



For Better Understanding on China–Pakistan and CPEC

Gleanings from the National & Chinese Press

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July 16, 2026

Pakistan Observer

Dar's China visit marks major push for Sino-Pak AI, Digital, and Strategic Cooperation

Muhammad Junaid

SHANGHAI – Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar visited China to strengthen Pakistan's tech-focused partnership with China, holding high-level talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and signing the agreement establishing the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization (WAICO).

The high-level engagement underscored Islamabad and Beijing's growing focus on emerging technologies, with artificial intelligence, the digital economy, and innovation taking center stage in discussions between the two sides.

Dar was accompanied by Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Punjab Chief Minister's Adviser on Artificial Intelligence and Special Initiatives Ali Mustafa Dar, Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA) Chairman Bilal Bin Saqib, Additional Secretary (Asia Pacific) Dr. Syed Asad Ali Gillani, and Pakistan's Chargé d'Affaires in Beijing, Aizaz Khan.

During the bilateral meeting, Dar and Wang reviewed the state of Pakistan-China relations and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the countries' longstanding All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. Both leaders agreed to accelerate cooperation under CPEC 2.0, with particular emphasis on high-quality development, trade, investment, science and technology, digital transformation, and artificial intelligence.

The talks also covered key regional and international developments, with both sides expressing their resolve to maintain close coordination on issues of mutual interest amid an evolving global geopolitical landscape.

Pakistan among founding member of global AI cooperation body

In a parallel development, Pakistan formally joined the founding framework of the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization after Senator Ishaq Dar signed the agreement establishing the international AI body. The move signals Islamabad's intention to play a more active role in shaping global AI collaboration and governance.

By becoming a signatory, Pakistan reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening international cooperation in artificial intelligence while advocating equitable access to AI technologies. The government also reiterated its willingness to work alongside partner countries to promote responsible AI development, innovation-driven growth, and inclusive technological advancement.

<https://pakobserver.net/dars-china-visit-marks-major-push-for-sino-pak-ai-digital-and-strategic-cooperation/>

July 17, 2026

The Express Tribune

PM Shehbaz hails \$440m Pakistan-China pharma deals, vows enhanced security for Chinese investors

Cooperation agreement regarding national programme for protective vaccines also finalised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday welcomed the signing of nine agreements worth over \$440 million between Pakistani and Chinese pharmaceutical companies while reaffirming that the government would leave “no stone unturned” to ensure the security of Chinese citizens working in the country.

Pakistan has witnessed a spike in violence and terrorist attacks, particularly in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, following the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan and after the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022. The attacks have largely focused on police personnel, law enforcement agencies and security forces, though Chinese nationals have also been among the targets in recent years. These attacks have targeted Chinese citizens working on key infrastructure projects in Pakistan, particularly the multi-billion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor initiative.

Addressing the Pakistan-China Business-to-Business Conference on Pharmaceutical, Healthcare and Biotechnology Sector in Islamabad, PM Shehbaz attached great importance to the security of 300 Chinese delegates.

“I would like to say with [the] fullest force at my command that the security of Chinese brothers and sisters in Pakistan is paramount for us. We will leave no stone unturned to provide them with best possible security,” he said.

The premier thanked local business leaders for contributing to the development of the country’s pharmaceutical sector, saying they had taken “great efforts just to show that these agreements will most definitely convert into action and implementable documents” that would be a step forward in promoting the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

“We have just witnessed a ceremony of agreements between the Pakistani and Chinese entrepreneurs valuing almost \$440 million.”

The conference was attended by the Chinese ambassador to Pakistan, representatives of local and Chinese pharmaceutical companies, federal ministers, special assistants, senior government officials, and a large number of other participants, according to a press release issued by the PM Office. It said the agreements were signed between the private pharmaceutical sectors of Pakistan and China, including agreements on local vaccine production, biotechnology, drug manufacturing, technology exchange and prevention of hepatitis.

An agreement on cooperation regarding the national programme for protective vaccines was also finalised during the conference.

PM Shehbaz described China as Pakistan's "most trusted and most dependable friend" and said China played an important role in Pakistan's economic development.

"China has supported Pakistan on all global forums, and \$30 billion in investment has come under CPEC 1.0," he asserted while thanking the Chinese leadership for its unwavering support.

PM Shehbaz praised Chinese President Xi Jinping as a "visionary leader" who "completely transformed Chinese society and economy".

He said China's economic and strategic development was "unprecedented" and praised the hard work and performance of the Chinese people in education, research, development and other sectors.

He also appreciated the efforts of the business communities of both countries, the federal minister for health, the special assistant for industry and production, the Chinese ambassador to Pakistan, and the Pakistani ambassador to China for enhancing cooperation between the two nations.

Referring to the recent US-Iran war, the premier said it had created major challenges for the world.

He said Pakistan had played an important mediating role between the US and Iran, with friendly and brotherly countries, including China, extending full cooperation.

The premier stated that President Xi Jinping had also lent his full support to the efforts.

Reiterating the importance of Pakistan-China ties, the prime minister emphasised that the friendship between the two countries was "higher than the Himalayas, sweeter than honey and stronger than steel".

