

CHINA MEDIA BULLETIN

*A weekly update of press freedom and censorship news
related to the People's Republic of China*

Issue No. 63: July 5, 2012

Top Headlines

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-  Netizen wins suit over labor camp stint for mocking Bo Xilai
-  Microblogs spread word of protests, police violence in Shifang
-  Hong Kong reporter briefly held for question to Hu Jintao
-  Indian navy files stolen by China-based hackers

PHOTO OF THE WEEK: SHIFANG PROTESTS



Credit: [Ministry of Tofu blog](#)

BROADCAST / PRINT MEDIA NEWS



Reporter suspended for article on officials' luxury cigarettes

Shi Junrong, a reporter at *Xi'an Evening News* in Shaanxi Province, was recently suspended for exposing government officials' consumption of expensive cigarettes. The reporter, who was also the paper's bureau chief in the city of Wei'an, confirmed his suspension via his microblog on June 30. His article had described a local Communist Party meeting at which attendees smoked a brand called 95 Zhizun, which reportedly cost about 200 yuan (\$31) per pack. Shi was contrite in his microblog post, saying he conducted a telephone interview to substantiate the story, but "didn't interview everyone involved, which is against the editorial policy of my newspaper." However, his suspension quickly elicited a broader discussion online and in the press, with even state media officials weighing in on the side of greater press freedom. Dissident journalist and former *Economic Weekly* deputy chief editor Gao Yu said the incident showed the high level of official control over public opinion ahead of the 18th Communist Party Congress scheduled for the fall. Cao Lin, an editor at the Communist Party Youth League's *China Youth Daily*, wrote in a July 3 editorial that Shi's suspension exposed China's failure to protect the rights of journalists, which he said amounted to a failure to guarantee Chinese people's basic rights. The editorial circulated widely on the internet, and was reposted on the microblogging account of state broadcaster China Central Television's evening news program. According to state-run newspaper *China Daily*, Nong Tao, an official at the General Administration of Press and Publication, expressed sympathy for Shi on his own microblog. "The report is not improper and the local government abused its power," he wrote.

- **China Media Project 7/3/2012:** [No power for media, no power for citizens](#)
- **China Daily 7/3/2012:** [Official defends journalist's revelation](#)
- **Radio Free Asia 7/2/2012:** [China fires journalist, blocks agency](#)

NEW MEDIA / TECHNOLOGY NEWS



Bloomberg news site blocked after Xi Jinping article

The website of the U.S.-based news agency Bloomberg remained inaccessible in China as of July 4, having been blocked in the wake of its June 29 story on the finances of Chinese vice president Xi Jinping's relatives. Xi is widely expected to succeed Chinese president Hu Jintao as head of the Chinese Communist Party at a party congress scheduled for the fall, and the authorities have been wary of any negative coverage of him (see CMB No. 49). The article alleged that Xi's extended family held millions of dollars in assets, and while it did not link the wealth to Xi or his immediate family, it contrasted his relations' riches with his own statements against nepotism and influence peddling. In 2004, for instance, he warned officials to "rein in your spouses, children, relatives, friends, and staff, and vow not to use power for personal gain." Though Bloomberg's other services, including its financial data system, remained available online, Chinese microblogging platforms apparently blocked searches for the word "Bloomberg" and even for Xi's surname. Separately on

June 29, the Chinese microblog accounts of the *New York Times* were disabled for much of the day as the paper launched its own Chinese-language website, though the website itself was not affected. The existing Chinese sites of other U.S. news outlets, such as the *Wall Street Journal*, have faced temporary blocking in the past, as they frequently cover topics that Beijing deems sensitive.

