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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

- **WHO's advice to Ukraine about closing its Bio-labs:** Netizens in China discussed the WHO's advice to Ukraine about closing its Bio-labs to avoid any leakage of pathogens. Netizens talked about US's response to the Russian allegations of operating bio-labs in Ukraine. The spokesperson of the US state department said that the U.S. government does not own or operate any biolab in Ukraine.
- **Netizens support to the idea of compulsory military training for primary and secondary school students:** A member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and researcher of the Naval Academy, recommended compulsory military training for primary and secondary school students. Netizens on Weibo also seemed to be in support of the idea.
- **Election of the sixth chief executive in Hong Kong SAR has been postponed:** The election of the sixth chief executive in Hong Kong SAR has been postponed due to the rising COVID cases. The news trended on Chinese social media as many blamed the local government for the increase in cases.

II. News in China

- China's President Xi and other leaders are unsettled by the ongoing situations in Ukraine. On Tuesday Xi urged "maximum restraint" over Ukraine, calling the crisis "deeply worrying". Beijing has so far refused to condemn the invasion by Russia and have said that despite international condemnation, their friendship remains "rock solid"
- On Tuesday Zhao Lijian, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson accused the US military of operating Bio-labs in Ukraine, containing dangerous pathogens. He added that the US should disclose information about which viruses are stored and what research are been conducted. Zhao called on "relevant sides to ensure the safety" of the facilities.
- China rescued over 6,000 Chinese nationals from Ukraine. On 9th March the last of 115 Chinese students moved to safe regions in Ukraine and received a warm welcome by Fan Xianrong, Chinese Ambassador to Ukraine, he assured them that the danger is over, and everyone is safe now and that "they will soon be back in the arms of their motherland,".
- Zhao Lijian, spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry, said that China welcomes the UN human rights chief's visit to China and her planned visit to the northwestern province of Xinjiang. But he also urged to not get influenced by the false narrative of the West and opposed certain countries' motives of political manipulation of the event. He urged to look objectively at Xinjiang's progress.

- On International Women's Day, a theme-based protest titled "Blue March", was organized by Hidayetullah Oguzkhan, President of East Turkistan Union of NGOs against the human rights violations in China. They demanded the closure of mass internment camps in Xinjiang. Beijing has denied all the allegations and justified the detentions by labeling the camps as vocational training centers.
- The United States has called on Chinese government to grant "unhindered and unsupervised access" to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in the Xinjiang region. Ambassador Sheba Crocker, the US permanent representative to UN institutions in Geneva, said that any interference in the work of Bachelet's team would support "propaganda" that denies alleged rights abuses against Uyghur Muslim minorities in Xinjiang.
- During a Congressional hearing on the Indo-Pacific region, a top US Admiral told the lawmakers that the tensions between India and China are worst in over four decades. The statement has come just before the 15th round of the high-level military talks between India and China. He also mentioned China's controversial border law which it uses as a pretext to use force and violence to resolve territorial disputes.

III. India Watch

- As covered in our earlier newsletter as well, China's approach towards the Ukraine crisis is gradually but surely changing. As Russia's approach becomes more aggressive, it becomes important for Beijing to maintain its equilibrium even as it maintains ties with Moscow.