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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA



writetous.orca@gmail.com

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NEWS IN CHINA

- The National Bureau of Statistics data suggests that the gross domestic product (GDP) of China has expanded by 4.5 per cent in the first quarter of 2023. The fiscal revenue grew by 0.5 per cent on a year-on-year basis and the fiscal expenditure has increased by 6.8 per cent in the same time period. The revenue from tax has reduced by 1.4 per cent. According to the National Bureau of Statistics data, the path to recovery is not very conducive to achieve high levels of growth given the complex international environment. The NBS said that the policies should aim at promotion of high-quality growth and deepening of reforms. A finance ministry official, Li Dawei, believes that the revenue growth may slow down in the second quarter of the year.
- China offered to facilitate the peace talks between Israel and Palestine. Qin Gang, the State Councillor and Foreign Minister of China, said that the escalating tensions due to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is of great concern to China. He said that China supports the Israel-Palestine peace talks and it is in China's interest to take active part in the peace process. He also said that China wants to contribute to bringing peace and stability in the West Asia region. The Palestinian counterpart, Al-Maliki, said that Palestine appreciates China's position. He also expressed Palestine's support for the one-China principle and thanked China for its concern and readiness to contribute to the resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine.
- The Closeby Habitable Exoplanet Survey (CHES) was proposed by Chinese scientists. The objective is to identify habitable planets outside the solar system in the neighbourhood. The 1.2-meter-aperture telescope with high-precision technology will survey stars that are situated 32 light years away from the solar system. Ji Jianghui, a professor at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said that they have developed enough

capabilities to achieve the objectives. Wu Ji, the president of the Chinese Society of Space Research, opined that it is an important frontier issue to search for the habitable planets in the near neighbours outside the solar system.

- Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, Wang Wenbin, responded to questions on the positions of the G7 countries on China's nuclear arsenal. He said that China adheres to its defensive strategy and the no first use policy in case of nuclear weapons. Wang said that China does not pose any threat to the countries of G7 and only maintains a minimum level of nuclear capabilities for national security. He said that G7 countries try to manipulate narratives while they themselves violate the international norms on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. He points out the no first use policy of nuclear weapons of the United States and called out Japan for being under the nuclear umbrella of the US while advocating a nuclear-weapon free world.
- The chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Zhao Leji, held talks with the speaker of the Slovak National Council, Boris Kollar on 18 April 2023. Zhao said that China and Slovakia share deep friendship and that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) cooperation facilitated the cooperation between both the countries in areas of economy and trade, science and technology, tourism and culture. He encouraged Slovak businesses to enter and expand in the Chinese market and emphasis was laid on people-to-people

exchanges. Kollar, the speaker of the Slovak National Council, said that both the countries have a great potential to exploit and that Slovakia wants to cooperate with China in various areas like transportation, high-speed railway, and people-to-people exchanges.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **The Hundred-Day Countdown for the Universiade trends on Weibo:** #成都大运会倒计时100天主题片100%发布 and #一看成都大运会 trended on the Chinese social media platform, Weibo, on 18 April 2023. The hundred-day countdown has started for the Chengdu Universiade, which is expected to happen between 28 July 2023 and 8 August 2023. The event was supposed to happen in 2021 but was repeatedly postponed due to concerns about the coronavirus. The official website of the Universiade has released the 100-day countdown theme film called "100%". The film features real stories of real people. It shows "100%" efforts of the community of the Universiade in pursuit of excellence. The Universiade, a multi-sport event, is a bridge to connect with the world while sports act as a common language.

INDIA WATCH

- The concern expressed by the G7 countries about China's growing nuclear weapon arsenal resonates with India's concerns. The lack of transparency on part of China about its nuclear arsenal and its nuclear doctrine has increasingly been a cause of concern. Both India and China are nuclear weapon states. But, the main area of concern between both the countries has
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traditionally been about the conventional capabilities. However, the increasing tensions and complicated geopolitical environment has led to China increasing its nuclear arsenal thus bringing in the same issue in India's threat perceptions and its need for deterrence. There have also been concerns about "the nuclear question" in the India-China relationship among the strategic community in India. The growing Sino-Pak nexus also adds to the worries of India. Despite its worries, India must note that it is highly unlikely for China's modernization efforts of its nuclear arsenal to take an offensive posture. It is however still a matter of concern since a "potential nuclear escalation" is not "completely unwarranted". Indian strategic experts also believe that China may continue to build up its capability and that India should make a decision about its approach on whether to replicate China's approach. While some level of ambiguity may be of strategic advantage; when it comes to sensitive matters about nuclear capabilities, ambiguity without rationality is bound to push the state into dangerous situations. For India, the best option is not to involve itself in the build-up spirals.

Prepared by: *Gokireddy Hima Bindu* |
Research Intern