- Reuters 7/4/2012: [Bloomberg sites blocked in China days after Xi family wealth story](#)
- CPJ 6/29/2012: [China blocks Bloomberg for political report](#)
- Bloomberg 6/29/2012: [Xi Jinping millionaire relations reveal fortunes of elite](#)
- Associated Press 6/28/2012: [After 'New York Times' launches Chinese website, 2 related microblogs go offline for hours](#)
- *Washington Post* 6/29/2012: [U.S. urges China to respect internet freedom after Bloomberg web site is censored](#)
- *New York Times* 6/27/2012: [The Times is introducing a Chinese-language news site](#)



Netizen wins suit over labor camp stint for mocking Bo Xilai

On June 29, a court in Chongqing ruled in favor of a former civil servant who was forced to spend a year in a “reeducation through labor” camp after mocking Bo Xilai, the city’s party secretary at the time, in an April 2011 microblog post (see CMB No. [62](#)). The plaintiff, Fang Hong, told the Associated Press that he plans to seek \$6,000 in compensation as well as an apology from the city government, which the court decision makes possible. According to the state-run news agency Xinhua, Chongqing’s Third Intermediate Court found that Fang’s administrative detention was illegal because although his comments were indecent, they did not amount to spreading rumors or disturbing social order, the justifications given for his labor camp term. Judicial review is permitted for “reeducation through labor” sentences, which are issued by police, but it is rare for former detainees in politically sensitive cases to have their appeals heard or decided in their favor. The ruling, combined with the fact that Xinhua reported on it despite tight controls over news related to Bo, suggests that the case is being used to bolster the central government’s long-standing assertions that the rule of law, rather than political infighting, is driving events surrounding Bo, who was purged from the Politburo in April and is the subject of an ongoing investigation. Nevertheless, prominent lawyer Pu Zhiqiang, who assisted Fang with his suit, said that the victory had inspired a renewed appeal to the National People’s Congress (NPC) to abolish the labor camp system, which is supposed to punish petty criminals but is often used to detain political and religious dissidents without trial. Separately, former Bo deputy Wang Lijun resigned from his NPC seat on June 26, according to a three-line Xinhua post published on June 30. Because the step meant a loss of parliamentary immunity, some interpreted it as a sign that Wang would soon face prosecution.

- BBC 6/29/2012: [China blogger who mocked Bo Xilai online wins case](#)
- Xinhua 6/29/2012: [Blogger detained for mocking officials wins redress](#)
- *Guardian* 6/29/2012: [Chinese blogger who mocked Bo Xilai wins court case](#)
- *Telegraph* 6/30/2012: [China prepares for the first trial in the Bo Xilai scandal](#)

Microblogs spread word of protests, police violence in Shifang

Over the past week, news and images of residents peacefully protesting the construction of a copper processing plant in Shifang, Sichuan Province—and of police responding with tear gas, stun grenades, and beatings—have spread quickly over the internet, despite some signs of censorship. On July 1, thousands of Shifang residents took to the streets after learning about plans to construct the factory, which raised fears of increased pollution and related illnesses. By July 2, “Shifang” had become the most-searched term on the microblogging site Sina Weibo. A July 3 post in which popular blogger Han Han expressed support for the protesters likely helped increase awareness of what was happening in the relatively small city of 400,000 people. After the first round of demonstrations, the local government announced—including via its own Weibo account—that it would suspend construction of the plant. But residents continued to protest, calling for a permanent cancellation and the release of several dozen demonstrators, many of them high school students, who had been detained. In what is being described as an important victory for “people power” in China, on July 4 the local government issued a statement affirming that it was canceling the project and releasing the students. The China Media Project reported that although much information was circulating online, a number of Weibo posts that included photos and other criticism of the government had been deleted. Moreover, on July 4, the term “Shifang” had abruptly dropped off of the list of commonly searched terms on Weibo, a possible sign of censorship aimed at limiting further discussion once the problem had supposedly been resolved.

