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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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NEWS IN CHINA

- In response to the historic power crisis of last summer, China has begun a huge expansion of its coal-fired power capacity by approving average two new coal power plants per week. Last year, several critical industrial regions like Sichuan, Zhejinag, Anhui and Jiangsu were severely affected by power shortage caused by drought and heatwaves. Thus, despite China's strict climate change goals, it has been building coal plants while also accelerating the installation of renewable energy. As a result, there are worries that many of the new coal power plants will be entirely unnecessary, serving only as extra capacity and putting a significant financial strain on the country's electricity producers. Several Chinese local governments have collectively approved the construction of 106 gigawatts (GW) of new coal power capacity in 2022, which is a fourfold increase from the previous year and the largest since 2015. The construction of approximately 50GW of coal power capacity began last year, a more than 50% increase from 2021 and six times that of the rest of the world put together. Further, it has become more difficult for China to meet its targets of reaching peak coal use by 2030 and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2060.
- Langfang city in Hebei province witnessed the start of its first China-Europe freight train on Saturday. The freight train will travel 7,800 kilometres while carrying 55 40-foot containers. It will cross border through Erenhot port in Inner Mongolia and will arrive in Moscow via Mongolia after 17 days. Light industrial products, food, clothing, and daily essentials make up the majority of over 20 million Yuan (about \$ 2.88 million) worth of commodities, which are sourced from Langfang-

based local businesses as well as from import and export businesses in the region. According to Langfang Development and Reform Commission, the freight train service is crucial to advancing the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and integrating into the growth of the Belt and Road Initiative.

- China's All-China Federation of Trade Unions recently released its Ninth National Workforce Survey. The main topic of the survey focused on the Chinese Working Class, protection of labor rights, reform of industrial workers, innovation and development of female workers amongst other topics. The survey also revealed that the country has an approximate of 402 million employees with an average age of 38.3 years old. There were also visible differences in the educational background of employees in various industries but 77.6% of the population surveyed were concentrated in manufacturing and construction.
- More pharmacies will be incorporated under the new health insurance reforms: The latest changes to the employee health insurance plan are intended to reduce unnecessary hospitalisations of individuals with mild diseases and ease the financial burden on outpatient care. The changes will broaden coverage to include outpatient expenses as well, such as payments for appointments, lab work, and prescriptions, in addition to only paying hospitalised costs. Even for people with minor ailments, the previous unbalanced strategy resulted in an increase in hospitalisations, the National healthcare security administration official claimed. The suggested modifications will alleviate

the hospital bed crisis, improve the distribution of medical resources, and free up hospital space for the needy. China's employee health insurance programme, which was established in 1988, is jointly funded by companies and employees. Individual contributions and a small portion of employer contributions are put into a personal account that can be used to cover outpatient expenses. The majority of employer contributions go into a fund pool managed by the regional health insurance agencies, which is then used to reimburse more expensive inpatient costs. The fund pool will receive payments from employers to employees' private accounts as a result of the changed laws, which will cut premiums in individual accounts.

- Qian Li, who served as the secretary of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Committee of the Communist Youth League, became the youngest official level cadre in China. Li was previously working with Inner Mongolia Publishing Group and served as the general manager of the subsidiary Chifeng City. Born in 1984 Li has a masters in engineering and is a political worker as well as a member of the Chinese Communist Party.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- Du Bo, Director of the Tahe Culture and Tourism Bureau in Heilongjiang in Northeastern China, has gained popularity online for a little video in which she has advertised the region's unique scenery in a snow-capped forest while dressed in an Oroqen ethnic costume. She shot the brief footage, which lasts less than a minute, for around two hours in -20 degrees. After the
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shooting, Du had to warm herself up by consuming two pots of ginger tea. Several tourism officials have opted to promote local scenery to the public directly as short video platforms have grown in popularity in China in recent years. Such promotions have also helped to sell local products across the country and aid rural revitalisation through employment generation.

INDIA WATCH

- China intends to connect its economic networks with Europe via land using the maritime Silk Road. It is one of the crucial transportation methods for the two-way trade between China and Europe. With the arrival of its first China-Europe freight train in Langfang recently, China has made significant progress along the maritime silk road. China intended to ship food, clothing, light industrial goods, and other necessities to Russia via this freight train. In contrast, India with the help of Russia sought to construct an international North south trade corridor route through Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, and India. India intends to go along this route to reach Russia. Benefits of this route include predictions that increased transport connection between Russia, Central Asia, Iran, and India will boost the volume of each country's bilateral trade. It will also strengthen India's commercial and investment ties with Central Asia. Moreover, in addition to it the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) has been emphasised in the Foreign Trade Policy of India, 2015-20. Given China's growing regional ambitions through its One Belt, One Road Initiative, the INSTC has special economic and strategic value to India. India may be able

to protect its interests in Central Asia and elsewhere with the aid of the projected INSTC trade corridor. INSTC is the ideal place to begin in order to establish India as a significant global player. For India it would be wise to enlist the help of other interested countries for the project, such as Japan, which sees Central Asia as a profitable market for its goods. The INSTC could be changed from a transportation corridor to a corridor for economic growth and indirectly support the long-term sustainability of the entire Eurasian continent.