Threat to Chinese security

The federal government on Wednesday said it was stepping up security around the Saindak copper and gold mine in Balochistan after terrorist violence disrupted supply routes.

State Minister for Interior Talal Chaudhry had said the government had received the mine operator's security concerns in early July and ordered agencies to increase deployment around its installations, personnel and cargo.

"We have directed the provincial authorities and all concerned security agencies to beef up deployment for all of their installations, personnel, logistics and transportation," Chaudhry had told Reuters.

"It is our priority to safeguard all projects run by international companies in Pakistan," he said, adding that logistics and cargo shipments to the site would receive additional security protection.

Balochistan, which borders Iran and Afghanistan, hosts several major Chinese-backed projects, including the deep-water port of Gwadar.

The Financial Times reported that Saindak's managing director had warned the energy ministry that operations could become unsustainable within a month because deteriorating security conditions were disrupting supply routes.

The Saindak mine is operated by the state-owned Metallurgical Corporation of China under a lease extended in 2022, and exports most of its output to China.

China's foreign ministry said it was unaware of the situation but that Beijing would work with its close partner, Pakistan, to protect Chinese citizens, projects, and institutions in the country.

One of the worst attacks on Chinese personnel occurred in July 2021, when a total of 10 Chinese nationals lost their lives and another 26 were injured in a suicide attack on a bus carrying them to the Dasu Hydropower Project work site.

In March 2024, six people, including five Chinese engineers, were killed in a suicide attack in Besham, a remote area of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. Around the same time, a massive explosion on a road near Jinnah International Airport in Karachi killed three people, including two Chinese engineers, and injured at least 11 others.

The government established a Special Protection Unit exclusively for the security of Chinese nationals in February this year, reiterating that their safety remained a top priority.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2618795/pm-shehbaz-hails-440m-pakistan-china-pharma-deals-vows-enhanced-security-for-chinese-investors>

China unveils first consumption-focused five-year plan to drive growth

China has unveiled its first-ever five-year plan dedicated exclusively to boosting domestic consumption, marking a strategic shift as the world's second-largest economy looks to strengthen internal demand and reduce reliance on external factors for growth.

The plan, covering the 2026-30 period, sets an ambitious target of raising total retail sales of consumer goods to around 60 trillion yuan (around \$8.8 trillion) by the end of the decade. The move comes after retail sales crossed the 50 trillion yuan mark for the first time in 2025, highlighting the growing importance of consumption in driving economic expansion.

Analysts say the initiative represents an important upgrade in China's macroeconomic planning framework, as it is the first time a standalone blueprint has been formulated solely to expand consumption. Previously, consumption-related goals were embedded within broader national five-year plans as secondary priorities.

"This marks a breakthrough in top-level economic design," said Fu Yifu, a researcher at Jiangsu Su Merchants Bank, adding that the plan reflects Beijing's intent to place consumer demand at the centre of its growth strategy.

Officials say consumption already contributed 52% to China's GDP growth in 2025, but its full potential remains untapped due to structural challenges such as high household savings and an investment-heavy growth model.

To address these issues, the plan outlines 28 key tasks across six major areas, including boosting household income, improving the social security system, and enhancing the overall consumer environment. Measures include stabilising employment, raising minimum wages, and increasing property income channels to strengthen purchasing power.

The government also aims to reduce precautionary savings by expanding public spending on healthcare, education and elderly care, thereby easing financial burdens on households and encouraging spending.

An important feature of the plan is its focus on improving quality of life through targeted consumption in sectors such as elderly care, childcare, culture, tourism, and health services. Authorities say these efforts are designed not only to stimulate economic activity but also to enhance public welfare.

Service consumption is expected to play a central role in this transition. The plan calls for increasing the share of per capita spending on services, reflecting changing consumer preferences and a shift towards a more mature consumption structure.

Recent trends suggest this shift is already underway. China's tourism sector, for instance, grew by 9.9% in 2025 — more than double the global average — driven by rising demand for lifestyle and experience-based travel.

This transformation is particularly visible in cities such as Wanning in Hainan province. Once known primarily for surfing, the coastal destination now offers a range of activities, including fitness tourism, paddleboarding and cycling, attracting a younger demographic. In the first half of 2026 alone, Wanning recorded more than 6.3 million tourist visits, with a majority participating in sports-related activities.

The plan also emphasizes improving the inbound consumption environment by expanding visa-free access, increasing international flight routes, and streamlining tax refund procedures for foreign visitors. Initiatives such as "Shopping in China" aim to position the country as a global retail destination.

Experts say the implications of the policy extend beyond China's borders. By strengthening domestic demand, Beijing could reshape global trade dynamics and create new opportunities for international businesses.

Chi Fulin, president of the China Institute for Reform and Development, estimates that aligning China's share of global consumption with its manufacturing output could add at least \$10 trillion to the global consumer market by 2035.

Similarly, Zou Jiayi, president of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, said a consumption-driven growth model would support more balanced trade and stronger import-export dynamics, while also enabling China to contribute more significantly to global economic stability.

