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# DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

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## SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Fangcang Quarantine Sites in China Are Becoming "Sub-Designated" COVID-19 Hospitals:** At a media briefing of the Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism of the State Council, Jiao Yahui, director of the National Health Commission's Bureau of Medical Administration, discussed steps to improve Coronavirus healthcare and conversion of Fangcang facilities in China on December 9 pertaining the next phase of Coronavirus in China. She claimed that China's tertiary hospitals must increase their critical care capabilities and bed capacity by 20-30 percent and demanded increased internal control (ICs) growth by the end of this month. The hashtag "Fangcang Will Be Turned Into Sub-Designated Hospitals" (#将方舱改造为亚定点医院#) received over five million clicks on Weibo on Friday. Fangcang (方舱) literally means 'square cabin,' points to China's COVID-19 improvised hospitals, which together with local lockdowns, mass testing, and the Health Code system, have been critical in fighting COVID-19 the Chinese way. Fangcang were introduced to relieve the burden on public hospitals and reduce COVID-19 mortality rates by quarantining and treating patients who are Covid-positive. In a video that rapidly went viral on Chinese social media, an anti-epidemic worker at a Fangcang hospital in Guangzhou informed patients that they may now choose to go home and isolate themselves if they wanted to. This abrupt end of China's "Fangcang period" is notable because seven months ago, Chinese authorities were still declaring that the country's temporary improvised hospitals would need to be converted into permanent ones. Some commenters on Weibo questioned why Chinese authorities prioritised the

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construction of Fangcang over the last few years instead of investing more in the construction of more intensive care units. Patients who test positive for Covid no longer have to worry about being turned away from traditional hospitals, added Jiao, receiving 110 million views on Weibo (#不用再担心核酸阳性医院不接诊#). Some voiced concern about the recent developments and how they may impact hospitals and their workers. "It's going to be difficult for all of us working in the hospitals," one medical worker from Liaoning wrote.

## NEWS IN CHINA

- The State Administration for Market Regulation of China published a warning on prices and competition for Covid-related commodities on Friday in which it set forth nine "red lines" against manufacturers' and merchants' improper market conduct, including "price gouging, misleading advertising, and commercial defamation. With potential fines of up to 5 million yuan (\$706,000), the Chinese government is targeting online pharmacies for the rising cost of the medicine for COVID-19. The cost of Lianhua Qingwen, a traditional Chinese remedy used to treat COVID-19, has increased fourfold in less than a month from 23.5 to 88 yuan on an online pharmacy platform. The manufacturer of Lianhua Qingwen, Shijiazhuang Yiling Pharmaceutical, stated on Tuesday that the cost of the drug has recently been stable and that the company is taking "different efforts to secure the supply." Consumers are urged to report any price rises by merchants to the authorities. Hashtags like "prices of Lianhua Qingwen capsules surged threefold" and "pharmacies sell Lianhua Qingwen for over 100 yuan per box" have been trending on Weibo. The targeted pharmacies, according to the notification, were suspected of price gouging since they sharply increased their prices without showing any indications of rising production costs. Additionally, it stated that numerous manufacturers and businesses had been unsuccessful in their attempts to submit trademark applications for Lianhua Qingwen imposter brands. The State Administration for Market Regulation stated that prices and potential illicit market behaviour regarding pandemic-related commodities will be "closely monitored to maintain the order of local markets."
  - China's first domestically developed passenger jet, the first C919 aircraft in the world, was delivered to China Eastern Airlines on Friday in Shanghai. It will go into service in the spring of 2023. This significant accomplishment signals the introduction of the most recent single-aisle aircraft to the market in more than 30 years, according to the manufacturer Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China (COMAC). It will give global airlines and consumers more options, expand prospects for global suppliers, and revitalise the global commercial aviation sector. It will also conduct more than 100 hours of empty aircraft verification test flight to assess the aircraft's operational safety, maintenance reliability, and other operational support capabilities. The aircraft will operate on flights between Shanghai, Beijing, Xi'an, Kunming, Guangzhou, Chengdu, and Shenzhen. The airlines established the C919 flying department and chose 24 experienced
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pilots as the initial batch; the initial batch of flight attendants and maintenance engineers. The aircraft uses cutting-edge aerodynamic design, materials, and a propulsion system for lower carbon emissions and greater fuel efficiency. In March 2021, China Eastern Airlines and COMAC agreed to purchase the first batch of five C919 aircraft. Within the next two years, the final four aircraft will be delivered.

