

13 APRIL 2023

# DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA



[writetous.orca@gmail.com](mailto: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

- [Xia Baolong](#), Director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office (HKMAO) of the State Council, kicked off his fact-finding mission to Hong Kong on Thursday, with a visit to the foreign ministry office of Hong Kong, followed by meeting with the Chief Executive, John Lee Ka-Chiu, and other government officials. In this fact-finding mission, Xia is set to engage in meetings with several stakeholders, comprising of mainland authorities based in Hong Kong, pro-establishment Hong Kong politicians, and representatives from the financial sector, as well as visits to the West Kowloon Cultural District, Cyberport business park, universities and local wet markets.
- The State Council and the [Central Military Commission](#) have released new rules for the recruitment of soldiers in wartime, with a pronounced emphasis on veterans. According to the new regulations, recruitment should focus on becoming battle-ready and increasing efficiency by calling up skilled recruits. A separate chapter on wartime recruitment has been added, which provides for ex-servicemen or veterans to be prioritised in such recruitment drives, and they would be expected to join their original units. On Thursday, the CMC released a Q&A in order to better explain the new regulations. According to existing rules, if a citizen receives a recruitment notice during wartime, he/she must go to the designated place for enlistment, else face punishment. Further, the regulations allow the designated authorities to adjust recruitment conditions and methods, as per the provisions of the law.
- The [‘Key Points of Digital Rural Development in 2023’](#) has been issued jointly by five departments, namely the Central Network Information Office, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, and the National Rural Revitalization Bureau. The

---

notice called for the implementation of policies and programmes such as the Digital Rural Development Action Plan 2022-25, with the aim of rural industrial development through digitisation. The Work Points focused on tasks in ten aspects: consolidating the foundation for digital rural development, strengthening the digital protection of food security, improving the effectiveness of online assistance, developing smart agriculture, measures to develop the county-level digital economy, developing rural digital culture, improving rural digital governance, deepening rural digital inclusive services, construction of smart green villages, and ensuring the quality development of digital villages.

- An important breakthrough was achieved at the Chinese Academy of Sciences on Wednesday, with the Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST) achieving a steady-state high confinement plasma operation for 403 seconds, which is roughly 7 minutes. This is a step forward in the direction of developing a fusion reactor. The EAST, also known as the Chinese 'artificial sun' and developed in 2006, aims to create nuclear fusion like the Sun by using substances from the sea, thereby providing clean energy. Elucidating about this breakthrough further, Song Yuntao, Director of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said, "The temperature and density of particles have been greatly increased during high confinement plasma operation, which will lay a solid foundation for improving the power generation efficiency of future fusion power plants and reducing costs." Once fully developed,

fusion energy from the 'artificial sun' could go a long way in solving mankind's energy needs.

- Wang Wentao, Chinese Minister of Commerce, met with his Serbian counterpart Tomislav Momirovic, and signed a Memorandum of Understanding to start negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement between the two countries. Wang proclaimed Serbia as the 'ironclad friend' of China, and a comprehensive strategic partnership has been developing between the two countries. Serbia has been an active participant in the Belt and Road Initiative, and considers cooperation with China necessary for its economic development. China serves as a major export destination for Serbia, and both countries are cooperating in the fields of investment and infrastructure. According to Momirovic, "The FTA between Serbia and China will create a favourable environment and provide a strong guarantee for the development of bilateral economic and trade cooperation, and the Serbian side is willing to work with China to promote the early completion of the FTA negotiations." Commerce Minister Wang Wentao also added that the FTA would lead to the strengthening of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Serbia.

## SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Controversy surrounding star actor's participation in a youth show:** Chinese actor and film director Xu Zheng is set to be among the first round of guests to be invited to the fourth season of Zhejiang STV's "Youth Travel," which was launched
-

---

on April 8. The show is also going to feature other personalities, such as Wang Baoqiang, Yang Di, Chen Zheyuan, Shen Yue, Xu Minghao, Zhang Yitong, and many more. However, the choice of Xu Zheng has become a matter of debate, with many criticising him on social media platforms like Weibo. According to netizens, Xu has been involved in a lot of controversies, such as the MLM scandal involving the cosmetic brand TST owned by Zhang Ting and Lin Ruiyang, copyright disputes and many other incidents of questionable behaviour. Many people are of the opinion that he should not be participating in a variety show like Youth Travel. Zhejiang STV was bombarded with requests to review his participation in the show, but received replies that he was chosen after much scrutiny, requisite approvals, and his participation was approved following due process. Later, many netizens have also spoken in his favour by calling the judiciary to punish him if he is guilty but not to encourage social media trials. Thus, the hashtag #徐峥应该上综艺节目吗 has been among the top 10 trending hot topics on Weibo.

## INDIA WATCH

- In light of the rising geopolitical tensions in the Taiwan Strait and on the Sino-Indian border, Beijing is looking to streamline its military by focusing on recruiting veterans with valuable experience. In recent years, India has also tried to streamline the military by introducing various programs such as the Agnipath scheme. It intends to attract youth of the age group 17-23, and enroll them into the armed forces for a period of four years, wherein they will be imparted with military skills and discipline.

After the completion of their service period, some of the Agniveers will be inducted into the regular armed forces, while the rest will receive a one-time financial package worth INR 11.71 lakh (Seva Nidhi), as well as incentives in employment. The scheme benefits the armed forces immensely, for it adds a fresh energy of youth and brings about a shift towards a more tech-driven army. The average age of the armed forces would also reduce by 4 to 5 years which will enable India to make optimum use of demographic dividend. Unlike India, China is focusing more towards wartime preparations specifically, as according to military law expert Xie Dan, "China's military laws - especially relating to wartime - have become 'weak points' over the decades of peace since China was last involved in a war." The new regulations provide for a detailed mechanism for wartime mobilisation, and as Xie said, "The prioritisation of veterans was necessary because of their skills and experience in operating hi-tech weapons." Although the PLA is also looking towards recruiting college students and graduates with a science background, the ageing demography of China and pressing problems at the frontiers have necessitated prioritising veterans with proven skills. While India's Agnipath scheme reflects a long-term approach, China had to resort to a short-term approach on account of pressing geopolitical tensions. Also, India is looking to utilise its advantage of a young demographic dividend, China is relying on the skills and experience of the veterans, since its ageing population leaves it with a diminished youth base.

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

---