

12 MAY 2023

DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA



writetous.orca@gmail.com

Explore our other verticals:

- [CiCM Insights](#)
- [Opinion Pieces](#)
- [Issue Briefs](#)
- [Backgrounders](#)
- [Expert Speak](#)
- [Mapping China](#)
- [Infographics](#)
- [Podcast: The ORCA Files](#)
- [Projects](#)

NEWS IN CHINA

- The International Committee of the Red Cross, on Friday, announced the winners of the 49th edition of the [Nightingale Prize](#), the highest global honour in the international nursing community. 7 nurses from China have been conferred with the Nightingale Medal, thereby giving China the distinction of having the highest number of winners this year. The winners are as follows: Chen Jing from Naval Military Medical University, Xing Shaoyun from the Fifth People's Hospital of Hainan province, Liu Xiaojuan from Capital Medical University, Gan Xiuni from Chongqing Medical University, Zhao Xuehong from Zhejiang University, Jiang Yan from West China Hospital, Sichuan University, and Zhang Yinghui from Shaanxi Medical University. In order to qualify for the Nightingale Prize, candidates must have been engaged in nursing work for a long time, have noble moral qualities and professional nursing standards, and also shown extraordinary courage and dedication in times of emergency.
- China and Laos launched a [joint military exercise](#) at the Kommadam Academy of the Lao People's Armed Forces, with the aim of improving the capability of both countries with regards to combating terrorism, and enhancing defence cooperation between the two countries. The opening ceremony was attended by Major General Phanseng Bounphanh, deputy chief of general staff, LPAF, and Jiang Zaidong, the Chinese Ambassador to Laos. The drill will simulate joint operations targeting transnational armed criminal groups operating in the mountainous forests, and will include live arms firing, comprehensive individual training, detachment tactics, and combat service support. There will also be basketball and tug-of-war matches, as well as cultural performances, in order to promote friendship between the militaries of the two countries.
- According to the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air

(CREA), China, which is notorious for being the world's top polluter, emitted record amounts of carbon dioxide in the first quarter of this year. More than 3 billion metric tonnes of carbon dioxide were emitted, which was 4 per cent higher than last year. This increase has been driven by multiple factors, such as the economic rebound post the end of the Zero-COVID policy, stimulus measures in manufacturing and construction, and low hydropower generation. The main contributors to the rising emissions are coal-powered electricity generation and production of construction material like steel and cement. According to Lauri Myllyvirta and Qi Qin of CREA, "Looking at the rest of the year, the government's focus on economic growth means that China's emissions are likely to reach an all-time high in 2023, topping the previous peak in 2021."

- Baidu, which recently became the first Chinese company to launch its own version of ChatGPT (Ernie Bot), has begun to embed this service in its search engine. The beta version of the new AI Mate chatbot appeared on the top right side of Baidu search engine's landing page for some users, which borrows its technology from Ernie Bot. The chatbot, while giving answers, cited only domestic sources and did not give any response to political questions, which thereby limited the accuracy and efficiency of the service. These limitations are a result of the Chinese government's AI policy, which requires companies providing generative AI services to "uphold Chinese socialist values and refrain from generating content that suggests regime subversion, violence

or pornography, or disrupts economic or social order."

- Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin, in a press conference, announced that starting from May 15, Ambassador Li Hui, Special Representative of the government on Eurasian Affairs, will be touring Europe and engaging with stakeholders to discuss the political solution to the Ukraine crisis. During this visit, the envoy will cover Ukraine, Russia, Poland, France, and Germany. With this visit, Li will be the highest-ranking Chinese official to visit Ukraine since the beginning of the conflict last year. In the press conference, Wang outlined Beijing's mindset with regards to dealing with the conflict. He also highlighted that China is committed to promoting peace, and "willing to continue to play a constructive role in building more international consensus on ceasefire, cessation of war, opening of peace talks, and avoiding escalation of the situation."

SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Netizens debate over considering childbirth as a paid job:** In the backdrop of declining birth rates in China, population expert Huang Wenzheng, provided an interesting solution, which got netizens on social media talking. In a news programme on the channel Netease, Huang called for turning childbirth into a 'paid job.' He said, "The birth rate of people is getting lower and lower, and the root cause is the incentive mechanism of the whole society. It is difficult to motivate everyone if it is just pure dedication, and
-

an effective fertility incentive mechanism must be established to cure the root cause.” This suggestion from Huang drew sharp opinions on social media from netizens. Many of them criticised him for commodifying children and the process of childbirth, and also argued that the country’s economic system, and the planet as a whole, can only sustain an increasing population upto a certain limit. China’s population is large anyway, and the country is suffering from problems like unemployment due to high labour supply but not enough jobs available. Moreover, bearing too many children would cause a lot of hardships to the families, as it would greatly increase the cost of living. However, there were also some people on social media who saw merit in Huang’s suggestion. They pointed out that earlier, the government used to incentivise family planning under the One Child Policy, and that they can subsidies can be given to families with more children. Overall, the consensus is towards regarding this suggestion as not feasible, for it would lead to difficulties such as rising cost of living.

INDIA WATCH

- With this upcoming tour of Europe, China is attempting to bolster its credentials as a leading global peacemaker, having played a similar role in solving the tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Earlier this year, China had issued a position paper on the Ukraine crisis, wherein it emphasised on points such as respecting the sovereignty of all, cessation of hostilities, protecting civilians and PoWs (prisoners of war), opposing unilateral sanctions, keeping industrial/supply chains stable,

and encouraging post-war reconstruction. While the intent of these points are lofty and noble, they also implicitly hint towards China’s own insecurities and concern for national interests in Europe. Beijing is yet to openly condemn Russia, its ally, for its actions in the conflict and have tacitly provided support to Moscow. On the eve of the Russian invasion last year, China had backed the Russian position of ‘legitimate territorial concerns,’ and throughout the course of the conflict, have provided limited amount of aid to Ukraine. Hence, in this upcoming tour, Ambassador Li Hui is tasked with the responsibility of finding a political solution to the conflict, which serves to fulfil the interests of Beijing and Moscow, as well as seem palatable to the West. If we look at India’s approach with respect to the Ukraine crisis, India had the tough job of balancing both of its relations with Russia and the United States. India managed to maintain a sense of consistency when it came to its principled stance on the conflict, by actively trying to play a peacemaker role between Kyiv, Washington, and Moscow. Although India was under immense pressure to boycott Russia, it had its own pressing needs as well, as well as a strategic relationship to maintain, while at the same time ensuring not to put off the US adversely. India justified its energy and defence imports from Russia by highlighting that even the European countries were doing the same. Simultaneously, India kept engaging with Ukraine, provided humanitarian aid to Kyiv, and rebuked Russia for its role in the conflict, on platforms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. In this year’s G20 Summit, under India’s presidency, the G20 outcome document on the conflict

was prepared, which even Russia had to sign. All these developments convinced the West of New Delhi's principled 'non-aligned' stance on the matter. In this way, India managed to safeguard both of its relationships with the US and Russia, while also maintaining its credibility as a peacemaker in the Ukrainian crisis. Comparing the two approaches, we find that while both countries are conscious about their national interests, there is a discernible tilt in China's Ukraine policy, which favours Russia. On the other hand, India played the peacemaker role in the conflict without any affinity towards the West or Russia.

Prepared by: *Debendra Sanyal* | *Research Intern*