The plan has already boosted confidence among multinational companies operating in China. Business leaders say the focus on consumption, particularly in sectors such as health, lifestyle and technology, is creating new avenues for growth.

Industry observers say Chinese consumers are increasingly prioritising quality, design and experience over price, signalling a broader shift in market behaviour.

While challenges remain, including structural imbalances and income disparities, policymakers appear committed to sustaining momentum through coordinated reforms and long-term planning.

As China enters what officials describe as the “full-scale construction” phase of its 15th Five-Year Plan, the consumption-focused blueprint is expected to play a pivotal role in shaping the country’s economic trajectory in the years ahead.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2618646/china-unveils-first-consumption-focused-five-year-plan-to-drive-growth>

The Nation

Pakistan signs WAICO agreement in China

Islamabad - Pakistan signed the agreement on the establishment of the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organisation (WAICO) at a signing ceremony that was held in Shanghai, China on Thursday.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar signed the agreement on behalf of Pakistan.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan reaffirmed its commitment as a founding member of WAICO to advance international cooperation in the area of Artificial Intelligence, especially from the perspective of the Global South.

It further said that Pakistan looks forward to working closely with fellow WAICO member states in efforts to help bridge the global AI divide and to promote equitable access to AI to advance development for all.

Meanwhile, Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar held a bilateral meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Shanghai, China, on the sidelines of the World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC).

The two leaders reviewed the broad canvas of Pakistan-China bilateral relations and reaffirmed their shared commitment to further deepening the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership.

They underscored the importance of advancing high-quality development under CPEC 2.0 and enhancing collaboration in trade, investment, science and technology, the digital economy, and artificial intelligence.

The two sides also exchanged views on the latest regional and global developments and reaffirmed their resolve to maintain close coordination on issues of mutual interest.

The meeting further reinforced Pakistan-China strategic cooperation and reflected the two countries’ shared commitment to innovation-driven development and emerging technologies.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/17-Jul-2026/pakistan-signs-waico-agreement-china>

July 18, 2026

The Express Tribune

China launches new global AI alliance

SHANGHAI/BEIJING:Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday cast Beijing as the champion of a new global AI order, using China's premier tech conference to promote open-source technology and challenge US influence over the rules governing the fast-moving sector.

In a speech to the opening ceremony of the World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) in Shanghai, Xi urged countries to seize the "historic opportunity" of open-source AI, and pledged to help developing nations build AI capabilities, warning against the emergence of "new historical injustices" from unequal access to the technology.

The remarks amounted to Xi's clearest articulation yet of China's ambition to shape

global AI governance, framing its open-source models as a global public good and positioning Beijing as an alternative to Washington at a pivotal moment in the race for technological leadership.

Comparing AI's significance to the invention of the steam engine and electricity, Xi outlined a vision in which China shares AI technology and expertise with countries across the Global South, while leading global efforts to create standards governing the emerging technology.

The speech pitched China's AI coalition as a rival to the US-led "Pax Silica" international initiative to secure global AI and critical mineral supply chains, though Xi avoided naming Washington. Chinese state media has increasingly portrayed Beijing's AI strategy as a response to what it calls a US-led attempt to erect an "AI Iron Curtain".

Xi also called for AI systems to remain under human control and urged countries to establish early-warning and emergency-response mechanisms to manage AI risks, in his clearest remarks to date on AI safety.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2618925/china-launches-new-global-ai-alliance>

Pak, China to jointly manage border security

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China have agreed to significantly expand cooperation on immigration, border management and institutional coordination, reaffirming their shared commitment to combating illegal immigration, arms smuggling and cross-border crime through closer collaboration.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry and a Chinese delegation led by Qi Jingyang, Director General of China's National Immigration Administration.

The two sides agreed to accelerate the finalisation of a bilateral agreement aimed at streamlining immigration procedures and facilitating faster processing.

They also decided to establish a Pakistan-China Joint Working Group on border management and security to strengthen coordination and improve operational effectiveness.

Speaking on the occasion, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said Pakistan and China would further enhance cooperation in land border management, seaport security and immigration administration. He reiterated that the Government of Pakistan was implementing a zero-tolerance policy against illegal immigration, unlawful border crossings and smuggling, adding that indiscriminate action was being taken against all those involved in such activities.

The minister also announced that a Gilgit-Baltistan Scouts checkpoint was being established at the Khunjerab Pass to further strengthen security along the strategically important border crossing.

Minister of State Talal Chaudhry said Pakistan and China would work together to effectively curb illegal immigration and other cross-border crimes through enhanced bilateral cooperation.

Chinese delegation commended Pakistan's efforts to prevent illegal border crossings and smuggling, describing the country's measures as effective and encouraging.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2618919/pak-china-to-jointly-manage-border-security>

PM assures Chinese investors of security

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, while reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to Chinese investors, on Friday said the security of Chinese nationals working in Pakistan remained the government's highest priority and assured them of comprehensive protection.

Addressing the Pakistan-China Pharmaceutical Business-to-Business Conference, the prime minister hailed the signing of nine agreements worth around \$440 million between Pakistani and Chinese private enterprises in the pharmaceutical sector, describing the development as a major step towards strengthening bilateral economic cooperation and advancing the next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC 2.0).