- **Agence France-Presse 7/3/2012: [China vows crackdown after latest protest](#)**
- **Wall Street Journal 7/3/2012: [Planned China metals plant scrapped](#)**
- **Global Times 7/3/2012: [Construction halted in Shifang over health concerns](#)**
- **Wall Street Journal 7/2/2012: [Sichuan protest turns violent](#)**
- **China Digital Times 7/3/2012: [Han Han: The liberation of Shifang](#)**
- **Ministry of Tofu 7/4/2012: [Faceoff in Shifang—Photos of China’s largest and bloodiest NIMBY protest in recent history](#)**
- **New York Times 7/4/2012: [Bolder protests against pollution win project’s defeat in China](#)**

Apple settles lawsuit over iPad name

The U.S. technology giant Apple has agreed to pay \$60 million to Shenzhen-based Proview Technology to settle a trademark dispute over the name iPad, according to a statement by the Guangdong Higher People’s Court on July 2. Apple had bought the rights to the name from Proview of Taiwan before applying it to its popular tablet computer, but Proview’s Shenzhen unit claimed that the rights were not valid in China (see CMB No. 47). The dispute had led to the seizure of iPads in some Chinese cities earlier in 2012, and analysts said the Chinese government was likely pushing for a settlement in order to ease foreign companies’ concerns about doing business in China. Proview was also motivated to settle by pressure from its creditors, as it was deeply in debt. Duncan Clark, chairman of the consulting firm BDA China, said Apple had rapidly expanded its sales in the country without developing a “deep understanding of China” among its senior managers, which raised the “risk of mistakes.” The Proview lawsuit has apparently inspired at least one other

Chinese company to pile on. A Chinese online news portal reported on July 1 that Snow Leopard Household Chemical, a Shanghai-based chemical manufacturer, had recently filed a lawsuit against Apple over its use of the name Snow Leopard for a computer operating system released in 2009.

- *Wall Street Journal* 7/2/2012: [Apple pays small price in China case](#)
 - *National Business Daily* 7/3/2012 (in Chinese): [Behind the \\$60 million settlement: Proview could have asked for more from Apple](#)
 - ZDNet 7/3/2012: [Apple's \\$60M for China iPad trademark merely 'tuition fee'](#)
 - *PC Magazine* 7/3/2012: [Chinese company sues Apple over snow leopard trademark](#)
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HONG KONG



Reporter briefly held for question to Hu Jintao

Hon Yiuting, a reporter at Hong Kong's *Apple Daily*, was briefly detained on June 30 after he asked Chinese president Hu Jintao about the June 4, 1989, crackdown on the Tiananmen Square democracy movement. As Hu toured a local ship terminal, Hon shouted, "President Hu, have you heard that Hong Kong people hope to reverse the verdict of June 4?" The journalist said he was held for 15 minutes by the police, who accused him of "disturbing public order." The Chinese leader was in Hong Kong for the inauguration ceremony of new chief executive Leung Chun-ying on July 1, which was followed by a mass protest of an estimated 400,000 people calling for Leung's resignation and opposing the territory's perceived erosion of freedom under Chinese rule (see CMB No. [62](#)). According to *China Digital Times*, search terms such as "July 1 + take to the streets," "Victoria" (a reference to the site of the protest), "Leung Chun-ying," and "Big Liar," which some Hong Kongers had dubbed Leung, were banned on the popular Chinese microblogging platform Sina Weibo. A post written by Xu Ji, a *Ming Pao* features writer with about 24,000 microblog followers, was deleted three days before the planned protest. He wrote, "It is said a powerful typhoon is expected to sweep across Hong Kong on July 1. How many people will take to the streets on that day? The time has come to test the people of Hong Kong!"

- *China Digital Times* 7/2/2012: [Sensitive words: Protest in HK, scandal in Beijing](#)
 - China Media Project 6/28/2012: [Post on July 1 Hong Kong protests deleted from Weibo](#)
 - Central News Agency 6/30/2012 (in Chinese): [Reporter interrogated after asking Hu Jintao about June 4](#)
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Ousted journalist details 'self-censorship' at major paper