- 42 candidates have been officially deemed qualified to seek seats in the country's highest legislative body representing the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). On December 15, there will be an election to choose 36 new deputies. On Thursday, the candidates received approval at the Conference for Electing Deputies of the HKSAR to the 14th National People's Congress' second praesidium meeting. A 19-member praesidium, led by Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu, assessed the 42 applicants' nomination forms during the meeting. All of the candidates satisfied the eligibility standards, which included receiving nominations from more than 15 members of the electoral conference. They will hold office for five years if elected as HKSAR's NPC deputies. Among the contenders are social leaders from a variety of fields, including Chan Yung, Chairman of the New Territories Association of Societies, Stanley Ng Chau-pei, President of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, Ma Fung-kwok, a Veteran Specialist in culture and arts, and legal commentators Chan Man-ki and Leung Mei-fun. Nine candidates are presently serving as members of the Macao NPC, while others are National Committee members of the Chinese People's Political

Consultative Conference and other influential figures.

- Li Keqiang, the Premier of China, declared on Thursday that China fully backs the international economic system that is centred on the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Li made the comments while speaking with Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the director-general of WTO, who was in China for the seventh "1+6" Roundtable in Huangshan, Anhui Province. Li stated that China has consistently kept its pledges since joining the WTO more than 20 years ago, which has helped the country's development and the globe at large. China will uphold the WTO's guiding principle of balancing rights and obligations and assume its commitments in accordance with the stage and scope of its economic development. Li reaffirmed China's preparedness to expand cooperation with the WTO to achieve development and stressed on the significance of implementing the decisions of the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference to boost international confidence in the multilateral trading system. Okonjo-Iweala praised China's constructive and beneficial contributions to maintaining the multilateral economic system. Decoupling and severing supply chains, according to the Director-General, are detrimental to the growth of the global economy and trade. The WTO is prepared to expand collaboration with China in order to jointly defend a robust and open multilateral trade system.
  - The largest supplier to Apple, Foxconn Technology Group, has invested \$500 million in its Indian subsidiary as the
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Taiwanese manufacturing giant moves to diversify its supply chain following the disruption of production at its top iPhone plant in Zhengzhou, China, as a result of China's strict pandemic controls. According to a filing submitted on Thursday with the Taiwan Stock Exchange, the capital infusion into Foxconn Hon Hai Technology India Mega Development Private Limited, conducted through Foxconn's Singapore company Foxconn Singapore Pte Ltd, entailed the purchase of more than 4 billion shares. The capital infusion occurred at a time when production at Foxconn's Zhengzhou facility, which generally hires 300,000 people during this time of year to meet holiday orders, has been significantly slowed by an exodus of tens of thousands of employees and violent workers' demonstrations as a result of which, the factory utilised just 20% of its manufacturing capacity in November.

Foxconn aims to quadruple the workforce at its Indian facility that produces iPhones over the next two years and struck a US\$300 million agreement with a Vietnamese developer in August to establish a new local plant. Foxconn stated last week that it was investing US\$58.98 million into a subsidiary in the Czech Republic and US\$142 million into Taiyuan unit, the capital of Shanxi province in northern China, as a "long-term investment." Thirty kilometres away in Zhengzhou, a different Foxconn plant also loosened its regulations on Thursday.

## INDIA WATCH

- Due to ongoing demonstrations and rigorous pandemic regulations in China, US tech giants have had to reduce their

dependence on China and consider alternative manufacturing locations. Given that India is the second-largest iPhone market in the world, this creates a chance for the nation to become a centre for iPhone manufacturing worldwide. The Ken reported that the demand for iPhones in India has reportedly quadrupled to 60 lakh phones in 2021 and is predicted to reach 70 lakh in 2022. According to Ming-Chi Kuo, an analyst at TF International Securities, the COVID-19 shutdown at the Zhengzhou facility may prompt Foxconn to speed up the expansion of its iPhone production capacity in India. Since 2017, Foxconn has been producing iPhone SE phones in its Sriperumbudur factory in India. By 2025, it's anticipated that it would increase its production capacity and create 25% of all iPhones in India. In comparison to 1.5% in 2020, India is anticipated to build 5-7% of all iPhones shipping internationally this year. Foxconn has already made arrangements to begin manufacturing the iPhone-14 in India as part of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) programme. In an effort to boost the make-in-India movement, India is also implementing standard operating procedures for manufacturing companies. In the second quarter of the fiscal year 2022-2023, India's industrial output decreased annually by 4.3%, posing a challenge for India. In such circumstances, a project like a manufacturing facility for the iPhone would stimulate the manufacturing industry by securing foreign investment and creating potential jobs for the populace at a time when the unemployment rate is at its highest point in the past three months.

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