The prime minister expressed confidence that the agreements would turn into practical projects, saying they would boost investment in pharmaceutical manufacturing, vaccines, research and development, and help Pakistan emerge as a regional centre for the production and export of life-saving medicines.

"I think this will ultimately result into manufacturing life saving medicines, vaccines, research and development and become a center of excellence for exporting our wonderful products to neighboring countries," he said.

He said China had consistently stood by Pakistan during difficult times and had already invested more than \$30 billion under first phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), calling the new partnerships another milestone in expanding economic cooperation.

The prime minister congratulated Pakistani and Chinese entrepreneurs on the agreements and praised the efforts of Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar Khan, Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi, Chinese

Ambassador Jiang Zaidong, government institutions and business leaders for making the conference a success.

The prime minister also highlighted Pakistan's role in promoting regional peace, saying Islamabad had played an important mediating role during the recent regional crisis with the support of friendly countries, particularly China.

He appreciated the contributions of President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and other Chinese leaders, while also acknowledged the efforts of Field Marshal, Syed Asim Munir, and Deputy Prime Minister, Ishaq Dar in diplomatic engagements.

Earlier, PM Shehbaz Sharif witnessed the signing of agreements worth \$440 million between the two sides in the pharmaceutical sector.

Ease of doing business

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed the relevant authorities that the implementation of the government's policy initiatives and the Ease of Doing Business Act, 2025 be expedited.

Chairing a review meeting regarding ease of doing business, the prime minister instructed that third-party validation by international organizations be ensured to assess the effectiveness and implementation of the ease of doing business measures.

The meeting was briefed on the progress made in implementing the reforms and on the future course of action.

Participants were informed that work had been completed on 558 reforms aimed at reducing regulatory requirements, paperwork, and approval procedures for businesses. Of these, 71 policy measures have already been implemented, while implementation of 272 measures is progressing rapidly. The reforms are being introduced across various sectors in seven phases. It was stated that these measures are expected to generate estimated savings of Rs468.7 billion for the business community by reducing compliance costs associated with regulatory requirements.

The meeting was further informed that eliminating unnecessary and complex paperwork and regulations would help boost exports, attract greater foreign direct investment, and create new employment opportunities.

URAAN Program

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif urged participants of the URAAN Overseas Pakistan Summer Scholars Program to utilize their education, research, and global experience for the country's development and prosperity.

The prime minister met with the scholars here. The participants are currently undergoing a six-week internship under the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives to research issues facing Pakistan.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2618936/pm-assures-chinese-investors-of-security>

The Nation

Pakistan, China sign \$440m pharmaceutical agreements

Shehbaz Sharif says govt's reforms to build self-reliant economy Urges URAAN scheme participants to contribute to Pakistan's prosperity Directs for expediting implementation of ease of doing business Act 2025.

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday urged participants of the URAAN Overseas Pakistan Summer Scholars Program to utilise their education, research, and global experience for the country's development and prosperity.

The prime minister met with the scholars here. The participants are currently undergoing a six-week internship under the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives to research issues facing Pakistan.

The prime minister welcomed the Pakistani students studying in leading universities of the world to avail internships in the country, and underlined that the youth plays a key role in national development as they are bringing laurels to the country all over the world.

The prime minister briefed the scholars on the government's reform agenda and responded to their questions. "In the past, when the country was on the verge of default, economic stability was achieved through emergency economic reforms. The comprehensive reforms include digitization of the FBR and increasing revenue, ease of doing business, increasing productivity, development of the agricultural sector, empowerment of youth, promotion of renewable energy and sustainable economic development reforms," he said.

PM Shehbaz Sharif added that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) collected more than Rs 800 billion in additional revenue during the last fiscal year as a result of effective enforcement measures. The government's economic reforms aimed to lay the foundation for a strong, self-sufficient and export-oriented economy, he said.

The prime minister also paid tribute to the Field Marshal Asim Munir for his leadership and strong support of the nation that helped Pakistan defeat India in May 2025 conflict. He added that Pakistan's role in mediating in stopping the ongoing war between the US and Iran is a prominent chapter in Pakistan's diplomatic history.

PM Shehbaz said Pakistan's diplomatic efforts resulted in the signing of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (Islamabad MoU), which is a significant step forward for world peace.

In the meeting, students expressed their views on improvements in various fields.

The meeting was attended by Federal Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Attaullah Tarar, Ali Pervez Malik, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, Minister of State for National Education and Professional Training Wajiha Qamar and senior officers of relevant institutions.

Also, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday hailed the signing of nine agreements worth around US\$ 440 million between Pakistani and Chinese private enterprises in the pharmaceutical sector, describing the development as a major step towards strengthening

bilateral economic cooperation and advancing the next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC 2.0).

Addressing the Pakistan-China Pharmaceutical Business-to-Business Conference, the prime minister expressed confidence that the agreements would turn into practical projects, saying they would boost investment in pharmaceutical manufacturing, vaccines, research and development, and help Pakistan emerge as a regional centre for the production and export of life-saving medicines.

