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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA



writetous.orca@gmail.com

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NEWS IN CHINA

- [China's railway investment](#) in the first quarter of 2023 hit its highest level since 2013, with a total fixed-asset railway investment of 113.55 billion yuan. The state railway operator plans to focus on construction projects in border areas and the Western land-sea corridor. This increase is part of China's fiscal policies to support post-coronavirus recovery and meet defence demands amid worsening ties with the West and some neighbouring countries. The expansion of the rail network in Western regions shows China's growing economic interests in South and Central Asia, and security concerns along its borders. The China-Europe Railway Express has played a significant role in ensuring industrial supply chain continuity and will continue to do so. The Western land-sea corridor witnessed the transport of around 756,000 TEU containers last year, up by 18.5 per cent from 2021.
- Two prominent human rights leaders in China have been [sentenced](#) to more than 10 years in prison for subverting state power. Xu Zhiyong, a former legal scholar, lawyer, and civil rights activist, was given a 14-year sentence, while human rights lawyer Ding Jiaxi received a 12-year sentence. Both were also stripped of their political rights for several years. They were detained for more than three years and tried in closed-door hearings last year. The men were accused of organising and expanding the New Citizens Movement, which urged officials to disclose their wealth, among other demands for greater democratic rights. They were also accused of producing an "illegal documentary" and holding training sessions for "non-violent colour revolution". According to Chinese criminal law, those who subvert state power can receive a prison sentence of 10 years to life.
- The [Chinese Foreign Ministry](#) has praised the recent state visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to China. According to the ministry's spokesperson Wang Wenbin, the heads of state

of China and France agreed on various strategic consensuses and signed almost 40 intergovernmental agreements and business contracts in sectors like aviation, education, agriculture, and science and technology. The significance of high-level mechanisms for strategic, economic, financial, and people-to-people dialogues in promoting bilateral cooperation was emphasised by both nations. As a result, they have mutually agreed to conduct a fresh series of meetings under these three mechanisms. China and France expressed support for each other's initiatives of multilateralism and vowed to work together to tackle global challenges like climate change, food security, and biodiversity conservation. They also pledged to jointly enhance global governance. The two leaders had a detailed discussion on the Ukraine crisis and agreed to strengthen communication and play a positive role in promoting peace talks and a political solution to the crisis. Overall, both nations are committed to maintaining a comprehensive strategic partnership and jointly promoting world peace, stability, and development.

- Tesla has announced the construction of its first energy-storage mega factory outside the United States, in Shanghai, to produce its energy-storage product Megapack. The factory is set to break ground in Q3 2023 and start production in Q2 2024, initially producing 10,000 units per year. Megapack is designed to enable low-cost, high-density utility projects at a gigawatt-hour scale and is shipped fully integrated with battery modules, inverters, and thermal systems. It aims to create a

more stable and sustainable grid and will be sold worldwide.

- Wang Huning, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, met with Liu Zhaoxuan, chairman of the Taiwan side of the Cross-strait Entrepreneur Summit in Beijing. During the meeting, Wang emphasised the importance of implementing the party's overall strategy for resolving the Taiwan issue in the new era and promoting cross-strait relations in the right direction. He also stated that China is committed to maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and opposing interference by external forces and separatist activities for "Taiwan independence." In response, Liu expressed his willingness to deepen cross-strait industrial cooperation and promote cross-strait integration and development for the well-being of compatriots on both sides of the strait and national rejuvenation.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Video of grieving monkey touches hearts on social media:** A viral video of a snub-nosed monkey in China showing grief and love for her stillborn infant has touched hearts on social media. The mother monkey was devastated after discovering her newborn was dead, and in the video, she is shown holding and rocking her dead infant. She later lays her baby down in a clearing and touches it
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gently. The video has touched millions of users on mainland social media, with many people expressing their admiration for maternal love and the spiritual nature of all things. The snub-nosed monkey is an endangered species in mainland China, with an estimated population of 1,471 in the Shennongjia area and more than 3,800 in Yunnan province. However, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica, there are some 8,000 to 10,000 golden snub-nosed monkeys in the wild, and they are not in immediate danger of extinction.

INDIA WATCH

- French president Macron's recent visit to China has ruffled some feathers in the Western world. During his visit, he emphasised the need for Europe to avoid accelerating the conflict over Taiwan and to pursue a strategy that is independent of both the US and China. France has been trying to establish strategic autonomy and pursue stronger economic ties with China. It is evident from the fact that Macron was accompanied by a high-level business delegation in an effort to secure favourable deals with China. This could dilute the stance of European countries against Chinese aggression in its neighbourhood. India-France cooperation in defence sector has been growing in the last few years. However, in economic field, French investments in India are still limited. France is currently the 11th largest foreign investor in India with a total FDI amount of US\$ 10.5 billion between 2000 to 2022, accounting for 1.7 per cent of India's total FDI inflows. There is a huge opportunity for India to increase France's involvement in Indian manufacturing sector, created by

Europe's efforts to decouple from China. However, with the recent visit by Macron, tensions between France and China seem to be easing out which can redirect investments to China thus, making it difficult for India to expand economic ties with France.

**Prepared by: *Dhananjay Shinde* |
*Research Intern***