

7 APRIL 2023

DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA



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NEWS IN CHINA

- According to the latest report, China ranks second in the world in terms of its scale of the digital economy. The concerned officials in a press conference asserted that China's goals for digital infrastructure are 'to achieve gigabit access to cities to cities, 5G in counties to counties and broadband for villages to villages.' By end of 2022, China has built over 5.231 million 5G base stations and its gigabit optical network has the ability to connect to more than 6 million households. Along with the might of digital economy which lies at the heart of Chinese growth engine, the official also highlighted the role digital technology has played in the development of education and health as well. The digitalisation of education was strategically implemented creating the world's largest education and teaching database. In the health sector, more than 2670 million people have benefitted from the telemedicine services.
- Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council in the Chinese Government has issued a notice that institutions that would support the cause of 'Taiwanese Independence' would be severely punished. Two Taiwan-based institutions, 'Vision Foundation' and 'Asian Freedom and Democracy Alliance' have been prohibited under these orders. The announcement also categorically supports the 'One China Policy and criticises any idea that supports the independence of Taiwan under pretexts of democracy, freedom, academic exchanges etc. The sanctions against these institutions included a ban on entry into Mainland China and its Specially Administered Regions of Hongkong and Macau.
- The Beijing Hangzhou Grand Canal on the Yellow River has been once again opened. The canal connects Dongbianmen in Beijing to Liocheng Mountains in Shandong Province. The canal has been operational for the first time in the century. It used to be a major transport channel connecting the North

SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- and South China. It spans over five river systems of Haihe, Yellow, Huaihe, Yangtze and Qiantang rivers. Due to environmental damages, it had stopped functioning. With the reopening, the section of the project aiming at the complete revitalisation of the canal, as planned by 14th Five Year Plan, has been completed. In 2014, The Canal was included into the UNESCO World Heritage site list. It is economically important for adjoining cities as well as it has become a cultural symbol of China as well.
- The spokesman of the Taiwan Affairs Office was authorised to announce the sanctions against Xiao Meiquin, diehard supporter of Taiwanese Independence. The spokesman has accused Xiao of relying on the United States support to provoke the cross-strait confrontation and undermine the stability and peace in the Taiwan Strait. The imposed sanctions include a ban on entry for Xiao and her family in Mainland China.
- In an interview with China Daily, Fahad Hamidal-dbdin, CEO of Saudi Tourism Authority has said, "The world tourism industry needs return of China." He also tried to woo Chinese travellers to Saudi Arabia to visit its heritage sites and experience its natural beauty. He also indicated that the relations between Saudi Arabia and China are experiencing golden phase. Underlining Saudi efforts to increase its tourism capacity, he highlighted that Chinese travellers can quickly obtain Saudi visa online.

- **First Instance Verdict on Eight Children Case in Feng County Creates Ripples on Chinese Social Media Platforms:** Feng County in Jiangsu province of South Eastern China has come into the limelight for its crime-dominated landscape on Chinese social media platforms. The hashtag #Feng County Eight Children Case First Instance Verdict went viral after an Intermediate Court of Jiangsu Province announced its verdict on the case of abduction and kidnapping of a woman named Yan. In the year 1998, Yan was abducted from Yunan Province and sold twice in Feng County. The suspects involved in the act also included her husband identified as Dong Zhimin. A video where Yan was chained by the neck went viral in 2022 causing huge anger against human trafficking in China. The intermediate Court's verdict convicted five suspects involved in the case for abduction and trafficking of the women. Dong Zhimin, the husband of Yan, has been sentenced to six years and six months for 'ill treatment' while three years for the committing crime of 'illegal detention.' Yan is said to have eight children from Dong Zhimin. Users of Weibo gave mixed reactions to the verdict. Many users have expressed their anger against the widespread human trafficking issue in China. Others have supported the verdict and Chinese laws against the issue.
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INDIA WATCH

- India and China are considered 'Asian Giants' due to the rising economic prowess of both countries. China in contemporary era is termed as 'the great power' at the global level, while India is still 'emerging power.' China's GDP exceeds US 17.73 trillion-dollars while India is still wobbling around US 2.5 trillion-dollar economy. The might of Chinese digital economy and its initiatives to attract global investments not only in the manufacturing sector but also in tertiary sectors like tourism indicates the difference between these two countries. If India really wants to catch up with China on the other fronts, India needs to expand its economic base. Data shows the success of Chinese initiatives in education and health sector with the help of digital technology. Such Indian initiatives, for example, E-Sanjeevani in telemedicine have started recently. Along with the social sector, the Indian manufacturing sector base needs to go beyond steel. India can leverage its base in electronics and pharmaceuticals. The issue here, however, is that India depends on China for the supply of raw materials in these sectors. The same is true in the case of semiconductors, the determinants of future powers as they are required for the manufacturing of almost every digital and electronic equipment on which modern economies run. Thus, India's short term strategic choices to respond China in geoeconomic domain are limited. Policies like Atmanirbhar Bharat may help to a certain extent but dependence on China is the reality of the day. Therefore, India should continue with its relative gains from China in terms of raw materials as they are

necessary for its economy. In longer term, finding out alternatives like exploration of lithium in Jammu and Kashmir might help.

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