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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

- **Flooding in Henan:** Continues to remain major point of domestic chatter on social media as floods intensify. Praise for China's tech progress in handling the situation is present in chatter; the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Wing Loong-2h by Aviation Industry Corporation of China to restore mobile network is being circulated. During the five-hour relay operation, the drone provided phone or internet services to a total of 3,572 residents and generated data traffic of nearly 2,100 megabytes.
- **Under reporting and censorship of deaths due to floods:** Videos on Twitter show dead bodies of drowned Chinese citizens but these are not present on Weibo, suggesting strong censorship by CCP on data being shared.
- **No mention of flooding on Instagram accounts of Xinhua and China Daily:** The Instagram accounts of both these state-controlled media outlets have immense international following; hence, news of the flooding in China has not received posting in these posts. China Daily does however post 24-hr stories showing bravery of Chinese citizens during floods but no permanent posts are released.
- **Weibo military observer suggest movement of 20 J-16 to Sino-India border:** This is tandem with recent reports on Weibo (as on 19-7-21) that India moved K9 Vajra-T to border. Movement of troops on both sides shows continued if not increased sensitivity between India-China ties, lack of trust and delicate situation on ground near Eastern Ladakh. (see image 1 and 2)
- **Maglev Train:** World's first 600 km/h high-speed maglev train rolled off the assembly line in Qingdao, East China. This marked China's latest technological/scientific infrastructure achievement. Photos of the train have been extensively shared in China and outside.
- **Focus on India's border infrastructure increasing:** Weibo military observer has posted videos taken from construction site showing India is constructing hard-cement road from Lukung to Phobrang near Pangong Tso –this will increase deployment speed of Indian troops.

II. News in China

- People's Daily (P's D) covered Henan flooding on Pg.7; this is likely because Xi Jinping issued instructions to authorities to protect people's lives and property with priority. This was carried on the front page.

- China appoints senior diplomat Mr. Yue Xiaoyong as the new special envoy for Afghanistan affairs at the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This comes amidst increasing focus on the situation in Afghanistan; Xiaoyong is set to maintain “close communication and coordination” with all relevant parties on ground to ensure China’s continued active participation in the peace process.
- Improvement of birth policies re-emerged as key focus on P’D front page with a focus on three-child policy.
- China is pushing its own coronavirus lab leak theory in latest battle of narratives. Chinese Diplomats (part of wolf-warrior diplomacy strategy) and state media are calling for US military base Fort Detrick to be investigated in a ‘new kind of tit-for-tat’ origin theories.

III. India Watch

- Post the withdrawal of US and NATO troops, there will indeed be a vacuum left in war-ravaged Afghanistan. China ideally would like to fill this vacuum, especially by making an exclusive entry into the country via its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China's methodology of establishing diplomatic grit has always been to achieve political power by first building economic clout and BRI has been its tool of choice for this. Kabul has been reportedly engaging with China over talks on the extension of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan; this would decidedly shape China's entry into post-US Afghanistan. For India, this would be a cause of worry as Kabul has historically fallen under New Delhi’s geographic area of influence and CPEC’s extension poses national sovereignty concerns for India.
- For their part, Taliban has stated that it would support development projects by China in Afghanistan. For Beijing, bringing the Taliban on board with BRI will hence not be a very difficult task. Strategic assets in Taxkorgan, Wakhan and Gwadar will highly aid China's economic and political global outreach; but still, peace is centrifugal to China's Afghanistan outreach. In this context, China’s appointment of Xiaoyong –a veteran diplomat with experience in both US and Middle East –shows the greater role China is readying itself to play in Kabul.
- Continued focus on developments along the border in Chinese Weibo and Baidu –coupled with Chinese media’s recent stories about Chinese soldiers martyred in Galwan –shows Beijing’s continued focus on the border and the

impression of India it wishes to convey amongst its public. Remarks by Pakistan's former interior minister Rehman Malik on evidence of India's involvement in Dasu were also discussed on Weibo, further showing Beijing's outlook of India as a rival but one that is economically unequal.



Image 1: China's J-16



Image 2: China's J-16