

22.04.22

DAILY
**CONVERSATIONS
IN CHINESE
MEDIA**



**ORGANISATION FOR RESEARCH ON
CHINA AND ASIA**

PREPARED BY

Reshma Qureshi (Research Intern)
writetous.orca@gmail.com

I. Social Media Chatter in China

- **Netizens termed Elon Musk's Starlink satellites as American space weapons:** Netizens lashed out against billionaire Tesla founder Elon Musk's SPACE X, said Starlink's satellites were "just a pile of space junk", and described them as "American space warfare weapons". Musk responded that some Starlink satellite orbits had been adjusted to reduce the possibility of collisions. Netizens also said that without China and Shanghai, there would be no Elon Musk today. During the time of 2008 when Musk faced financial crisis, Shanghai supported Musk, not only giving land loans, but also giving preferential tax policies.
- **Netizens talked about Russia banning Facebook Meta:** Mark Zuckerberg's Meta has been designated as an extremist organization by the Russian court. The internet platform had allowed some users to post calls for violence against Russians. Netizens on Weibo discussed the Western companies' selective censor of contents and manipulation of the freedom of speech.

II. News in China

- China's Union Pay, an alternative to Visa and MasterCard, has pulled away from Russia. In compliance with the heavy economic sanctions on Russia, Visa and MasterCard have suspended their operations in Russia. Russian banks were hoping to issue cards with the Chinese Union Pay; speculations are that China's decision is linked linked to the sanctions imposed on Russian banks rather than a call to stand against Russia.
- US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman blasted China over various conflicting issues. She warned China of consequences for shielding Moscow and not condemning its invasion of Ukraine. She also accused China of undermining the very system that they benefitted from, condemned China's human rights records, bullying of Lithuania and its actions against European companies like H&M and more.
- Japan-New Zealand intelligence sharing agreement is not a "warning shot" to China, as per New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. The deal was announced after the first face-to-face meeting of Ardern and her Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida. She added that the deal should not be seen as just security and intelligence agreement as it will also help the countries coordinate for humanitarian aid during disasters. Japan and New Zealand already have such arrangements and this move will formalise the protocols and help the concerned agencies engage more efficiently.
- An American teacher has been sentenced to death in China for stabbing a 21-year-old woman who tried to break off their relationship. The court ruled that it was a "premeditated revenge killing" that warranted the death sentence. A representative

for the United States Embassy said the embassy was aware of the sentencing and was watching the issue, but could not comment further due to privacy concerns. China is thought to be the world leader in capital punishment, however specific data is never revealed.

- Chinese President Xi Jinping, during his speech at the annual Boao Asia Forum, proposed a global security initiative upholding the principal of indivisible security without giving details on how it would be implemented. Russia has also endorsed this concept previously. Mr. Xi added that the world should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, while paying attention to the "legitimate" security concerns of all.
- At least 15 power plant projects have been stopped in their pre-construction phase after China banned overseas coal projects. China is the world's largest energy consumer. President Xi had announced to the UN General Assembly that China would end its overseas coal projects as a contribution to the prevention of climate change and cutting on the emission of greenhouse gases.

India Watch

- US Deputy Secretary of States along with other top EU officials warned China against its attempts to undermine the Western sanctions on Russia. They warned China of consequences if it provides any "material assistance" to Moscow's war on Ukraine. They also alleged China is amplifying the Russian disinformation campaigns. However, the US leader avoided such comments on India and said that US is determined to help India move away from its traditional dependence on Russian weapons. After a series of debates over the past month, this statement by a top US leader show that India-US ties are still strong and US is serious about improving its partnership with India. It is a well-known fact that India is largely dependent on Russia for most of its military hardware, and other options are too expensive for India to cut down on Russia. But recent sanctions on Moscow have hit the Russian economy badly affecting the military industrial complexes. India will have to manoeuvre the coming months delicately to ensure national interests are met while maintaining strategic partnerships.