting a brand of space diplomacy as China has invited countries to apply to participate in projects aboard the space station. It also allowed China to join the leagues of the other two space powers, the US and Russia. To similarly enhance its forte as a space power, India will first need to successfully complete its Gaganyaan mission. The Indian Human Spaceflight Programme was first initiated in 2007 and received formal approval in 2018, with the announcement of the Gaganyaan- in a move that prioritised independently conducting manned spaceflight, for the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). The initially proposed timeline however stands derailed as of date. Two uncrewed missions in December 2020 and July 2021, were supposed to precede the first crewed mission in December 2021. Till date, ISRO has not launched any uncrewed missions; pandemic-induced delays have potentially pushed launches to late 2023 or 2024, despite the government insisting that

COVID-19 would not impact the project's trajectory. This sets back ISRO's post-Gaganyaan plans of developing an Indian space station, by even further. India will thus first need to catch up on fulfilling its delayed plans. It is important to negate claims of scientific stagnation and planning inefficiency, through successful results. The gap between India, and China and the other space powers, however, certainly would have further widened by the time this goal is reached; China's first crewed flight was back in 2003.

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