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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA



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NEWS IN CHINA

- Ji Guogang, former Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Regional People's Congress has been ousted from the Communist Party of China (CPC) over allegations of misconduct. His membership has been rescinded and he can no longer participate in public office. Investigations carried out by the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) and the National Commission of Supervision (NCS) concluded that Ji had engaged in dialogue that threatened the Party's policies. Moreover, it was revealed that there was a significant abuse of power, including but not limited to breaking codes of conduct; bribery; unauthorised use of public vehicles; and accepting large sums of money in the form of gifts. It has been reported that his actions caused serious damage to the Party's image and were a violation of national interests. A move has been made to confiscate his acquired holdings and cancel his delegate membership to the 10th CPC Tibet Regional Congress.
- Xu Zhuoyuan, a 16-year-old Chinese high-school student from Changsha in Hunan Province, successfully climbed to the summit of Mount Qomolangma. This achievement made her the first female athlete in China to reach the summit from the south slope. It was estimated that it took Xu about 10 hours to complete the expedition which started at around 10 PM on Sunday. Her father, Xu Jianglei a great mountaineer himself and recognised as the "first person from Hunan to climb Mt. Qomolangma" has been a constant source of inspiration for the youngster. Since the age of 12, Xu has been scaling several high-altitude points with the guidance of her father, including no-man's land to name a few. To prepare for the Mt. Qomolangma summit, the teenager trekked to Muztagh Ata, located in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region with an elevation of over 7,000 metres last year.

- The world's largest offshore liquefied natural gas (LNG)

terminal launched trial operations in Hong Kong. The China National Offshore Corporation (CNOOC) reported that the two-berth offshore terminal is part of the Hong Kong LNG project which also includes two submarine pipelines. CNOOC also stated this was the largest offshore energy project in the Special Administrative Zone in recent years. This development marks the conscious effort to embrace clean and sustainable energy sources. Once the trial operations commence, the region will be ready to receive its share of renewable energy that will greatly benefit the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay area. The estimated service life of the terminal is 50 years which is twice as efficient as far as conventional offshore LNG terminals go. The deputy project manager of the Hong Kong leg of the LNG terminal, Liu Zhigang also stated it can hold within its barriers the force of 4.9 million ships each time.

- In the recently opened 15th Shanghai Trade Union Congress, Chen Jining, secretary of the Municipal Party Committee, stated in his speech that the 20th National Congress of the CPC has drawn up a grand strategy for holistically promoting a reinvigorated sense of the nation with a Chinese-style modernisation blueprint. In order to speed up the construction of a metropolitan city with international influence, Shanghai must closely rely on the combined efforts of the workers of the city and the labour efforts of the working class. Over 800 representatives from various sectors and industries of the economy attended the event, running from May 15 to 17. The annual meeting has been aimed at improving the working conditions

of the work force, specifically in the agricultural sector and promoting more female representation and participation as well. The Trade Union Congress has been viewed as an important way to promote Shanghai's growth agenda and transform it into a thriving city that signals modernity, progress, and socialist values.

- The Hungarian Foreign Minister, Peter Szijjarto, expressed his support for China's peace efforts in Ukraine during his visit to China this week. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi also expressed gratitude at Hungary's "Pro-China" policies, calling it a landmark in Sino-Hungarian relations. Moreover, statements were also made criticising the European Union's so-called "bloc confrontations" in terms of the Ukraine crisis. Wang also stated that Beijing would continue to strengthen its alliance with Hungary and continue to work towards "just and reasonable" global governance practices. There is also an acknowledgement on both sides for cooperation in multilateral institutions. There was a call from the Chinese side to avoid "Cold War mentality" and push for a united front. This move comes as the EU bloc remains divided over the Ukraine issue. The EU has tread with caution with regards to these developments so as to not jeopardise its entrenched economic ties with China. Lastly, Szijjarto before leaving for China was quoted as saying, "We don't see China as a risk, but as a country with which cooperation offers us immense opportunities."

SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Manned vehicles for the elderly generate criticism on Weibo:** Small mobility vehicles primarily used by the elderly have been a hot topic of discussion on social media recently as news emerged that several cities are clamping down on them. With sales, and public attention on related accidents on the rise, netizens have been debating whether to ban these vehicles, which have few requirements in terms of licensing and insurance. A related hashtag to the debates has been making rounds on social media, with around 400 million views.

INDIA WATCH

- Over the last decade, the Hungarian government under Prime Minister Viktor Orban has strengthened ties with authoritarian actors, most notably Russia and China. Hungary's participation in the 16+1 format, a cooperation format linking China with Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), and the Belt and Road initiative (BRI) are prime examples of the strengthening of Sino-Hungarian relationship. On the other hand, historically, India's alliance with the EU countries has been significant. This can be discerned from its voting patterns in multilateral organisations as well as support on several issues on issues of mutual interests. However, with China's distinct method of conducting diplomacy, it remains to be seen whether India will be able to outmanoeuvre China at its own game. It would be worthwhile to consider the long-term efficacy of New Delhi's "wait

and watch" approach as opposed to Beijing's current "wolf-warrior" diplomatic approach. This is particularly significant in the growing lack of a united EU voice on issues such as climate change, refugee policies and human rights violations. With the rise of 'illiberal' democracies around the world, perhaps it is time for India to take a measured as well as empowered stance against these voices. The present dispensation seems unable to carve out a foreign policy route that reflects an intellectual and balanced approach to rising Chinese dominance. It creates a juxtaposition that is mired in ambiguity and informational asymmetries internally as well as with the external world.

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