“I think this will ultimately result into manufacturing life saving medicines, vaccines, research and development and become a center of excellence for exporting our wonderful products to neighboring countries,” he said.

He said China had consistently stood by Pakistan during difficult times and had already invested more than US\$ 30 billion under first phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), calling the new partnerships another milestone in expanding economic cooperation.

The prime minister congratulated Pakistani and Chinese entrepreneurs on the agreements and praised the efforts of Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar Khan, Pakistan’s Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi, Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong, government institutions and business leaders for making the conference a success.

The prime minister also highlighted Pakistan’s role in promoting regional peace, saying Islamabad had played an important mediating role during the recent regional crisis with the support of friendly countries, particularly China.

He appreciated the contributions of President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and other Chinese leaders, while also acknowledged the efforts of Field Marshal, Syed Asim Munir, and Deputy Prime Minister, Ishaq Dar in diplomatic engagements.

Reaffirming Pakistan’s commitment to Chinese investors, he said the security of Chinese nationals working in Pakistan remained the government’s highest priority and assured them of comprehensive protection.

Earlier, PM Shehbaz Sharif witnessed the signing of agreements worth US\$ 440 million between the two sides in the pharmaceutical sector.

Health Minister, Syed Mustafa Kamal said the conference was held on the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, adding that weeks of intensive meetings had paved the way for the business-to-business engagements. He said Pakistan’s ambassador in Beijing had also played an important role in facilitating the initiative.

Chinese Ambassador, Jiang Zaidong said Pakistan’s large and growing population had created significant demand for healthcare, making the country’s pharmaceutical sector an attractive destination for investment and cooperation. He said the embassy had worked as a bridge between enterprises of both countries to promote business partnerships.

The ambassador welcomed Pakistan's improving economic indicators under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership and appreciated Islamabad's constructive role in recent regional developments.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the relevant authorities that the implementation of the government's policy initiatives and the Ease of Doing Business Act, 2025 be expedited.

Chairing a review meeting regarding ease of doing business, the prime minister instructed that third-party validation by international organizations be ensured to assess the effectiveness and implementation of the ease of doing business measures.

He said that fully utilizing Pakistan's vast potential for both domestic and foreign investment remained one of the government's top priorities.

He also directed that a comprehensive report on the implementation of ease of doing business policy measures be prepared and submitted at the earliest.

The prime minister appreciated the efforts of the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the Board of Investment, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Industries and Production, and all other relevant institutions for their work on legislation and policymaking to facilitate business. The meeting was briefed on the progress made in implementing the reforms and on the future course of action. Participants were informed that work had been completed on 558 reforms aimed at reducing regulatory requirements, paperwork, and approval procedures for businesses. Of these, 71 policy measures have already been implemented, while implementation of 272 measures is progressing rapidly. The reforms are being introduced across various sectors in seven phases. It was stated that these measures are expected to generate estimated savings of Rs468.7 billion for the business community by reducing compliance costs associated with regulatory requirements. The meeting was further informed that eliminating unnecessary and complex paperwork and regulations would help boost exports, attract greater foreign direct investment, and create new employment opportunities.

The prime minister directed that the implementation of ease of doing business measures and the employment opportunities generated as a result should be treated as key performance indicators in the evaluation of officials of the relevant institutions.

The meeting was attended by Federal Ministers Azam Nazeer Tarar, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Jam Kamal Khan, Ahad Khan Cheema, Syed Mustafa Kamal; Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani; Adviser to the Prime Minister Muhammad Ali; Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar; Attorney General Mansoor Awan; and senior officials from the relevant departments.

Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan Jameel Ahmad, the chief secretaries of all four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, as well as internationally renowned experts in the field, participated in the meeting via video link.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/18-Jul-2026/pakistan-china-sign-dollar-440m-pharmaceutical-agreements>

The News

China launches first of 1,000 space-computing satellites

Pareesa Afreen

China's announcement comes in the wake of Elon Musk's SpaceX company working towards developing its own space computing project. China's push to move AI computing into orbit gained a new entrant this weekend. Shanghai Xingshu Tiansuan Space Technology said Saturday it had launched the first constellation in a project the company says will ultimately deploy 1,000 satellites.

The announcement landed alongside President Xi Jinping's appearance at the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai, running July 17 to 20, where Xi positioned Beijing as a leading voice shaping global AI governance.

China's push to move AI computing into orbit gained a new entrant this weekend. Shanghai Xingshu Tiansuan Space Technology said Saturday it had launched the first constellation in a project the company says will ultimately deploy 1,000 satellites.

The announcement landed alongside President Xi Jinping's appearance at the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai, running July 17 to 20, where Xi positioned Beijing as a leading voice shaping global AI governance.

It's worth mentioning that the launch occurs within a larger context of China announcing AI-related developments during this same week, in connection with the conference, as opposed to just being an achievement of its own.

The basic concept behind space computing consists of not sending data from sensors or satellites directly to Earth but processing it directly in space and sending back only the results.

This approach could potentially reduce latency and bandwidth issues, especially when considering tasks such as earth observation or distributed AI inference.

