

WEEKEND ISSUE
27.11.21-28.11.21

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

- **Chinese expert says new Omicron variant not a serious threat:** Zhang Wenhong, the infectious disease expert and director of the Huashan Hospital's department of infectious diseases, stated that the new variant will not have a big impact on China. Writing on Weibo, he mentioned that China's zero-Covid policy can cope and adapt to any new variant as required.
- **Murder suspect fails to escape due to COVID lockdown:** Attracting 300 million views on Weibo, a murder suspect named Huang failed to escape the authorities after he was forced to a 14-day quarantine in China.
- **Red banner being displayed at Tiananmen Square:** On 28.11.21, a Twitter account has posted an image of a red banner being displayed by a few people in Tiananmen Square which reads "Earnestly request President Xi to continue in office in 2023".
- **14000 apartments for judicial auction:** Posts on Weibo suggest that around 14000 apartments in Jinshui District in Shenzhen will go for judicial auction as the families living in them have not been able to pay the monthly EMI due to the financial difficulties brought on by COVID-19.
- **Chinese soldiers in Galwan Valley with bayonets:** A Twitter account has uploaded a picture that shows Chinese soldiers near Galwan valley with Bayonets fixed on their guns which can be used by them in case of an eventuality as gunfire is prohibited. (See Image 1)

II. News in China

- Following anti-China riots in Solomon Islands, Australia sent peacekeeping forces to restore order in the region. Australian peacekeepers restore order in the Solomon Islands after anti-China riots. Peter Dutton, the Defence Minister of Australia, blamed China for stoking tensions in the Pacific region.
- With the Solomon Islands continuing to face unrest, many analysts believe that the unrest was caused due to things like ethnic tensions, corruption, and the government switching allegiances from Taiwan to China. The government's prioritization of China has stoked unrest, which is why Chinatown became a target for rioters.
- Fumio Kishida, the Prime Minister of Japan, said that the tensions in the region are "severer than ever" and stated that Japan will consider all options in order to strengthen its defence capabilities. The statement was made in context of North Korea testing ballistic missiles and China becoming increasingly assertive in the region while building up its military.

- On 24.11.21, Dwnews.com published a report titled "Jiang Zemin: The Taiwan Issue Is My Biggest Concern." Throughout the article, it describes how Jiang Zemin handled the trilateral relations between China, the United States, and Taiwan. It has been mentioned many times that Jiang Zemin proposed a military force on Taiwan. The article also mentioned that Jiang Zemin made two statements on the Taiwan issue: *First*, if we want to take military action, it should be sooner rather than later. In other words, Jiang Zemin believes that the sooner the use of force against Taiwan, the better. The *second* is that the Taiwan issue cannot be dragged on forever. There must be a timetable. Both these statements are tantamount to putting pressure on Xi Jinping.
- The article also revealed that in 1995, President Clinton allowed Lee Teng-hui, then President of the Republic of China, to visit the United States in June of that year, breaking the ban on high-level Taiwanese visiting the United States. Later, because of this incident, Jiang Zemin hinted that military action would be taken in secret conversations with senior communist generals. But it was the elderly Deng Xiaoping who issued an instruction to deal with Sino-US relations and cross-strait relations in a rational manner. Although Jiang Zemin wanted to take tough actions, it was blocked by Deng Xiaoping.
- It has been reported that Fantasia, one of the leading Chinese property developers, is facing wind-up petitions and possible liquidation. This is the first time that a wind-up petition related to offshore debts has been filed against a mainland developer or its subsidiaries. Fantasia Holdings Group's subsidiary "Fantasia Investment Holdings Group Co., Ltd.", referred to as "Fantasia Investment", has a debt of nearly US\$150 million that was not repaid to the creditor in time, so the creditor has now put forward a request for the compulsory liquidation of Fantasia.
- China's former Culture Minister (Culture Ministry was dissolved in 2018), Wang Meng who served under Deng Xiaoping, has published an article titled "Cultural treasures and Cultural bubbles" strongly criticizing the contemporary state of arts and culture in China. He writes that "on one hand, the existing cultural heritage is not cherished and destroyed from time to time, on the other hand, it is arbitrarily fabricated to create false monuments" such "at the opening ceremony of large-scale sports events, a large number of fabricated cultural symbols appear, displaying the long-lost Chinese musical instruments in strange shapes". He also criticized the New year Gala which is broadcasted by CCTV on the eve of the Chinese new year and is curated by the authorities with great efforts.

