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OSC Report: Hot Topics of Discussion Among PRC Internet Users, 14-20 May 2010

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The following report covers the top most-read or most-discussed news stories or bulletin board (BBS) postings -- based in most cases on the sites' own metrics -- on selected PRC websites from the period 14-20 May 2010.

Source Note: The following report provides a sampling of comments observed by OSC on a selected set of websites frequented by Chinese-language users. The views detailed in this report should not be considered representative of public opinion in China generally or of Chinese internet users in particular. OSC is generally unable to verify the identity or location of posters or readers of these online comments. Furthermore, OSC is unable to verify the extent of censorship or manipulation of this online discussion, including potential efforts to shape public opinion by commentators acting on behalf of party, government, or other organizations. Users based in the PRC may need to use circumvention tools to access blocked websites outside the PRC. Information is user-provided and may be false or incorrect.

The websites cited below were selected because they all provide convenient metrics indicating their most popular postings. Renmin Wang and Xinhua Wang are included as representatives of major state- or party-affiliated portals, while Tencent (QQ) and Sina are two of China's most popular commercial, for-profit websites. The Renmin Wang Public Opinion Monitoring Office's top ten hot postings are also included because they are issued by an official source and purport to measure the most popular postings on the Chinese internet as a whole.

Renmin Wang Public Opinion Monitoring Office Top 10 PRC Internet Postings

On 20 May, according to the website of the Renmin Wang Public Opinion Monitoring Office (<http://yq.people.com.cn>), also known as the *Renmin Ribao* Internet Center Public Opinion Monitoring Office, all of the top 10 hot postings for the period 14-20 May originated on popular commercial BBS Tianya Shequ (www.tianya.cn). The Renmin Wang Public Opinion Monitoring Office is a public opinion research institute that cooperates with experts from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences [CASS], Beijing University [Peking University], and Qinghua University [Tsinghua University], and conducts round-the-clock monitoring of internet media such as online versions of traditional news media, internet news portals, BBS, microblogs, and influential bloggers. Renmin Wang (www.people.com.cn) is a portal affiliated with *Renmin Ribao* [*People's Daily*], the official newspaper of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Following are the top 10 articles or postings -- based on the number of written responses to the original item, not on the number of page views -- across the PRC internet as a whole on 20 May, as calculated by Renmin Wang Public Opinion Monitoring Office:

- 1) A Tianya Shequ posting criticized two secondary school teachers' negative responses and incorrect answers to the author's daughter's question in physics. Respondents discussed the author's physics experiment mentioned in the theme posting and some pointed out that a lot of school teachers do not have concrete understanding of the subject. Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 765,526 times, generating 7,826 responses.
- 2) A Tianya Shequ posting responded to a series of leaked pornographic photos of a popular dating game show participant Yan Fengjiao, who claimed that she was coerced into taking the photos. The author elaborated on his observation to point out that Yan was actually telling lies. Dated 16 May, this posting was viewed 912,870 times, generating 2,770 responses.
- 3) A Tianya Shequ posting asserted that all corrupt officials share a common characteristic -- they all have an "abnormally strong" sexual desire. The author cited the confession of a corrupt official as saying that the number of concubines is a symbol of power and "face." Many respondents expressed revulsion towards the unethical Chinese officials, and some said they were prepared to revolt against such a corrupt regime. Dated 15 May, this posting was viewed 573,365 times, generating 1,874 responses.
- 4) A Tianya Shequ posting written by a former worker at Foxconn, a Taiwanese-owned electronics manufacturer notorious for a spate of suicides committed by its employees at its Shenzhen plant, accused the company of repressive management and imposing overly long working hours. The author pointed out that labor rights in general must be improved to avoid social tragedies in the future. Dated 16 May, this posting was viewed 468,420 times, generating 1,739 responses.
- 5) A Tianya Shequ posting called on fellow parents to share their experience in teaching their children about sex. Dated 16 May, this posting was viewed 548,165 times, generating 1,203 responses.
- 6) A Tianya Shequ posting cited a report on popular Beijing tabloid *Xinjing Bao* about high school and university students voluntarily providing sexual services at a prestigious nightclub, Tianshang Renjian, which was closed by Beijing authorities as part of a recent round of its anti-prostitution campaign. Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 476,196 times, generating 1,303 responses.
- 7) A Tianya Shequ posting by another former employee of Taiwanese-owned electronics manufacturer Foxconn commenting on the spate of suicides (see item no. 4). The author similarly condemned the "inhumane" working environment and pointed out that "workers were treated like machines." Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 411,037 times, generating 1,437 responses (ranking as published).
- 8) A Tianya Shequ posting commented on the leaked pornographic photos of TV game show participant Yan Fengjiao. Dated 15 May, this posting was viewed 401,660 times, generating 1,398 responses.
- 9) A Tianya Shequ posting listed 10 Chinese cities which the author thought were not suitable for living. The 10 cities include Harbin, Lhasa, Xian, Taiyuan, Urumqi, Chongqing, highly-urbanized cities like Beijing and Shanghai, Wuxi, cities with high crime rates like Guangzhou and Shenzhen, as well as Wuhan. Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 401,835 times, generating 1,388 responses.
- 10) A Tianya Shequ posting exposed alleged corruption at a secondary school in Sichuan's Neijiang city. Identifying himself as a teacher at the school in question, the author listed out his monthly salary and remuneration details in order to criticize the school for forcefully deducting "donations" for school construction projects. Dated 15 May, this posting was viewed 389,679 times, generating 1,448 responses (ranking as published).