China has multiple companies pursuing similar approaches, including Zhongke Tiansuan and a Zhejiang Lab-led project known as the Three-Body Computing Constellation, both targeting large-scale orbital compute networks in the coming years.

At the same time, the announcement comes in the wake of Elon Musk's SpaceX company working towards developing its own space computing project. This has gained impetus after SpaceX entered into a complete stock merger with xAI in February 2026, which valued both companies together as being worth nearly \$1.25 trillion.

Space computing centres have been mentioned by Musk as a solution to the problem of limitations of energy and cooling systems available on Earth for the growth of AI technology.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1409523-china-launches-first-of-1000-space-computing-satellites>

July 19, 2026

The News

Pocket-sized AI-powered phones take center stage at China show

Hafsa Naeem Baig

Chinese smartphone makers showcase compact devices with advanced AI features as the race for smarter mobile technology accelerates. At the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference WAIC in Shanghai, Chinese tech firms took center stage by showcasing a new generation of "agentic" AI smartphones.

This marks a massive shift from standard digital assistants to true "pocket-size AI"—handsets capable of executing complex, multi-step real-world tasks directly on the device.

At the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference WAIC in Shanghai, Chinese tech firms took center stage by showcasing a new generation of "agentic" AI smartphones.

This marks a massive shift from standard digital assistants to true "pocket-size AI"—handsets capable of executing complex, multi-step real-world tasks directly on the device.

Unlike current AI smartphones that primarily focus on isolated tricks like photo editing or voice dictation, these new models use built-in AI agents integrated directly into the operating system.

Through simple voice or text commands, a user can instruct the phone to execute complex workflows across different software platforms. Prominent examples showcased at the event include.

Nubia's NaviX Ultra: Powered by ByteDance's massively popular Doubao AI chatbot tool, this device is built to natively collaborate across a multitude of applications.

On-Device Autonomy, prototypes on display demonstrated the ability to seamlessly compare e-commerce prices across different retailers, plan travel itineraries, and order food entirely on their own.

Processing AI models locally on the phone's hardware rather than relying on the cloud offers massive benefits to consumers.

This comes as tech firms are racing to roll out advanced smartphones that use artificial intelligence to do everything from ordering food to composing messages upon a simple voice command.

Processing AI models locally on the phone's hardware rather than relying on the cloud offers massive benefits to consumers.

Speed tasks like live audio translation, document summarization, and file searching happen with zero latency.

These devices also cater privacy issues. because data doesn't leave the handset, users have vastly superior data security.

Wide adoption of phones running on so-called AI agents would be a revolution, but would also take control away from major apps, which aren't always happy about it.

Days after it was released, tech giants including Alibaba, Tencent and JD.com restricted the built-in assistant's access to their platforms.

App developers are hesitant to let an AI agent act as a middleman, fearing they will lose direct engagement, data control, and user tracking to the hardware maker.

Associate research director at US market intelligence firm IDC said, gaining broad access to apps owned by other companies is a sticking point for AI agent devices.

"Platforms want to keep direct contact with their users, otherwise "they lose control to another party", she added.

While the technology is incredibly promising, a major geopolitical and corporate roadblock has emerged as "app access control."

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1409601-pocket-sized-ai-powered-phones-take-center-stage-at-china-show>

July 20, 2026

The Nation

China accounts for over half of Pakistan's net FDI in previous FY

ISLAMABAD - China accounted for more than half of Pakistan's net foreign direct investment (FDI) in fiscal year 2025-26, reaffirming its position as the country's dominant investment partner despite an overall decline in foreign investment, according to a provisional data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The analysis shows Pakistan attracted net FDI of \$1.637 billion during FY 2025-26, down from \$2.477 billion in the previous fiscal year. Of the total, China contributed \$862 million, representing 52.7% of Pakistan's net FDI. Chinese gross inflows reached \$1.198 billion, while outflows amounted to \$336.3 million, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. The figures underscore China's continued central role in Pakistan's investment landscape at a time when overall FDI slowed. Chinese investment alone exceeded the combined net inflows from several of Pakistan's other major foreign investors. A similar trend emerged in June 2026. Pakistan recorded net FDI of just \$13.5 million, as gross inflows of \$294.4 million were largely offset by \$280.9 million in outflows. China contributed \$43 million in net FDI during the month, equivalent to about 318.5% of Pakistan's monthly net FDI. The share exceeded 100% because investment inflows from China offset net capital withdrawals from several other countries, significantly reducing Pakistan's overall monthly net FDI.