- Guo Feixiong, a Chinese human rights legal activist from Guangdong province who is often identified with the Weiquan movement, was arrested in January this year while trying to board a flight for the U.S to meet his ailing wife who is in the last stage of cancer and his whereabouts are still unknown. His wife, Zhang Qing, published a letter of help in the media on November 26.
- On Sunday, China deployed 27 aircraft into Chinese air space, forcing Taiwan to scramble fighter jets and missile systems to warn them out of the airspace. The 27 aircraft consisted of 18 fighter jets and five H-6 bombers, as well as a Y-20 aerial refueling aircraft.
- Not wanting to give over the country's only international airport to China, Uganda is looking to amend its agreement it signed with China in 2015. The threat of takeover comes due to Uganda being a loan defaulter after borrowing \$200 million from China.
- External Affairs Minister of India, S Jaishankar, will meet his Russian and Chinese counterparts, Sergey Lavrov and Wang Yi respectively. According to him, the three countries will meet under the RussiaIndiaChina trilateral framework to discuss regional and global issues.

III. India Watch

- Wang Meng in his article has also said that its present culture in China has no reflection, no thinking, no enthusiasm, no love or hatred, no moral debate, no depth, no morals to learn, no spiritual nourishment, and no emotional fulfillment and transcendence. Such culture is a "hollow culture, a pale culture devoid of soul; it is the place where culture goes to die." It is rare to see such strong remarks being published about affairs managed directly by the government by a former government high-level official.
- The director and CEO of Fantasia is Zeng Baobao, and her father is Zeng Qinghuai, who is also Zeng Qinghong 's younger brother. Therefore, the Fantasia debt default is an obvious sign of Zeng Qinghong's loss of power. Xi Jinping has been successful in releasing a message to the outside world that Zeng Qinghong is now losing ground.
- The article by Dwnews.com mainly puts pressure on Xi and at the same time shows Jiang Zemin as a leader who really cares about national unity especially as crackdown on the Jiangsu province and Jiang faction continues in China. Dwnews.com is a Chinese-language news website headquartered in Beijing but it is also blocked in mainland China but it has a wide readership in China. It is believed that this website is controlled by Zeng Qinghong. Mostly in recent times, its articles appear to be anti-Xi.

- Just days after Xi Jinping told the ASEAN leaders that China will not seek hegemony or assert itself in the region, three separate events have taken place that disprove the statement such as China allegedly stoking unrest in Solomon Islands, spying on Australian military bases, and sending over twenty aircraft into Taiwan's airspace. Despite statements, China continues to assert itself in the region, and that has led to the Japanese Prime Minister having to openly say that it will look to ramp up its defense capabilities in light of recent Chinese aggression. China's continued alliance with North Korea also continues to be a hindrance for the countries in the region.
- The Russia-India-China trilateral framework will be essential in understanding Russia's stance over Indo-China tensions and also provide Russia with a chance to mediate differences between the two. As mentioned in previous reports, Russia continues to maintain its ties with both China and India and remains equidistant from them.
- Chinese media is publicizing the opening of the China-Laos railway that will connect Kunming, Yunnan, and Vientiane, the capital of Laos. It is a project under BRI and will start operations in December. This news has come when China's BRI is under renewed backlash due to reports of it seizing Uganda's Entebbe airport because of loan defaults and shows Xi's attempts to counter negative reporting.

Image 1: Chinese soldiers near Galwan valley with Bayonets fixed on their guns