Top Five Most-Read Postings on Official Media-Affiliated BBS

Following are the top five most-read postings on 20 May -- according to site metrics -- on Qiangguo Luntan [Strong Nation Forum], a BBS on Renmin Wang.

- 1) A posting about the imminent collapse of an abandoned bus terminal in Yantai city, Shandong province. Most of the respondents lambasted official corruption. Dated 15 May, this posting is identical to the most-commented posting on Tianya Shequ last week [10 May; see CPP20100514715028]. It was viewed 573,035 times, generating 2,930 responses.
- 2) A posting lambasted the Yunnan courts for releasing a county court judge who allegedly raped two teenage girls. The majority of respondents slammed the verdict and mourned for the death of Chinese laws. Dated 18 May, this posting was viewed 121,234 times, generating 408 responses.
- 3) A posting cited a Renmin Wang report about a video showing Chen Bentao, a local court judge of Qingdao Fangzi District Court, asking a plaintiff for 19,000 yuan for "operational charges." Huang Liangdong, vice president of Qingdao Fangzi District Court, and Guo Zhenyu, head of the court's Executive Bureau, admitted that the judge had been wrong to ask for a bribe but refused to compensate the plaintiff. The majority of respondents called this a typical case of court corruption. Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 94,568 times, generating 97 responses.
- 4) A posting reprinted a report on Beijing-based *Jinghua Shibao* about Beijing's crackdown on the prestigious nightclub Tianshang Renjian. Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 94,467 times, generating 233 responses.
- 5) A posting criticized the price surge of garlic, red peppers and green beans. The author pointed out that today's price of green beans was four times more expensive than it was one year ago, adding that people's daily necessities should not be subject to speculative activities. Many respondents criticized the vices of capitalism, few people pointed out that corrupt bureaucracy plays a major role in inflation in China. Dated 19 May, this posting was viewed 91,242 times, generating 89 responses.

Following are the top five most-read postings -- per site metrics -- observed on the BBS of Xinhua Wang (www.xinhuanet.com), the web portal of China's state press agency Xinhua, on 20 May.

