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DAILY
**CONVERSATIONS
IN CHINESE
MEDIA**



**ORGANISATION FOR RESEARCH ON
CHINA AND ASIA**

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I. Social Media Chatter in China

- **Chinese University announced strict punishment for social media posts about lockdown:** A university in Shandong Province is now under lockdown due to the COVID outbreak. Students who are locked inside have been warned to not post any “inappropriate remarks” on social media. “It will be a criminal offence if your remarks get more than 1000 views”, says the notice.

II. News in China

- Despite China's zero COVID policy, it is now on brink of its biggest COVID crisis since February 2020 as cases triple nearing 3400. Across China, millions and millions of Chinese people are being forcibly lined up to do daily mandatory COVID tests and get a negative PCR test result, to keep their movement licenses-QR code vaccine passports valid. It has to shut down its southern business centre of Shenzhen, a city of 17.5 million due to the ongoing COVID crisis. Northeast China's Jilin province also reported another 895 locally transmitted cases.
- A second shipment of Chinese humanitarian aid sent by the Red Cross Society of China is to arrive at Budapest Airport in Hungary at 1:00 p.m. local time, and then transfer to #Ukraine. The relief material includes a sleeping bag, food, damp-proof mat and more.
- Chinese e-cigarette regulations are to ban the sales of flavoured e-cigarettes except for tobacco flavours on 1st May in China. It does not look like it will affect exports but it will have a profound impact on the domestic market in China. It seems Chinese regulators are prioritizing tax revenue over smokers' lives especially as China's Tobacco remains the largest producer of cigarettes worldwide.
- The number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the Chinese mainland grew by over 4.18 million on Saturday, with the total number reaching nearly 3.19 billion, data from the National Health Commission showed on Sunday.
- China's newly added vegetation reached about 1/4 of the global total increase over the past two decades, ranking first worldwide, official data showed. Chinese citizens voluntarily planted approximately 78.1 billion trees from 1982 to 2021 across the vast country.
- March 12 in China is Arbor Day celebrated for environmental protection through tree planting. It was established in 1928 to pay homage to the first president of China. The holiday's original resolution mandated every citizen to plant 3-5 trees per year.
- Russia has asked China for military equipment and other things to support its invasion of Ukraine. This proposes a problem for India as Russian dependence militarily on China could grow affecting the dynamics between Russia-India-China.

- H.E. President Isaias Afwerki met in Asmara with Ambassador Xue Bing, the special envoy for the Horn of Africa affairs of MFA of China. The main aim of this talk was to continue cordial and friendly talks and reach a broad consensus on strengthening the strategic partnership between China and Eritrea.

III. India Watch

- Japan's banks suddenly have built huge leverage over China's economy. The important little understood function of Japan's megabanks in financing Asia's economy will be a critical factor in ensuring that dollars continue to flow. Since the 1990s, Japan's big banks have had a very large and growing deposit base but limited domestic demand for credit, forcing them to look overseas for profits in international capital markets, which are dominated by dollars. As a close ally of the U.S., the Bank of Japan can borrow dollars directly from the Federal Reserve to provide a temporary overdraft to its banks. This is an advantage not available to the People's Bank of China or even the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. One of the lessons we can take from the tragic Ukraine crisis is that, until China's financial system matures, Asia's most important bankers remain in Tokyo. Hence, India's focus on the Asian Development Bank, as opposed to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, must remain high.