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*DAILY*  
**CONVERSATIONS  
IN CHINESE  
MEDIA**



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**ORGANISATION FOR RESEARCH ON  
CHINA AND ASIA**

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## I. Social Media Chatter in China

- **Diplomatic uproar over alleged assault on Chinese students in South Korea:** In a video widely circulated on Weibo, a Chinese student was seen being attacked by two South Koreans in South Korea. The Chinese Consulate General in Busan reached out to the concerned parties to understand the situation, provided active assistance, and coordinated with the local police to investigate the case. Zhao Lijian, PRC's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said, "we are highly concerned about this incident". Lijian further added, "We will spare no effort to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests and personal safety of Chinese citizens overseas". The incident took place post an Olympics skating race controversy.

## II. News in China

- In order to counter China's rising influence in the region, U.S Secretary of State Antony Blinken is to go on a seven-day trip from 7 Feb to Indo-Pacific states. His itinerary includes visits to Australia, followed by Fiji and Hawaii. This will be the first visit to Fiji in four decades by a top U.S diplomat. The meet will be an effort to elevate American engagement with the remote Pacific islands. Malcolm Davis, a senior analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute says, "There will be important discussions for furthering the Quad as a key organization for managing Indo-Pacific security issues, especially in the context of increasing challenges from a rising China."
- China has agreed to donate millions of dollars to the Philippine government for military and construction equipment despite a dispute over the South China Sea. About 1 billion Philippine pesos of donation will be used to rebuild the southern city of Marwari, which was destroyed during a 5 month battle in 2017 between government forces and militants linked to the Islamic state.
- China urged the United States to remove additional tariffs, sanctions, and other suppressive measures against it. In a press conference, Gao Feng, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Commerce, said, "Since the deal came into force, China has worked hard to promote the joint implementation of its phase-one economic and trade agreement with the United States". He said the deal overcame multiple negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, disrupted supply chains and a global economic recession. He also called for action from the U.S to create a favourable atmosphere and sound conditions for the two sides to expand trade cooperation. This development comes post the US' expression of dissatisfaction over Chinese contributions in fulfilling the phase 1 deal.
- Australian media has reported that Chinese spies wanted to support a candidate from the Australian Labour Party to participate in the election. The effort and intention behind it was thwarted by Australian Intelligence Agencies. Zhao Lijian

refuted the Australian media reports as 'reckless and purely for political gains'. Zhou Lijian also stated that China has adhered to the principle of mutual respect and non-interference in countries' internal affairs and that it has no interest in Australia's internal Affairs and has never intervened. He asked Australian politicians and institutions not to drag China in between their domestic political competition.

- U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken stated on the 11th that China's behavior at home and in the region is more aggressive, but he does not think conflicts in the Asia-Pacific regions are inevitable. In response, Zhou Lijian said "the remark is purely old-fashioned and full of political lies. It discredited China and suppressed China's development, which fully exposes the deep-rooted cold war thinking and ideological prejudices of the United States. China firmly opposes the relevant statement of the U.S."
- On Iran's National Day and the Islamic Revolution's 43rd anniversary on 11th February, Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Keshavarzzadeh (Keshavarzzadeh) spoke with reporters Hu Yuwei and Bai Yunyi. He recognised the hard-won victories of both Chinese and Iranians in preserving political sovereignty and territorial integrity. He applauded the "historic Beijing Winter Olympics" and the Iran-China efforts toward regional stability and global peace. Moreover, he noted that Iran will ensure a steady supply of oil to China and showed interest in prospective enhanced military cooperation with China.

### **III. India Watch**

- A sense of paradox is visibly apparent in Chinese oft-repeated response to any statement on their aggressive behavior at home or the broader Indo-Pacific region. China refuted Blinken's statement as old-fashioned, full of political lies and as one that showed deep-rooted 'cold war' thinking. On the other hand, it refutes the Indian response to Chinese assertiveness as 'alliance politics' by claiming India's action as a relay from the United States. India has repeatedly claimed that it practices strategic autonomy, solely based on Indian national interest. However, if analysed closely, it is the Chinese military and political strategy that emulates cold war tactics, engaging in unilateral actions at the expense of rules-based international order.