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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA



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NEWS IN CHINA

- The China Manned Space Agency announced an open call for space breeding experimental projects, as recent years have seen a significant increase in the variety of crops that have toured around space. These crops include rice, wheat, corn, peppers, tomatoes, space lotus and other varieties. China's space breeding is playing a greater role in contributing to China's food security, as it has produced nearly 10 new varieties of high-quality, high-yielding rice in the past five years. More than 5,000 vegetable variant strains of good quality have been bred onboard the Shenzhou series of manned spacecraft, creating over 20 new varieties of vegetables such as space peppers and space tomatoes. The China space station has now entered the application and development phase, and a large number of biological samples have been carried to the in-orbit station, obtaining space mutagenesis under cosmic radiation in the microgravity environment during spaceflight. The Shenzhou spacecraft has returned experimental materials to Earth, including 1,000 crop seeds and microbial strains from over 100 institutions. These valuable strains will lay the foundations for the innovation of China's agricultural and forestry resources and play an important role in the development of the country's food security and ecological civilization. Space breeding has produced 240 varieties of staple crops in China, improving crop yield and quality and increasing grain production by 1.6 billion kilograms. Space mutagenesis has improved the properties and quality of materials, allowing for the commercial use of staple food crops such as rice and wheat. Safety issues from space-bred crops should not be a concern, as the introduction of exogenous or endogenous genes is not involved and the radiation concentration is lower than that of traditional radiation breeding.
- Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen arrived in New York on Wednesday amid tensions between Washington and Beijing

about her visit and threats of unspecified "countermeasures" from a Chinese official. Protesters led by the New York Alliance for China's Peaceful Reunification, a pro-Beijing group, outnumbered Tsai's supporters, but police kept the two groups separate. Tsai's travel itinerary includes two nights in New York, delivering a speech and receiving a leadership award at the Hudson Institute, before departing for official visits to Guatemala and Belize. Beijing is irked by Tsai's plans to deliver two speeches and meet McCarthy, who has himself suggested he could repeat Pelosi's visit to Taiwan. Beijing has threatened "countermeasures" if Tsai meets with McCarthy and has denied that such "transits" are standard. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning called on the United States (US) to abide by the 'One China' principle and stop "upgrading" its relationship with Taiwan, while Tsai pledged not to be swayed by external pressure. US officials say Tsai will not meet with anyone from the Biden administration during her six days in total on American soil. State Department principal deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel reiterated that Tsai's trip was "consistent with our unofficial nature of relations with Taiwan" and did not alter the "One China" policy.

- The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) started selecting graduates from junior high schools in 14 provincial-level regions for its teen aviator program. The program was launched in 2015 and aims to attract students interested in aviation and fit for military flight. Qualified applicants must be born between Aug 31, 2006, and Aug 31, 2009, have a height between 162 and 181 centimeters, and be free of diseases such

as meningitis or nephritis. Other criteria include clean political, legal and study records, consent from legal guardians, a strong mind, mental and physical agility, and a certain level of proficiency in English. After passing all rounds of selection, dozens of applicants will be enrolled in the program and will be given lectures and training on naval and flight knowledge. After three years, those who pass necessary tests will be admitted to naval aviation academies or some of China's top universities that collaborate with the Navy for pilot training.

- China strongly opposes the UK's ban of the Chinese-owned social media app TikTok from official government devices due to security concerns. The Chinese Embassy in the UK urged the UK to respect objective facts, abide by the rules of the market economy and the principles of fair competition. TikTok believes the bans are based on misconceptions and driven by wider geopolitics.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Ipsos Global Happiness Survey creates waves among the Chinese netizens:** A new global happiness survey released by Paris-headquartered multinational market research and consulting firm Ipsos found that the Chinese mainland has the highest proportion of happy citizens among the 32 surveyed markets. The survey found that 91 per cent of Chinese participants described themselves as happy, with respondents from Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands coming in second and third place respectively. The survey results quickly
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went viral in China, garnering 190 million views on the microblogging site Weibo. However, many netizens questioned the legitimacy of the results and expressed their unhappiness. The survey reminded many netizens of a 2012 street interview by state-backed broadcaster CCTV where a reporter asked migrant workers if they were happy. One Weibo user questioned, "I wonder who took the survey, was anyone engaged in this?" "If you're not happy, you're not Chinese," one person jokingly said. In response to the encouraging survey results, a lot of young web users also emphasised how, in this era of "involution" (内卷, *neijuan*) – a Chinese slang term used to describe the societal phenomena of overwork and intense competition in China – they and their peers are under increasing pressure from work, parents, and society. However, some netizens pointed out that the general level of happiness in China may not necessarily be related to the pressures of life. When it comes to the high level of stability and security that China offers for its residents, no other large country can compare, according to one comment.

INDIA WATCH

- Indian agricultural and space scientists have developed a smart way to estimate the country's crop yields using technology, such as satellite data and modeling approaches, to optimise crop cutting experiments (CCEs). CCEs, based on traditional methods, have been the traditional basis of crop yield estimation in India. The approach was successfully implemented in several states across India for the estimation of rice crop yield in 2019. In contrast, China Manned Space Agency

has announced an open call for space breeding experimental projects to increase crop variety, including rice, wheat, corn, peppers, tomatoes, and space lotus. Space breeding is becoming increasingly important for China's food security. Expanding space-based agricultural forecast to cover more crops using remote-sensing satellites is a strategic move for India to boost its agricultural sector. Agriculture is one of the major contributors to India's economy, employing around 50 per cent of its workforce and accounting for 17-18 per cent of its GDP. However, the sector faces numerous challenges such as unpredictable weather patterns, droughts, floods, pest infestations, and low productivity due to outdated farming techniques. The use of remote-sensing satellites can help overcome some of these challenges by providing more accurate and timely information about crop acreage, crop health, and weather patterns. This information can help farmers make informed decisions about crop management practices such as irrigation, fertilisation, and pest control. Moreover, the use of remote-sensing satellites for agricultural monitoring can help in disaster management and mitigation. Thus, investing in more remote-sensing satellites for agricultural monitoring is a wise decision for India, as it can help in increasing agricultural productivity, reducing wastage of resources, and improving disaster management capabilities.

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