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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

- **China's COVID conditions trend post official conference:** In a State Information Office Press Conference, it was announced that according to the analysis and judgment of experts, the current round of the global pandemic is “a high tide, and it will not end in the near future”. China will continue to face an epidemic prevention and control situation dominated by Omicron virus strains in many places at the same time, and the epidemic prevention and control situation is becoming increasingly severe and complicated. This conference has trended on Weibo.
- **Chinese bloggers posts recommended strategy for China-Russia weapons trade:** A popular Chinese Blogger has posted that “If the Russian army can be equipped with 50 Wing Loong II UAV, it will not let the Ukrainian army be so arrogant”. Wing Loong II UAV is China's first aviation weapon system that was bought even before its drawings was successfully developed.

II. News in China

- China launched corruption Investigation into a senior official Wang Zhengwei who had been an influential advocate of Muslim culture. He also promoted halal food labelling and building of mosques. This appears to be a part of Xi Jinping's idea of cultural assimilation.
- China-Europe trade jumped 14.8 percent or \$137.16 billion in the first two months of 2022, making Europe the largest trade partner of China during the period, a spokesperson of the Ministry of Commerce said that.
- China's first sea-crossing high-speed railway connecting the two major cities of Fuzhou and Xiamen in China's Fujian province started track-laying work on Thursday. The railway is about 277.42 km long with a designed speed of 350 km/h.
- The 2022 Annual Conference of the BOAO Forum for Asia (BFA) will be held on April 20-22 in BOAO, south China's Hainan Province. The theme of this year's forum is “The World in COVID-19 & Beyond: Working Together for Global Development and Shared Future”. The BOAO Forum for Asia is a non-profit organisation that hosts high-level dialogue for leaders from government, business and academia in Asia and other continents to share their vision on the most pressing issues in the region and the world at large. BFA is modelled on the World Economic Forum.
- A new batch of 300 mainland medical staff on Wednesday arrived in Hong Kong to support the local fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Hong Kong public health system is suffering heavily from COVID with the city currently recording around 30000 daily COVID cases.
- A Chinese “spy” hired a private investigator to use violence if necessary to end the campaign of a U.S. Congressional candidate, instructing him to “beat him until he

cannot run for election," the Department of Justice said. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson denied this accusation and said that China always asks its citizens to abide by the laws of the host countries and never asks its citizens to act in activities that violate local laws. The U.S. Justice Department indicted five people for allegedly spying for China. They were accused of attempting to suppress criticism of the Chinese government, including by trying to thwart the campaign of the Congress candidate.

- Chinese policy makers became alarmed last year by how sharply growth had slowed after Xi Jinping tightened controls on private businesses. This year, various levels of government have shifted away from a near-blanket crackdown.
- Shandong province seeks tighter grip on its bauxite supplies. A company co-owned by the province's government is soon to sign a deal to buy Guinean bauxite for its alumina and aluminium smelters.
- Chinese President Xi Jinping chaired a meeting on China's current anti-epidemic work, asking local authorities to stick to the dynamic zero-COVID policy, and overcome a slackening of vigilance in epidemic prevention and control work.
- China's cyberspace regulators have taken measures against online violence that attacked and insulted athletes and coaches during the Winter Olympics, such as targeting Chinese skier Gu Ailing and skater Zhu Yi, in a special campaign to regulate internet activities.
- Police in New York have arrested a 25-year-old woman Xiaoning Zhang in connection with the stabbing death of Li Jinjin, a former 1989 Tiananmen Square protester who worked as an immigration lawyer after fleeing China. Chuang Chen, CEO of the China Democracy Party said that the killing might have happened due to Jinjin's refusal to Zhang on as a client.

III. India Watch

- U.S. AFRICOM commander Stephen Townsend said before Senate armed services that China wants to establish its first naval base in the African state of Equatorial Guinea. China already has a military base in Djibouti. Many security analysts are worried that this base can give China a permanent hold on the Atlantic side of Africa. This base would be nearly around 10000 Kms from the U.S. Such a base would deter India and Japan's Africa connectivity ambitions greatly.
- Uganda president Yoweri Museveni said that he sees double standards in the western response to Ukraine crisis . He has said that the Chinese approach of non interference in other countries domestic affairs is much better. This statement is not only alarming for U.S. and its western allies, but for India as well as it marks a downfall in India-Uganda ties, especially as China frequently comments on India's internal matters like Kashmir and Northeast India.