

WEEKEND ISSUE
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DAILY
**CONVERSATIONS
IN CHINESE
MEDIA**



ORGANISATION FOR RESEARCH ON
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I. Social Media Chatter in China

- **Translation of sentences with Xi Jinping's name:** It has been noticed that Baidu Translate now does not translate sentences with Xi Jinping in it. Sentences with Xi Jinping in it Chinese are translated as “ *** ” in English and one has to click over it to reveal the translation.
- **Debate over whether martyr died in clash with India:** Some military observer accounts and netizens on Weibo are speculating that Wen Tao, whose martyr ceremony was held recently (report dated 3.12.21), died during a clash with Indian forces. There are also many in social media who are refuting this claim saying that on the date on which he died (15 Nov 2020) there were no reported clashes with India.
- **China's Drone Show posted online:** China Daily News verified a drone light show staged by National University of Defense Technology; the drones can be seen making remarkable formations in the sky of major Chinese events, items and leaders.
- **Twitter closed Chinese state-linked accounts spreading propaganda:** Twitter has closed 2,160 of China state-linked Twitter accounts that sought to counter evidence of human rights abuses in Xinjiang. Twitter is banned inside China but officials frequently operate accounts to provide a counter-narrative overseas. Individually, 2,048 accounts were suspended for amplifying the Chinese Communist party's narratives related to Xinjiang.
- **Top 10 Internet terms in 2021:** WeChat Official Account of Commercial Press revealed a list of Top Ten Internet Terms published the National Language Resources Monitoring and Research Center.

II. News in China

- Both the Secretary of the Municipal Party Committee of Guangzhou city and the Mayor of Guangzhou City was changed on the same day.
- Lin Keqing was appointed Secretary of the Guangzhou Municipal Party Committee; Zhang Shuofu was removed from the position of Secretary of the Guangzhou Municipal Party Committee and will have some other appointment. Later that day, the Standing Committee of the 15th Guangzhou Municipal People's Congress held its 60th meeting. After a vote, the meeting accepted Lin Keqing; Guo Yongkang, who assumed the new acting mayor of Guangzhou City, previously served as the Deputy Governor of Guangdong Province. Both their official online CVs state that they still concurrently hold the previous posts also. Such changes highlight continuing shifts in local key posts in the run up to 2023.

- Wen Guohui's resigned as mayor of the Guangzhou Municipal People's Government; Guo Yonghang has been appointed as the deputy mayor and acting mayor of the same.
- After it was reported that 14 independent candidates running in elections for the renewal of the provincial assembly in Beijing are withdrawing their election campaign because of intimidation and threats from Chinese authorities, Non-mainstream HK media has reported that independent candidates (namely Tang Jingzhou 汤境舟 and Xiao Zhenyi 肖真义) running for Chongqing assembly were also forced to withdraw their candidature.
- The latest statistics show that since the 19th Party Congress, 42,000 officials have surrendered voluntarily to CCDI, including 10 "tiger-level" officials, taking the number of surrenders to a record high.
- CGTN posted a video of the first international freight train from Chengdu-Chongqing to Vientiane, running on the BRI built China-Laos Express Railway. It will run from Yunnan to Vientiane Prefecture. For China and Laos --whose trade is heavily road dependant --the train cuts down deliveries to three days.
- EU has planned a €300 billion infrastructure fund named Global Gateway seeking to mobilize public and private investment by 2027. This could be seen as an initiative to counter China's BRI. The infrastructure project builds a roadmap for major investment in infrastructure development around the world.

III. India Watch

- It is extremely rare to change the secretary of the municipal party committee and mayor on the same day. There are unconfirmed reports that this is a result of a large number of old banyan trees being felled in Guangzhou City for renewal and reconstruction of important roads and surrounding areas. More than 4,300 trees are planned to be removed or felled, of which more than 3,000 are banyan trees. This caused strong dissatisfaction and civil society reported this to the CPC Central Committee, and the highest level of CPC has ordered a thorough investigation.
- Zhang Shuofu's career trajectory was earlier referred to as "star of tomorrow". Although the state media says that Zhang Shuo Fu will have "another appointment" and he is rumored to be transferred to become the head of United Front Work of the Guangdong province, his real power has been greatly reduced.
- The recent report released on most used terms suggests that nationalism is dominant in social media discourse and surveillance and continuous banning of accounts over social media leaves little space to express dissent. Words such as 'not very harmful' and 'extremely insulting' show a sense of patriotism along with analytical approach prevailing in Chinese social media.

Image 1: Images from Video posted by China Daily News of drone light show staged by the National University of Defense Technology

