

WEEKEND ISSUE
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DAILY
**CONVERSATIONS
IN CHINESE
MEDIA**



ORGANISATION FOR RESEARCH ON
CHINA AND ASIA

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I. Social Media Chatter in China

- **Chinese Netizens Respond to 'Uplifting' COVID-19 News, "We're Not That Dumb"** - A WeChat article this week has been making the rounds on Chinese social media, slamming the 'uplifting' news regarding Shanghai's COVID-19 situation. Weibo commentators said they're not sure "whether to laugh or weep" over certain state-run media stories attempting to transform the COVID-19 crisis in Shanghai into something 'uplifting.'
- **Chinese Netizens Voice Concerns over Molly the Elephant, Call for Animal Performance Boycott:** Molly, a little elephant, has been a hot subject on Chinese social media this week. On Weibo, Molly has a number of hashtags dedicated to her, as well as multiple fan forums ('supertopics') dedicated to her. There are Molly artworks, Molly films, Molly gifs, Molly cartoons, but most importantly, there are internet appeals to rescue Molly.

II. News in China

- According to the Xichang Satellite Launch Center, China has achieved the first accurate forecast of Earth's near-surface wind for a major space launch operation. The centre claimed it used a precise forecast system for wind in critical parts of the near-surface layer to assure the transportation of the Tianzhou-4 cargo spacecraft and the Long March-7 Y5 carrier rocket to the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site's launching location. The technology was created by the center's meteorological tech support team to address issues with the Earth's near-surface wind, which has a significant influence on the smooth vertical transfer of spacecraft and rockets.
- China has issued instructions for local governments across the country to encourage urbanisation, with a particular emphasis on county towns. The move, according to the instructions released jointly by the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council, intends to better address the requirements of rural people in finding work and settling down in county towns. The instructions specify a number of actions, including building competitive sectors, increasing employment creation in rural areas, and improving environmental protection, with the goal of seeing significant improvement by 2025. According to the 14th Five-Year Plan, the government wants to increase its urbanisation rate to 65 percent between 2021 and 2025.
- After receiving 1,416 votes from Election Committee members, John Lee Ka-chiu was elected as the sixth-term chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on Sunday. On Sunday morning, from 9 and 11:30 a.m., committee members voted at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai. After being appointed by the central government, Lee, 64, is set to take office on July 1 for a five-year tenure. Lee pledged to construct a competent

government and increase the city's competitiveness in his political platform, saying he will emphasise housing and youth development concerns. Lee launched his candidacy for mayor on April 9 and received 786 nominations from members of the Election Committee.

- The Pilecki, the world's biggest multifunctional heavy lift vessel, made its debut on Thursday, delivering Chinese vaccine production equipment from Shanghai to Morocco in order to aid Africa's fight against COVID-19. The mission is a collaboration between the Chinese-Polish Joint Stock Shipping Company, which owns Pilecki, and the Morimatsu Group of China, which provides vaccine production lines. It will allow for the manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines in Africa, including three vaccinations that will serve more than 60% of the continent's need. The Pilecki was conceived and built during the COVID-19 pandemic, and all parties involved, including shipyard and dock employees, worked tirelessly to assure a timely delivery despite the persisting epidemic in Shanghai.
- In an effort to enhance the stable and sound growth of the property market, China's central and local governments are fine-tuning housing rules to strike a balance between mitigating risks and stimulating demand. A critical meeting of the Communist Party of China Central Committee's Political Bureau held last week called for efforts to strengthen real estate rules based on local conditions, while repeating the idea that "housing is for living in, not for speculating." It advocated assistance for satisfying demand from first-time home purchasers and house upgraders, as well as maximising regulation over prepayment for commercial housing, giving a shot in the arm to both the demand and supply sides.
- The likelihood of the US economy slowing or perhaps going into recession will add another layer of uncertainty to China's economy in terms of export growth and financial stability, emphasising the need for China to develop its internal economy. Markets have been troubled by fears of a future US economic crisis, as investors question if the US Federal Reserve's aggressive tightening would be able to contain inflation without causing the world's largest economy to crash. A probable US recession might damage Chinese exporters since they largely sell items to US consumers, and consumer spending could drop more severely than the overall US economy as the Omicron wave fades, shifting spending from goods to services.
- Representatives from Serbia and China laid flowers at memorial plaques dedicated to the three Chinese journalists murdered in the NATO bombing of the old Chinese embassy in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, commemorating the Chinese martyrs and condemning NATO's "barbaric deed." Serbian Interior Minister Aleksandar Vulin, Minister of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs Darija Kisic Tepavcevic, and Chinese embassy Charge

d'affaires Tian Yishu were among the officials who attended the event. "Chinese citizens who decided to lay down their lives here didn't have to," Vulin added, "but they chose to do so in order to experience the most difficult and saddest times with us."

- The charges that China is to blame for the Ukraine crisis are ludicrous, according to Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng. Le made the statements during a lecture to a global forum of 20 nations' research tanks held online. He claimed that during the Ukraine issue, some people made baseless accusations, misinterpreted China's position, and attempted to blame China for their own activities. He said that some people misread the terms "friendship has no bounds" and "cooperation has no prohibited regions" in the recent China-Russia joint statement to suggest that China had "advance knowledge" of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine and even "supported" it. As a result, they have come to the conclusion that China must be held responsible for the crisis.

III. India Watch

- Experts believe that global market anxieties over recession fears might potentially hamper Chinese financial markets. Following a decline in US stocks, China's stock market closed the day down on Friday, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index falling 2.16 percent to 3,001.56 points. China, as the world's second-largest economy, can weather external headwinds by improving internal economic circulation but right now taking the COVID-19 situation into consideration, it is not something Chinese government requires. According to international analysts, more fiscal support may be used to raise domestic demand, reduce supply-chain interruptions caused by the epidemic, and optimise industry rules to foster the healthy development of the property and internet sectors.