

WEEKEND ISSUE
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DAILY
**CONVERSATIONS
IN CHINESE
MEDIA**



ORGANISATION FOR RESEARCH ON
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I. Social Media Chatter in China

- **Shanghai Residents protest as Pudong apartments are turned into quarantine sites:** Residents in a Shanghai area are furious that their community facilities have been taken over and utilised as a quarantine facility, and the protest has now grown on the internet. These residents are at Zhangjiang Nashi International.
- **Chinese State media's hashtag 'America is bad' trends** On the Chinese social media site Weibo, a hashtag about the United States being the worst country in the world when it comes to human rights had gotten over 580 million views by Friday, April 15. The hashtag was created by Chinese news source CCTV in response to a video report released by the state broadcaster on April 14 on the United States Department of State's 2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices, which was released on April 12.
- **Weibo has still blocked 'Shanghai buys groceries' hashtag:** The Chinese social media site Weibo removed the 'Shanghai Buy Food' or 'Shanghai Groceries' hashtag on April 8, the seventh day of Shanghai's phased citywide lockdown, as many people in the city were having trouble obtaining food delivered to their homes and airing their frustrations online. For millions of inhabitants who are unable to leave their houses owing to the city's coronavirus preventative efforts, getting everyday requirements has become a difficulty.

II. News in China

- Three Chinese astronauts on the Shenzhou-13 manned spacecraft finished their six-month mission to the International Space Station on Saturday and safely returned to Earth. The trip represents the completion of China's certification of critical space station technology, as well as a new record for Chinese astronauts' time in orbit, according to the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA). At 9:56 a.m., the Shenzhou-13 return capsule, which carried astronauts Zhai Zhigang, Wang Yaping, and Ye Guangfu, landed at the Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. The CMSA declared that the Shenzhou-13 manned mission was a complete success.
- China's central bank said on Friday that it will drop the reserve requirement ratio (RRR) for financial institutions starting April 25 in order to strengthen the real economy and lower overall financing costs. Except for financial institutions that have already adopted a 5% RRR, the RRR ratio would be reduced by 0.25 percentage points, according to the People's Bank of China (PBOC). Following a similar broad-based drop last December, the cut came as the State Council meeting on Wednesday approved monetary instruments such as suitable RRR cuts to boost banks' loan intake capability. The solutions are meant to improve financial

assistance to virus-affected industries and small businesses.

- The Standing Committee of China's 13th National People's Congress (NPC) began its 34th session on Monday to examine a number of draught legislation and law changes. On the agenda for the session are proposed changes to the Vocational Education Legislation, the Law on Physical Culture and Sports, and the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests, as well as a draught law on futures and derivatives and a draught law on black soil protection. Among other laws and reports, lawmakers will debate election regulations for the 14th NPC, as well as the ratification of the International Labour Organization's Forced Labor Convention of 1930 and the Abolition of Forced Labor Convention of 1957.
- After finishing construction of the Tiangong space station this year, China expects to launch two manned spacecrafts and two cargo spacecrafts per year, according to Hao Chun, Head of the China Manned Space Agency. After the three astronauts from the Shenzhou XIII mission returned to Earth on Saturday, Hao made the comment during a news briefing in Beijing on Sunday. The crew spent nearly six months in orbit performing experiments and chores that will help the space station be complete by the end of 2022. He stated that after the Tiangong space station is built, it would enter a phase of application and development that will span more than a decade. Astronauts will be stationed in space for an extended amount of time to conduct scientific research and maintain the station.
- The building of a vaccine cold storage facility financed by China's Sinovac began this week, according to a statement released by the Chinese Embassy in Egypt on Saturday. The modern facility will improve Egypt's vaccine storage capacity with the help of a Chinese biopharmaceutical company, Chinese Ambassador to Egypt Liao Liqiang said during a ceremony for the project on Thursday. According to the Chinese envoy, the facility, which will occupy 2,800 square metres and have a storage capacity of 150 million doses once completed, would assist Egypt reach its objective of vaccinating 70% of its people by mid-2022.
- China and Saudi Arabia have committed to step up trade and energy cooperation as part of efforts to enhance their comprehensive strategic alliance in the wake of the COVID-19 epidemic and the Ukraine issue, which has complicated the international scene. President Xi Jinping and Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud pledged to strengthen synergy between the Belt and Road Initiative and Vision 2030, a unique transformative economic and social reform blueprint that is opening Saudi Arabia up to the world, in a phone conversation on Friday. They also promised to improve communication and coordination on regional and international issues.
- On Friday morning, the Chinese military launched a huge multi-force exercise outside Taiwan, just hours after US senators came to demonstrate support for

the self-governing island and see President Tsai Ing-wen. According to a statement from Col. Shi Yi, spokesperson for the People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theater Command, Chinese military planes, vessels, and troops were participating in battle preparation drills in the East China Water as well as the sea and airspace near Taiwan (PLA). The number of personnel and weapons was not given, but the Taiwanese military reported six PLA fighter jets, including four J-16s and two J-11s, entered Taiwan's southwest air defence identification zone (ADIZ) on Friday.

III. India Watch

- According to the Chinese government, China assists Saudi Arabia in preserving its national sovereignty, security, and stability, as well as in pursuing a growth path that is tailored to its specific circumstances. China says it is willing to collaborate with Saudi Arabia to promote peace in the Middle East peace and stability, push for the early completion of the China-Gulf Cooperation Council free trade agreement and together construct a China-Arab community with a shared destiny for the new era. Saudi Arabia in return values China's international position and the expansion of its relations with China, and is a staunch believer in the one-China concept. Saudi Arabia supports the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council in their efforts to strengthen ties with China. This cooperation between China and Saudi Arabia is a statement of influence and support for China in West Asia, and highlights the inroads China wants to make for the BRI in West Asia.