

22.7.21

DAILY
**CONVERSATIONS
IN CHINESE
MEDIA**



**ORGANISATION FOR RESEARCH ON
CHINA AND ASIA**

PREPARED BY

Team ORCA

writetous.orca@gmail.com

I. Social Media Chatter in China

- **Amidst heavy Henan floods, chatter focused on positive management:** As we have seen, over the past two days as flooding has intensified, the social media + news coverage of the floods has become exceedingly state controlled. Positive videos related to the State's swift action in containment and saving of lives are being circulated.
- **Negative reporting on Henan is censored:** Stories such as the flooding of Jingguang Tunnel (around 5 kms long) in Zhengzhou with occupied cars in it, leading to deaths of all those stuck, have not been shared in state-media. Importantly, the tunnel has been sealed as bodies are being carried out of it and a banner has been put up that says "Your every word and action represents the image of Zhengzhou, please don't stand and watch here". There is also lack of support being given to those searching for lost family and friends, with the police driving them away from areas of mass casualties such as the tunnel.
- **Xi's trip to Lhasa:** The same, while reported upon in state-media like Xinhua and China Daily, was being censored on Chinese social media initially. One Weibo military observer posted a picture of Xi in Lhasa and wrote the caption "The big boss is in Lhasa" (see image 1); however, the post was deleted after 10-15 minutes. However, on the morning after the visit (i.e. 23.7.21), Xinhua News finally confirmed on Weibo that Xi Jinping visited Lhasa's Drepung Monastery, Barkhor street, and Potala Palace square.
- **Military drills in Xinjiang:** Weibo military observer account posted images of a PLA Reconnaissance Regiment (deduction based on them wearing camouflage suits) conducting drills in the military district of Xinjiang. This ties with the increased number of PLA and PLAN drills taking place in and around China.

II. News in China

- Xi became the first Chinese leader in many years to visit Tibet as well as its south-eastern border region with India. In his trip to Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), Xi has inspected a newly opened and strategically important railway line linking Lhasa to Nyingchi near the border with Arunachal Pradesh.

- People's Daily reported on attack drills conducted by rocket corps; this gave insight into 'informatized warfare' that China has been building on. The drill saw the field commander being assisted by the rear command room with real time data, aiding in more acute adjustment of target identification.
- On July 3, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued a notice requesting all regions and departments to earnestly study and implement the spirit of Xi Jinping's centennial anniversary celebrations speech. On July 22, 2021, the official website of Party History Learning and Education has released a 'study_package' to help the Chinese people understand, implement and follow Xi's speech directives. The package provides important insight into how the speech is a policy tool within China itself by the CPC vis-à-vis Chinese citizens.
- People's Daily also carried an interview with Wang Yi post his Middle East visit; focus was given to BRI's inculcation into the Middle East and stronger China-Arab ties.

III. India Watch

- Amidst Xi's focus on pushing the 'Xi Jinping Thought', the visit to Tibet even at a time when the country is battling heavy flooding, comes as a precursor to CCP's broader focus on 're-unification'. The same focus has been given to the Taiwan Question and crackdown in Hong Kong. With the Dalai Lama's succession becoming a matter of immediate focus, India must envision its own 'Tibet policy' with more clarity. Either way, New Delhi's involvement in the future of Tibet is a pre-formed conclusion; Tibetan politics, with the Dalai Lama being a political refugee in India for decades now, is linked with India even if New Delhi would want to maintain non-alignment.
- India should also focus on its own 'Look/Act West' policy; amidst focus on 'Act East' policy (AEP), India's outreach to the Middle East has not grown at par with that of countries like the US, Japan and China. As China's BRI faces delays due to COVID-19 –even though China is continuing to push for its outreach as seen with Wang Yi's Middle East visit, Beijing's talks with Kabul for extension of CPEC and China's Africa outlook –the time for India (along with partner states like Japan) to push for stronger ties with West Asia is ripe.



Image 1: Weibo military observer posted a picture of Xi in Lhasa and wrote the caption "The big boss is in Lhasa"; image was deleted soon after.