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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

- **Chen Man's photo criticized as it sparks outrage on Weibo:** Shooting pictures for Dior, Chinese fashion photographer Chen's pictures were criticized by Chinese netizens for perpetuating western stereotypes of Asian people and how they look.
- **An initiative to keep cyberspace clean:** Chinese celebrities at the China Internet Media Forum in Guangzhou vowed to keep cyberspace clean by combatting fake news and rumors. Internet service providers also took part in the initiative, while ensuring netizens' rights.

II. News in China

- After Sri Lanka removed India and Japan from its East Container Terminal (ECT) project, the Cabinet has approved China's Harbor Engineering Company's role in the Colombo Port project.
- Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) progress has slowed down in African countries as credit has dried up in recent years. The slowdown can be accredited to multiple factors: from China's growing unwillingness for large foreign investments to the damages caused to investors during COVID-19, the economic slowdown in Africa, and reluctance to exchange natural resources for loans.
- Taiwan Affairs Office on Wednesday stated that China is open to welcoming Taiwanese enterprises into the mainland, however, it will not tolerate these enterprises supporting secessionists.
- In Yunnan, a member of the epidemic control was caught trying to smuggle a Vietnamese individual across the border.
- Chinese Foreign Ministry condemned Lithuania's involvement with Taiwan and committing crimes with the US by working with them on its "black jails".
- South China Morning Post reported that the People's Liberation Army held live-ammunition exercises at the Indo-China border. The military exercise includes high-altitude artillery usage and precision strike drills at more than 5,200 meters.
- Indian National Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar criticized the central government for "acting like slaves" to the US and having no discussions over non-alignment. The comments came at the India-Russia Friendship Association.
- Beijing's Winter Paralympic Games reach a 100-day countdown.

- Wei Fenghe, China's State Councilor, and Defence Minister will hold a video conference with his Russian counterpart to discuss a strategic partnership, cooperation, and developing their relations.

III. India Watch

- The Colombo Port is swiftly emerging as a battleground for India and China in Sri Lanka. As the East Container Terminal (ECT) development port project goes to China, the West Container Terminal (WCT) in Colombo Port stays with India's infrastructure behemoth Adani Group. That project is next to the Chinese-run Colombo International Container Terminal (CICT), in operation since 2013. Two Chinese submarines berthed at the CICT in 2014; post India's staunch disapproval of the same, Sri Lanka has not allowed Chinese submarines to do so again. Yet, as BRI in Sri Lanka gains hold (Hambantota Port is already on a 99 year lease to Beijing), India's sphere of influence in South Asia comes under question.
- China's live ammunition exercises at the Indo-China border serve as an efficiency test and preparedness for the PLA. The exercise comes days after Xi Jinping stated that China is not looking to dominate the South Asian region, while also serving as a reminder to India that the PLA is ready to protect its border against Indian intrusions into its territory.
- Russia seems to balance its relations with India and China, supplying Indian defense capabilities while also ensuring it does not alienate China. Russia is remaining equidistant with the two countries, realizing the pros and cons of maintaining relations with both countries.
- Report that BRI in Africa has slowed down explain the recent focused switch-up by Beijing on its Africa outreach. India and Japan via their Platform for Business Cooperation for Asia-Africa must seek to capitalize on this opportunity to further build a continental connect with Africa and off-set Chinese footprint.