Former *South China Morning Post* reporter Paul Mooney, known for his award-winning writing about human rights in China and other contentious issues, released an article on June 28 that attempts to explain why the revered paper has become the "butt of jokes in the local Chinese media." The *Post's*

newly appointed editor in chief, Wang Xiangwei, has come under fire in recent weeks for allegedly blocking stories that reflect poorly on Chinese or Hong Kong authorities (see CMB No. [62](#)). According to Mooney, Wang told him in April that his contract would not be renewed beyond May 21 due to budget constraints, but proceeded to hire a spate of new reporters from the mainland after Mooney's departure. Moreover, Wang ignored Mooney's offer to work as a freelance writer and his request to retain his accreditation with the *Post*, which would entail no financial cost to the paper. "To me it was clear that this was a political decision. For seven months, he had basically blocked me from writing any China stories for the newspaper," Mooney said. He noted that he was the last of many experienced foreign reporters whose contracts Wang had declined to renew, leaving the paper with no foreigners working in China. In an interview with Agence France-Presse, Wang admitted that his recent controversial decision to radically shorten an article on the suspicious death of Chinese dissident Li Wangyang was "a bad call." But he said, "It was never my intention to downplay that story and try to exercise self-censorship," adding that he was "shocked at the scale of the reaction to all of this." Amid growing concern over Hong Kong's press freedom, the International Federation of Journalists on June 28 called on Wang to resign as a member of the Jilin Province Political Consultative Conference on the grounds that his seat in the prestigious mainland advisory body raised questions as to his independence and impartiality.

- [iSunAffairs 6/28/2012 \(in Chinese & English\): Why did I get kicked out of 'South China Morning Post'?](#)
- [Agence France-Presse 7/2/2012: H.K.'s SCMP editor under fire as press freedom 'shrinks'](#)
- [International Federation of Journalists 6/28/2012: Hong Kong's 'South China Morning Post' accused of censorship](#)

TIBET & XINJIANG



Malware targets overseas Tibetan and Uighur activists

A deceptive e-mail message carrying a malicious program was sent to over 80 individuals active in the Tibetan rights community on June 15, according to a report by the University of Toronto research group Citizen Lab. The e-mail's subject line referred to a June 14 European Parliament resolution that called on China to disclose information about Tibetan protesters who had self-immolated and to grant human rights monitors access to Tibet. Citizen Lab found that the malware embedded in the e-mail was the same used in past instances of Tibet-related cyberattacks. Users who opened the file would inadvertently grant the hackers access to their computers. On June 29, it was reported that Russian internet security company Kaspersky Labs had intercepted similar malware targeting the overseas Uighur community. Technology news website CNET said the file was attached to e-mail messages and masqueraded as an Apple operating system application. Once installed, it would connect to a server based in China and give the attackers control over the host computer. Tibetan, Uighur, and other human rights activists have repeatedly been targeted in the past by cyberespionage thought to originate in China.

- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 6/21/2012: [Tibetan activists targeted by spoof European Parliament e-mail](#)
- Phayul 6/30/2012: [Is the Dalai Lama the reason behind the new Tibet malware for OS X?](#)
- Uyghur American Association 7/3/2012: [Malware originating in China targeting Uyghur activists an attempt to control Uyghur sources of information about East Turkestan](#)
- CNET 6/29/2012: [New OS X Tibet malware variant surfaces](#)

BEYOND CHINA



Taiwan citizen detained in China for alleged TV ‘sabotage’

Chung Ting-pang, a Taiwanese engineer, was detained on June 18 by Chinese security agents in Ganzhou, Jiangxi Province, as he was about to board a flight for Taiwan. On June 27, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported that Chung, who had been visiting relatives in Ganzhou, faced charges of “sabotaging national and public security” for obtaining “classified documents” and providing people in China with devices that would allow them to disrupt television signals, presumably to broadcast uncensored information. Chung’s wife and daughter, who did not confirm his alleged involvement in broadcasting activities, told reporters in Taiwan that they had not heard from him since he was detained, though an official at Taiwan’s Ministry of Justice said the Chinese police had assured them of Chung’s safety. Several Taiwanese lawmakers have joined the family’s calls for President Ma Ying-jeou’s government to secure Chung’s release. A related Facebook page created by Chung’s daughter had garnered over 9,000 supporters as of July 5. Taiwanese media and the Falun Dafa Information Center linked the engineer’s detention to his practice of Falun Gong, a spiritual movement whose followers are subject to harsh persecution in China. According to the *Taipei Times*, at least 13 Taiwanese Falun Gong practitioners were detained, imprisoned, or tortured in China between 1998 and 2009, though they were all eventually released. By contrast, mainland Falun Gong practitioners accused of tapping into television signals to broadcast uncensored information have been sentenced to long prison terms after questionable trials, and several have died in custody.

