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DAILY
**CONVERSATIONS
IN CHINESE
MEDIA**



**ORGANISATION FOR RESEARCH ON
CHINA AND ASIA**

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I. Social Media Chatter in China

- **Videos of January 8th Earthquake sparks debate:** On January 8th, Menyuan county in the Haibei Tibetan autonomous prefecture (Qinghai province) was struck by an earthquake with a reported magnitude of 6.9. The earthquake damaged a few homes and caused minor injuries to some. The widely shared photos of the incident show buildings with shattered ceilings, wall tiling and window glasses. The CCTV footage from moments before the earthquake has been going around rounds in Weibo which captured an explosive flash of light just before the earthquake. This sparked a debate among Chinese netizens over the cause of the strange lights- called "earthquake lights"- with explanations ranging from ionization of oxygen in rocks under stress to piezoelectric or triboluminescent phenomena.
- **Netizen detained for fabricating video on pandemic:** An internet video titled "Tianjin has been diagnosed with 700 new COVID infected people" has been shared widely across social media platforms. South China Public Security Bureau arrested one of the suspects accused of fabricating and publishing the video claimed fake by the authorities. The netizen has been detained for ten days according to the law.

II. News in China

- The Civil Aviation Administration of China along with The National Development and Reform Commission and Ministry of Transport issued a plan for the development and progress of China's civil aviation industry as part of the 14th Five-year plan. This plan supports China's aim to become an aviation power and a strong transport country. The plan includes a two-step approach- the first phase focusing on recovery, and the second on expanding domestic travel and restoring international transportation. According to the plan, China aspires to have over 270 civil transports airports in operation, 80% of municipal administrative centres with 60-minute airport connections and 70+ countries linked with China via air routes through BRI projects by 2025.
- China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister- Wang Yi, held a telephone conversation with Deputy PM and Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Treuberdi. He affirmed China's firm support as Kazakhstan's comprehensive strategic partner towards maintaining stability in the region. While Treuberdi briefed the security situation in Kazakhstan claiming it as a terrorist attack, China expressed its concern and condolences to the front-line law enforcement officers who died in the fight against the violence. China's focus on and support for Kazakhstan is holding strong amidst the latter's domestic turmoil.

- Chinese President Xi Jinping, held a telephonic conversation with Malta's President Vera on January 10th on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Malta and China. Along with exchanging new year greetings, Xi spoke on 50 years of strong and healthy relations between the two countries which had stood the test of time. Xi Jinping also held telephonic talks with the Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, stressing that 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Belarus.
- China has secured a near-monopoly over the rare earth minerals- controlling 60% of rare earth ore, producing 85% of the oxides, and with 95% of rare earth manufacturing accounting to China. Modern technology- cell phones, computers, and televisions- and even modern medical devices, communication systems, and military technology is highly dependent on rare earth minerals.
- Tianjin Municipal government announced that Tianjin city completed nucleic acid sampling of over 9 million residents of the city, to prevent the epidemic from spreading.
- State Council of China issued its approval for the '14th Five-Year Plan for the construction of a modern circulation system'. The new development concept adheres to Xi Jinping's thought on 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era' to promote innovation-driven, high-quality development and coordinate the advancement of the hardware and software construction in the modern circulation system.
- The Ministry of Education in China issued the guidelines for quality evaluation in high schools, to develop the quality of education as per the National Education Conference. The quality evaluation mainly has five contents which are school-running directions, curriculum teaching, teacher development, school management and student development. The other two major factors included in the guidelines are- indicators of strengthening party building work and adhering to moral education- aiming to strengthen the party's overall leadership over ordinary schools.
- The National Energy Administration to deepen the reform systems in the Power sector issued rules and guidelines to continue promoting the construction of the power market and further standardize the mid-and-long-term electricity transactions across regions and provinces.
- As China looks to deepend ties with Sri Lanka, Foriegn Minister Wang Yi has stated that no "third country." (hinting at India) should interfere in the bilateral between Colombo and Beijing. Both India and China have in the past year refocused their attention on Colombo in what is appearing to be a new area of competition for the two.

III. India Watch

- Malta was one of the first European countries to establish relations with China in 1972. 50 years later, China and Malta have successfully collaborated on many projects and China has shown its appreciation through projects like 'Red China' dock'- the biggest port in Grand Harbour, and other infrastructural and technical assistance. Malta has continued to remain a positive force in China's relations with the EU, against the backdrop of China's deteriorating relations with the EU in recent months. India itself must review ties with Malta and the EU in line of growing China-Malta ties.