

13.10.21

DAILY
**CONVERSATIONS
IN CHINESE
MEDIA**



**ORGANISATION FOR RESEARCH ON
CHINA AND ASIA**

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I. Social Media Chatter in China

- **Weibo discusses effects of energy crisis:** A Chinese twitter account has posted a video showing protesting workers from Suzhou who were laid-off because of companies being forced to under-operate due to the ongoing crunch in power supply. Liaoning Provincial Department of Industry and Information Technology issued a Level 2 orange warning for severe power shortages on the 11.10.21. This is the fifth time that Liaoning Province has issued a power shortage warning in two weeks, and it is the second time that it has issued a level II orange warning for severe power shortages.
- **Soldiers commended for outing overseas media:** WeChat public account of "Bijie Release" which comes under the Propaganda Department of the Bijie Municipal Committee of Guizhou province issued an article stating that many local cadres were commended for reporting important clues related to national security. According to the article, this year officials reported about "overseas anti-China media" continuing to sneak into Bijie and conducting "illegal interviews" in the local area to report negative news about poverty alleviation. This official was subsequently commended and materially rewarded by the Ministry of National Security of China and the State Security Department of Guizhou Province.

II. News in China

- In light of the Market Access Negative List, Li Guangman's article which ORCA covered in its report from 12.20.21 wrote that "the entire news sector will be closed to non-public capital, and only public capital will be permitted to participate in related operations, without exceptions. I would also like to emphasize that there are no exceptions in the formulation here — the entire news sector is to be brought under the operation of public capital." He said the draft will help in political orientation, guidance of public opinion and value orientations and believes that "Although it is one event after another in different arenas, the changes brought by these events to our society are comprehensive, profound and long-term, and each of us should face this profound change, be awake to change, and have the courage to accept change."
- In what is seen as a move to further undermine editorial independence in Hong Kong, the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) was instructed by the government to prioritize national security as well as the interests of the Chinese regime.
- Former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott called on the international community to show solidarity with Taiwan.

- A report released by Microsoft has accused a Chinese hacker group of attacking universities in Hong Kong and Taiwan and targeting governments and telecommunications providers in other countries.
- Chinese state-media has reported that 15 inspection teams of the Central Committee have been completely stationed at 25 financial institutions which are to be inspected. The Inspection Teams have also set up a special telephone and post office box to accept letters and visits. The inspection team will accept letters and visits until December 15, 2021. It is believed that in the inspections of 25 state-owned financial institutions, their loans will be reviewed, investment and regulatory records will be reviewed, and will also be asked for answers to certain transactions or decisions related to private companies. A Chinese twitter account had pointed out that the ongoing anti-corruption inspection of the financial sector appear to have mentioned publicly in January 2021 when the communique from the fifth plenary session of the 19th Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) mentioned three sectors where it would deepen anti-corruption efforts -- finance was the first one. And in the work report at the fifth plenary session of the 19th CCDI, in January 2021, Zhao Leji, secretary of CCDI, clearly mentioned anti-corruption in the financial sector in the part of "the main task in year 2021".

III. India Watch

- Weibo accounts discuss power shortages but the narrative is still dominated by the rising price of coal which has made things difficult not only for China but the whole world, including India.
- The planned restrictions on news media appears to stem out of the CCP's fear of losing control over public opinion, especially at a time which is sensitive (i.e until Xi takes on his third term next year). It can be validated from the fact that Jack Ma's Alibaba was asked to dispose of its media assets as it is a big financial power in the country and the party sees it as a threat because it is "just too big". Alibaba, assembled a formidable portfolio of media assets that span print, broadcast, digital, social media and advertising. Notable holdings include stakes in the Weibo platform and several popular Chinese digital and print news outlets, as well as the South China Morning Post, a leading English-language newspaper in Hong Kong. This law will help effectively weed out any such threat from a non-state power holding media assets. The media sector is increasingly becoming a headache for the CPC. People with control of media would find themselves in a position of power from where they can sway public opinion and this is not good for the party.