The SBP data also indicate that Pakistan received gross FDI inflows of \$3.568 billion during FY 2025-26, while outflows climbed to \$1.931 billion, leaving net FDI at \$1.637 billion. Overall foreign investment, including portfolio investment, declined to \$450.6 million as portfolio outflows continued throughout the fiscal year. Sector-wise, the data reveal that foreign investment remained heavily concentrated in a handful of industries. The power sector attracted \$958.3 million in net FDI during FY2025-26, accounting for approximately

58.5% of Pakistan's total net FDI. The financial business sector ranked second with \$805.5 million, followed by communications with \$456.1 million and electronics with \$66.9 million. Other sectors posting positive inflows included transport equipment (\$57.6 million), textiles (\$47.7 million), trade (\$19 million), and tourism (\$18.2 million). Meanwhile, several sectors experienced net capital outflows, including mining and quarrying (-\$116.8 million), food (-\$102.1 million), cement (-\$96.6 million), and construction (-\$39.9 million), suggesting that foreign investor interest remained uneven across Pakistan's economy despite strong inflows into energy and financial services, CEN added.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/20-Jul-2026/china-accounts-half-pakistan-s-net-fdi-previous-fy>

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Pakistan Observer

Gwadar Port: CPEC's Strategic Gateway Enters a New Era

Naveed Aman Khan

For years, Gwadar Port was viewed more as a promise than a fully functioning commercial hub. The port is gradually transforming into an operational maritime gateway, with commercial shipments, refueling services, expanding logistics infrastructure and growing regional connectivity demonstrating that Gwadar is entering a new phase of practical development. The project has begun to validate the strategic vision that inspired its creation.

Gwadar Port occupies one of the world's most significant maritime locations. Situated near the Strait of Hormuz, through which a substantial share of global oil trade passes, the deep-sea port offers Pakistan an unparalleled geopolitical and economic advantage. It provides China and other regional countries with a shorter and more secure route to the Arabian Sea while positioning Pakistan as a vital bridge linking South Asia, Central Asia, Middle East and Western China.

Commercial cargo vessels have increasingly utilized Gwadar's modern berths, handling shipments ranging from agricultural products and minerals to industrial equipment and imported machinery. These operations demonstrate that the port is steadily transitioning from infrastructure development to commercial utilization. Each successful shipment strengthens confidence among investors, shipping companies and regional traders that Gwadar possesses the capacity to become a competitive maritime hub.

One of the most notable milestones has been the operationalization of marine refueling and vessel support services. The availability of bunkering, freshwater supply, pilotage and other port-related services significantly enhances Gwadar's attractiveness to international shipping lines. Ships operating along busy international sea lanes can now benefit from essential logistical support without diverting to distant ports.

Designed to attract domestic and foreign investment, the free zone offers tax incentives, simplified customs procedures and modern industrial infrastructure. Manufacturing, logistics, warehousing, seafood processing, mineral exports and value-added industries are expected to flourish within this economic ecosystem.

The success of Gwadar cannot be measured solely by maritime activities. CPEC has introduced a comprehensive development model that integrates transport, energy, communications and urban infrastructure. Modern highways connecting Gwadar with the national road network have substantially improved accessibility. The East Bay Expressway has enhanced connectivity between the port and major highways, while continuous improvements in road infrastructure facilitate faster cargo movement across Pakistan.

Reliable electricity is indispensable for any major port and Pakistan has undertaken various initiatives to address Gwadar's long-standing energy shortages. Grid connectivity, renewable energy projects and supporting infrastructure aim to ensure uninterrupted power for industries, residential areas and port operations. Simultaneously, investments in water supply schemes seek to resolve one of Gwadar's most persistent challenges, improving both industrial productivity and residents' quality of life.

Another landmark achievement is the inauguration of the New Gwadar International Airport, one of the largest infrastructure projects under CPEC. The airport significantly enhances international connectivity, supports cargo transportation, facilitates business travel and complements the port's expanding commercial activities. Together, the airport and seaport create a multimodal logistics platform capable of serving regional trade far beyond Pakistan's borders.

Digital connectivity is another important dimension of Gwadar's transformation. Optical fiber connectivity under CPEC has improved communication infrastructure, enabling modern port management, customs digitization and enhanced coordination among government agencies and commercial operators. These technological improvements contribute to greater efficiency and transparency in logistics operations.

Pakistan and China envision Gwadar evolving into a world-class smart port city. Planned initiatives include expanding cargo handling capacity, constructing additional container terminals, developing modern warehousing facilities, strengthening cold storage infrastructure and establishing export-oriented industrial parks. Greater emphasis is also being placed on fisheries, seafood processing, ship repair facilities, petrochemical industries and maritime services.

Pakistan seeks to connect Gwadar with Central Asian Republics, Afghanistan, Western China and potentially Middle Eastern markets through an integrated network of highways, railways and energy corridors. If regional political conditions continue to improve, Gwadar could emerge as a preferred gateway for landlocked Central Asian economies seeking access to international markets.

No discussion of Gwadar's future would be complete without addressing security. Recognizing the strategic significance of CPEC, Pakistan has implemented an extensive security framework to protect Gwadar and associated infrastructure. The government established dedicated Special Security Divisions comprising thousands of military personnel specifically assigned to safeguard CPEC projects. These formations work alongside paramilitary forces, the Pakistan Navy, Maritime Security Agency, Coast Guards, Frontier Corps, intelligence agencies and Balochistan Police.

Gwadar itself has witnessed substantial security enhancements. Safe City surveillance systems, expanded checkpoints, coastal monitoring, maritime patrols, aerial surveillance, rapid response units and advanced intelligence coordination have significantly strengthened the protection of critical infrastructure. The Pakistan Navy has increased its presence in coastal waters to secure maritime approaches against potential threats, while specialized counterterrorism operations continue to target militant groups seeking to disrupt development projects.

