

DAILY
**CONVERSATIONS
IN CHINESE
MEDIA**

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I. Social Media Chatter in China

- **Zhao Wei removed from Chinese media:** One of China's most famous actresses, Zhai Wei, has been removed from online channels in China. The same marks another major earthquake in Chinese entertainment industry; on Weibo itself, Zhao has over 85.6 million followers. "Zhao Wei Withdraws from Companies" (#赵薇接连退出多家公司#) received over 240 million views on Friday. Another related topic, namely "Zhao Wei's Super Topic Shut Down" (#赵薇超话被封#) received over 970 million views. Her removal could be linked with the scandal involving the fallen Hangzhou Party chief Zhou Jiayang (read out report from 24.8.21)
- **"entertainment circles earthquake" takes places in Chinese entertainment circles:** Following Zhao Wei's removal from Chinese media, the actress Zheng Shuang (郑爽) was slapped with a US\$46.1 million tax evasion fine (her name was also wiped off various platforms & online fan groups were closed), while her ex-partner Zhang Heng (张恒) also became a target of an investigation. The online fan group of Chinese singer-songwriter Henry Huo (霍尊) was removed. The work of the famous musician (and co-founder of Alibaba Music Group) Gao Xiaosong (高晓松) was also taken offline. Chinese authorities are targeting celebrities in the entertainment industry and are giving off a strong signal that these influential people cannot get away with immoral or illegal acts.

II. News in China

- Tax Bureau of the Ministry of Finance of India has imposed anti-dumping duties on China's natural mica pearlescent industrial pigments. Concurrently, Department of Internal Market Protection of the Eurasian Economic Commission has imposed anti-dumping duties on Chinese aluminum kitchenware.
- Pakistan-China Institute of Pakistan (PCI) organized a webinar on topics related to the origin of the new coronavirus and international cooperation. Mushahid Hussain Sayed, chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee of Pakistan, stated at the meeting that the US government's politically motivated investigation of the new coronavirus traceability has led to the "demonization" of China.
- In continued efforts to promote vaccine diplomacy, post approval of the Central Military Commission and at the request of the Bangladeshi army, a batch of Covid vaccines assisted by the Chinese People's Liberation Army to the Bangladeshi army was delivered to Bangladesh.

- US drones carried out air strikes against the "Islamic State" Afghan branch in Nangarhar Province in Eastern Afghanistan. The US military said that two senior members of the organization died in the air strike and another person was injured. China reacted to the same in continuation with its narrative of the situation in Kabul being a US-made 'mess'.

III. India Watch

- China's Health Silk Road (HSR) diplomacy is seeing solid gains especially in South Asia; it is important that India offset this growing public-health footprint of China's especially in its own strategic neighbourhood. India's vaccine diplomacy has seen success, but recent shortages have led to a fall in exports of the doses which must be immediately addressed. The HSR will be relevant for Beijing to claim leadership in regional and global health governance. Southeast Asia will be an important region where China promotes the HSR.
- China's continued Taliban outreach and focus on recalibrating its policies towards Kabul is hinting quickly towards an official recognition of the group by Beijing. The hold-out points remain the ETIM and terror activities by the Taliban themselves. India must focus on holding its own meetings with the Taliban bilaterally to gauge how it can proceed in the coming months with its Afghanistan outreach.