- 1) A posting about a fatal traffic accident in Beijing involving a speeding car and a drunk driver. Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 181,931 times, generating 187 responses.
- 2) A posting reposted a Xinhua News Agency report about Premier Wen Jiabao's inspection in Tianjin, where he emphasized the implementation of a moderately relaxed monetary policy and the need to curb the rapid increase of exceedingly high prices for real estate in certain cities. Most respondents noted that property prices were still on the rise. Dated 17 May, this posting was viewed 140,022 times, generating 257 responses.
- 3) A posting reposted a report on Nanhai Wang, a key news portal of Hainan province subsidiary to provincial daily *Hainan Ribao*, which disclosed that children of the social security bureau chiefs of Sanya city, Qionghai city, and Wenchang city were listed as the top three candidates for positions in the Sanya government. The majority of respondents suspected nepotism and corruption. Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 124,341 times, generating 302 responses.
- 4) A posting cited a Xinhua report of the crackdown on Beijing nightclub, Tiansheng Renjian. Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 108,363 times, generating 79 responses.
- 5) A posting discussed the high-profile closure of Beijing nightclub Tiansheng Renjian. The author questioned the "calm" response of the arrested hostesses and speculated on the nightclub's ties with criminal syndicates. Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 106,596 times, generating 338 responses.

Top Five Most-Read Postings on Popular Commercial Portals

Following are topics from the top five most-read postings on 20 May as calculated by the "news" section of the BBS of popular PRC commercial web portal Tencent (Tengxun Wang; QQ; www.qq.com). Tencent is the second most popular website in China -- after search engine Baidu (www.baidu.com) -- according to international web rating company Alexa (www.alexa.com, 20 May).

- 1) A posting discussed the credibility of reality TV shows following the scandal of pornographic photos of game show participant Yan Fengjiao. Dated 18 May, this posting was viewed 653,496 times, generating 1,021 responses.
- 2) A posting praised China's air defense system and claimed that US pilots of F-22 stealth fighter jets "felt threatened" entering Chinese air space. The author praised China's Red Flag [hong qi] series of air defense missiles. However, the majority of respondents questioned the validity of the author's claims. Dated 17 May, this posting was viewed 52,792 times, generating 108 responses.
- 3) A posting showed several photos of a group of Shanghai World Expo student volunteers who returned to university campus after completing their service. Dated 19 May, this posting was viewed 41,120 times, generating 21 responses.
- 4) A posting discussed the phenomenon of university students, including post-graduates, being hostesses at a prestigious nightclub in Beijing. The author said employment pressure, family financial difficulties, and a materialistic society may be the driving force behind the student "prostitutes." Dated 15 May, this posting was viewed 30,622 times, generating 329 responses.
- 5) A posting showing photos of the work of Peng Liang, a university graduate working as a village official in Chenjiahe village, Baokang county, Xiangfan city. The photos showed Peng chatting with local peasants, helping one of the peasants to fix a computer, and feeding rabbits at a farm. Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 54,122 times, generating 415 responses.

Following are the top five most-read postings on 20 May -- per site metrics -- on the BBS of popular PRC commercial web portal Sina (Xinlang Wang; www.sina.com.cn). Sina is the fifth most popular web domain in mainland China, following Baidu, Tencent, trade website Taobao (www.taobao.com), and the Hong Kong edition of US-based search engine Google, according to Alexa (20 May).

- 1) A posting showcased photos of a Volkswagen car. Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 492,757 times, generating 56 responses.
- 2) A posting recalled the 18-hour standoff between a Malaysian Navy warship and vessel 311 of the Chinese Fishery Department in the South China Sea on 29 April. The author asserted that the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, which emphasizes political trust among the countries which claim sovereignty over territories in the disputed South China Sea, "seemed to have lost its appeal." Many respondents suggested that military conflict is the only solution. Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 460,848 times, generating 317 responses.
- 3) A posting lamented a fatal car accident in Beijing referring to the same tragedy mentioned in the Xinhua BBS section (item no.1). Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 303,294 times, generating 149 responses.
- 4) A posting noted that it is now possible for a new generation of Jian-10 fighter jets to take off from the Russian aircraft carrier Varyag purchased by China. Dated 14 May, this posting was viewed 293,891 times, generating 69 responses.
- 5) A posting reposted six photographs of the PLA 99G tank originally carried on Xinhua Wang and a PRC military forum Dingsheng Junshi Luntan [www.top81.cn]. Dated 15 May, this posting was viewed 262,972 times, generating 120

responses.



Picture shows advanced tank, PLA 99G. (Dingsheng Junshi Luntan, 15 May)

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