- *Epoch Times* 7/3/2012: [Taiwan citizen accused of conspiring to tell truth in China](#)
- Xinhua 6/27/2012: [Taiwanese suspected saboteur under investigation](#)
- *Taipei Times* 7/3/2012: [Family of Falun Gong practitioner seeks official help](#)
- Falun Dafa Information Center 6/28/2012: [Taiwanese Falun Gong practitioner abducted in China](#)
- Facebook 6/29/2012 (in Chinese): [Please save my dad Chung Ting-pang!](#)
- *Weekly Standard* 12/6/2010: [Into thin airwaves](#)



State-owned site to stream U.S. films in China

The web subsidiary of the state-owned China Movie Channel, known as M1905, and Jiaflix, a startup

cofounded by U.S. and Chinese entrepreneurs, announced on June 28 that they planned to launch an online video streaming service in China. The joint venture already has an agreement to stream films from the Hollywood studio Paramount Pictures, adding to a string of recent Sino-American movie deals (see CMB No. [61](#)), and its subscription-based service is scheduled to launch on the M1905 website and related smartphone applications by the end of 2012. The new platform will bring a state-owned company into competition with China's existing market leaders for online streaming video, the privately owned Youku and Tudou, which announced merger plans in March (see CMB No. [50](#)). All such sites are regulated by the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT), and to date they have benefited from the absence of potential foreign rivals like YouTube, which is blocked, and Netflix, which has yet to enter the Chinese market.

- *Wall Street Journal* 6/28/2012: [Venture to stream movies in China](#)
- *Variety* 6/28/2012: [Jiaflix, China movie channel in streaming pact](#)
- *Tech in Asia* 6/29/2012: [With Government backing, China close to a Netflix-like video subscription site](#)
- *Reuters* 6/29/2012: [China to launch Netflix-like movie service](#)



Indian navy files stolen by China-based hackers

The *Indian Express* reported on July 1 that naval computer systems in Visakhapatnam, the headquarters of India's Eastern Naval Command, had been targeted by hackers based in China. The Eastern Naval Command plans operations and deployments in the South China Sea, where Beijing has recently clashed with neighboring countries over its expansive territorial claims (see CMB No. [58](#)). The naval computers were found to have been infected with a virus that allowed transmission of confidential files and documents to servers in China. The breach was reportedly made possible by the improper use of USB storage devices on sensitive computers that are not connected to the internet for security reasons. The virus, which secretly collected specific documents based on certain keywords, was ferried to the target computers on the small USB drives, which also carried the stolen files back to internet-enabled computers. The Indian navy has indicted at least six mid-level officers for "procedural lapses" that led to the breach. China has been blamed for numerous incidents of cyberespionage in recent years, including some with military targets (see CMB No. [50](#)). Moreover, this is not the first time that highly classified Indian government documents have fallen into the hands of China-based hackers. In a 2010 investigation into cyberespionage called *Shadow in the Clouds*, the Infowar Monitor research group discovered that Indian government documents, including diplomatic correspondence classified as "confidential," were among the files obtained by apparently China-based hackers targeting the computers of the Tibetan government in exile.

- *Australian* 7/4/2012: [Indian navy probes Chinese hack claims](#)
- *Indian Express* 7/1/2012: [China hackers enter navy computers, plant bug to extract sensitive data](#)
- *China Daily* 7/2/2012: [IP addresses not evidence of hacking: expert](#)
- *Infowar Monitor* 4/5/2012: [Shadows in the Cloud: An investigation into cyber espionage 2.0](#)