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# DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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## SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **'Lying flat' is no longer an option: new wave of disillusionment has frustrated Chinese youths who are 'letting it rot':** 'Lying flat,' or tang ping in Mandarin, a social protest movement, gained traction in China last year, referring to the concept of doing just enough to get by. However, some Chinese youths are now 'letting it rot' by not even attempting to participate in society in the first place. "Leave me alone," read a note taped to the door of Yan Jie's 28-year-old bedroom. Yan, who lives in a suburban Shanghai flat with a colleague, was mocking himself, saying he was lazy, by using a new buzz phrase "bailan," which literally means "let it rot" and is becoming increasingly popular among young Chinese people. "When I am assigned a task at work, I try to avoid it. If I'm forced to do the work, I'll do it poorly," said Yan, who works for a medium-sized IT firm." When my parents ask when I'm going to marry, I tell them I'll leave it to chance," he said. Social expectations in China are causing disillusionment among the country's youth. Bailan refers to the attitude of giving up on a bad situation. It stems from a widespread belief among China's young people that they are powerless to combat forces that make social expectations unattainable. So, rather than expend energy attempting to fix an impossible situation, many people have decided to "let it rot," effectively abandoning the pursuit of high or any achievement in Chinese society. The term evolved from "lying flat," which has entered the global lexicon and means "doing just enough to get by." It became so popular that it is now used by the Chinese government at all levels, from local cadres to top officials.

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# NEWS IN CHINA

- After the G20 meeting in Bali, Xi Jinping and Joko Widodo will test Indonesia's Chinese-made high-speed train. The Jakarta-Bandung high-speed railway, worth \$7.8 billion, is a joint venture between an Indonesian consortium of state-owned companies and China Railway Project, and it is not expected to be operational until June 2023. Widodo intends to invite Xi to ride on the China-built train that connects Jakarta and West Java after the G20 summit in Bali on November 15-16, according to Indonesian Transport Minister Budi Karya Sumadi, who spoke to Singapore's The Straits Times. With a top speed of 350kph, the bullet train will cut the 142km journey between the cities to about 40 minutes, down from 3.5 hours on the existing rail network. In August, China delivered the first set of bullet trains for the multibillion-dollar project, which began in 2015. The project is the first of its kind in Southeast Asia. The facility, which was built as part of Beijing's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative to boost trade and connectivity, has been plagued by delays and cost overruns.
  - Taiwanese Premier Su Tseng-chang announced a 12.9% increase in the national defence budget for 2023 and a 13.9% increase when a special budget for fighter jets is included. Su while presenting a report on the central government's budget for 2023 to the Legislative Yuan announced that, the Ministry of National Defence has been allocated NT\$415.1 billion (US\$13.06 billion), an increase of NT\$47.5 billion, or about 12.9%, over this year. Su stated that the special budget for the acquisition of new fighter jets and plans for naval and air combat enhancements is NT\$108.3 billion. Including non-operational special funds of NT\$62.9 billion, the total defence budget is NT\$586.3 billion, a 13.9% increase over last year. Su stated that the government's estimated annual revenue for 2023 is NT\$2.556 trillion, an increase of NT\$289.5 billion (12.8%) over 2022.
  - Taiwan's Minister of National Defense Chiu Kuo-cheng stated on Tuesday (Oct. 4) that Taiwan would continue its military buildup on its own even if the United States passed the Taiwan Policy Act of 2022. Chiu expressed gratitude for American support, but noted that each country has its own strategy for weapon development and war preparations. He stated that Taiwan's efforts to improve its defence capability will not be altered. The minister stated that if Taiwan accepts foreign capital for its military, it will be used properly. Furthermore, Premier Su Tseng-chang stated that Taiwan-US relations are strong under the leadership of President Tsai Ing-wen. He added that Taiwan does not seek war but will not back down from one.
  - Scholars in Tibetology from China and abroad shared research and discussed the fixed religious rituals and historical conventions of Living Buddha reincarnation in Tibetan Buddhism at a side event of the UN Human Rights Council's 51st session, during which the Chinese central government's jurisdiction over the Dalai Lama's reincarnation was reaffirmed. The "International Webinar on the Religious Rituals and Historical Customs of Living Buddha Reincarnation" was held on Monday from an offline venue
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at the China Tibetology Research Center in Beijing. "The affairs related to the 14th Dalai Lama's reincarnation belong to the domestic affairs of Tibetan Buddhism in China, which must respect the wishes of the Chinese Tibetan Buddhist community and the majority of religious believers, and accept the management of the Chinese government," Zheng Dui, Senior Fellow, and Director-General at the China Tibetology Research Center (CTRC) said at the event in Beijing on Monday. "This not only has sufficient historical foundation but also conforms to the provisions of current law, which cannot be shaken by any separatist forces," he said in his keynote address.

- Early data suggests that a nationwide festive mood for the weeklong National Day holidays is boosting China's tourism and leisure industries, pointing to a recovery underway in the world's second-largest economy. Tourists flocked to attractions, theme parks, shopping malls, and movie theatres across the country, indicating a rebound in consumer demand as the economy recovers from the effects of a prolonged epidemic outbreak and rising global uncertainty. Massive lines of tourists, for example, were seen in the vicinity of Hangzhou's famed West Lake in East China's Zhejiang Province. Hangzhou Daily reported on Sunday that all of the city's scenic attractions welcomed 1.78 million visitors on Saturday, returning to 91.41 percent of the previous year's level.

## INDIA WATCH

- China is attempting to establish good relations with ASEAN countries through
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investment and trade and is not allowing territorial disputes to interfere with their investment and trade, considering the fact that ASEAN is an emerging market that China does not want to lose. China has already signed an FTA, so India should focus on improving its trade with ASEAN as it is an important trading bloc. China has been ASEAN's largest trading partner since 2009; India should engage more and try to build its influence. Currently, ASEAN cannot avoid China because they do not have any other alternative, so India should try to become that alternative. India should try to increase defence exports because this market cannot be filled with Chinese weapons since their main concern is the Chinese PLA. It is a good opportunity for India to increase its defence sales as it did with Vietnam and Malaysia. This will strengthen India's position in ASEAN and give it a strong foothold in China's backyard.