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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

- **Arrest of senior Weibo official trends:** Mao Taotao, the Director of Public Relations at Weibo, is suspected of bribery and has "seriously harmed the interests of the company". He was arrested amidst public outrage against Alibaba for its delayed action in responding to an employee's allegations of sexual assault by her manager. Furthermore, as we had earlier reported, Weibo itself in lieu of the Kris Wu sexual misconduct scandal has discontinued its seven year old 'star power' function as China's #metoo movement grew in traction.
- **As COVID-19 cases rise, videos on social media show authorities locking people in houses:** China's National Health Commission on Aug. 9 announced 143 new confirmed COVID cases in at least 17 provinces. This is the highest reported tally since January 20, 2021. Post this tally, videos have emerged on Weibo and other social media platforms showing personnel in hazmat suits hammering iron bars over people's house entrances to prevent them from leaving. It is not clear if this is done only for those houses who have positive patients, or all.

II. News in China

- China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has recalled its ambassador to Lithuania and demanded that the Lithuan government recall its ambassador to China. This is in response to Lithuania and Taiwan establishing respective representative offices building up reciprocal diplomatic ties.
- China's Propaganda Department has carried an insightful piece on the Lalin Railway which runs between Gangdisê Mountains and the Himalayas on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The piece propagates that the construction of this rail route --as well as the Fuxing train that runs on it -- in extremely difficult terrain and work conditions within 6 years with an investment north of 35 billion yuan is a vital example of transformation the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has brought about in Tibet.
- China-Canada ties are adversely hit amidst two high-profile rulings against Canadians in China. A Chinese court upheld Canadian Robert Schellenberg death sentence for drug smuggling. He was arrested in 2014 and jailed for 15 years in late 2018. Post appeal, a court in the city of Dalian sentenced

him to death in January 2019. The timing of this sentencing was a month after Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou was arrested at Vancouver International Airport on a warrant from the United States. Simultaneously, a day after the ruling on Schellenberg was upheld, Canadian Michael Spavor was jailed for 11 years for spying. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has condemned the 'unacceptable and unjust' jailing of Michael Spavor in China.

- Global times has uploaded a video titled "Interview with border troop CPC members". In the video a soldier from an infantry company stationed in Burang County (which sits at the trijunction of Nepal, India and China) of Tibet was interviewed. This video mentions Ngari by its Chinese name 'Ali' and calls Zanda by its Chinese name Zhada. The soldier importantly emphasises on how he is first a member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and being a party member makes him more responsible.
- Xu Zhangrun (a former law professor in Tsinghua University who was expelled and prosecuted) in 2018 has published a new essay in which he states that most intellectuals in China are displeased by Xi's decision to abolish term limits for himself. Among other observations, he emphasizes that without a stable political process of succession, the fate of the nation ultimately relies on armed might and coercion. He concludes by noting that China and the Chinese people lack a truly resilient political system, instead China is burdened with one that, despite its formidable appearance, is inherently fragile.
- Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union has held a press conference and officially announced that it will disband. This is post Chinese state-media labelling the Union as a 'poisonous tumor'.
- It is reported in non-mainstream HK media that the chances of the Politburo standing committee members (PBSC-7 members) going to Beidaihe are more as compared to the Politburo members (25 members), since PBSC members have not made public appearances but the Politburo members did appear in public events.
- A detailed piece by Sixth Tone (which seeks to present 'fresh voices' across sectors in and from China) has sought to understand the Zhengzhou subway disaster during the Henan flooding. It has called the subway tragedy as 'preventable'.

III. India Watch

- MOFA's press release highlights China's warning to Taiwanese authorities that the idea of 'Taiwan Independence' is a "dead end and any attempts at separatist activities in the international arena is doomed to fail". As India's strategic partners US and Japan show deeper focus on strengthening ties with Taiwan, New Delhi's own passive outlook towards Taipei, especially post Galwan, has been debated extensively. It is hence vital that India's Taiwan policy emerges as a strong narrative of its regional decision making processes.
- The Lalin rail network also passes over the Yarlung Zangbo River (which turns in Brahmaputra upon entering India). China's construction of a major dam on the river has been a matter of deep concern for India vis-a-vis water security politics. This rail network would ideally be used for infrastructure equipment and labor transportation upon beginning of the dam's construction.