Beyond physical security, the government increasingly recognizes that sustainable protection also depends on local inclusion. Investments in education, healthcare, vocational training, clean water, housing, fisheries and employment opportunities aim to ensure that the people of Gwadar directly benefit from economic development.

Environmental sustainability is also gaining greater attention. Urban planning, renewable energy, modern waste management, coastal conservation and climate-resilient infrastructure are becoming integral components of Gwadar's future development strategy. Balancing rapid industrialization with environmental protection will be crucial to ensuring sustainable growth.

Gwadar's transformation has never been intended as a short-term undertaking. Ports such as Singapore, Dubai, Rotterdam and Shanghai required decades of continuous investment before becoming global maritime centers. Gwadar's development should therefore be evaluated through the lens of long-term strategic planning rather than immediate commercial returns.

Continued policy consistency, transparent governance, investor confidence, efficient logistics and robust security will be indispensable. If these elements remain aligned, Gwadar could fundamentally reshape Pakistan's economic geography, diversify national trade routes, stimulate industrialization, create thousands of jobs and strengthen regional connectivity.

Gwadar Port represents far more than a maritime infrastructure project. It embodies Pakistan's aspiration to become a regional trade, logistics and connectivity hub linking Asia, the Middle East and beyond. While challenges persist, Gwadar is no longer merely a symbol of future promise—it is steadily emerging as one of South Asia's most consequential economic gateways, with the potential to redefine Pakistan's place in regional and global commerce for generations to come.

<https://pakobserver.net/gwadar-port-cpecs-strategic-gateway-enters-a-new-era/>

July 25, 2026

Pakistan Observer

Pakistan, China eye Direct Skardu-Kashgar Flights in major connectivity push

Muhammad Junaid

ISLAMABAD – Imagine traveling from the towering peaks of Skardu to China's historic city of Kashgar in a few hours. That vision may soon become reality, as Pakistan and China explore a direct air link that could unlock tourism, expand trade, and open a new chapter in the decades-long friendship between 'Iron Friends'.

The proposal was discussed during a high-level meeting between Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Amjad Hussain Azar and Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong, with both sides describing enhanced connectivity as a key step toward expanding bilateral cooperation.

The direct air route dramatically cut travel time between two regions from days of road travel across mountainous terrain to just a few hours, making cross-border movement faster and more convenient than ever before.

The proposed flights are expected to boost tourist arrivals from China, giving travelers easier access to GB top attractions, including Skardu, Hunza and the Karakoram region. At the same time, Pakistani tourists and businesses would gain quicker access to Kashgar, one of western China's key commercial hubs.

The air corridor could become major economic catalyst for Gilgit-Baltistan by driving tourism, creating employment opportunities, attracting fresh investment and stimulating local businesses linked to the hospitality and transport sectors.

The initiative is also expected to strengthen cross-border commerce by facilitating smoother movement of business delegations and investors, while reinforcing economic cooperation under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

The proposed flights would not only improve transportation but also deepen people-to-people ties, promote cultural exchanges and strengthen the long-standing friendship between Pakistan and China. GB government urged introduction of a visa-on-arrival facility for Chinese tourists visiting destinations such as Hunza, subject to approval by Pakistan's federal government.

The provincial government also invited Chinese companies to expand investments in tourism infrastructure, mining, hydropower, renewable energy and other strategic development sectors across Gilgit-Baltistan.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-china-eye-direct-skardu-kashgar-flights-in-major-connectivity-push/>

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Pakistan Observer

Beyond CPEC 2.0: The Jilin Parallel and the Quest for Economic Revitalization

Dr Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan

The strategic orientation of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has demonstrably evolved. Chinese policymakers are no longer solely focused on the velocity of expansion; instead, they are recalibrating the initiative to prioritize resilience, supply chain security and a long-term strategic posture designed to navigate an increasingly fragmented geopolitical and geo-economic landscape.

Within this paradigm shift, Jilin Province in Northeast China has emerged as a compelling case study. By aggressively leveraging the BRI, Jilin is transforming its economic base, modernizing communities and reinvigorating state-owned enterprises. This holistic transformation offers a strategic blueprint for Pakistan and its provinces as they seek to maximize the dividends from the next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC 2.0).

Jilin's recent economic performance signals a successful structural recalibration. In the first quarter of this year, the province's GDP reached 334.74 billion Yuan, a 4.5 percent year-on-year increase. This growth is not merely quantitative but qualitative, characterized by a pronounced pivot toward a services-driven model.

The tertiary sector has become the primary engine of expansion, contributing over 70% to the province's growth. The GDP composition—5.1 percent primary, 29.2 percent secondary and a dominant 65.7 percent tertiary sector—vividly reflects an economy that is successfully diversifying, digitizing and building resilience.

This shift is underpinned by a booming ice-and-snow economy and cultural tourism, with tertiary sector output reaching 220.05 billion Yuan as the retail and hospitality sectors outperform national benchmarks. Jilin has effectively branded itself as a hub for winter sports, services and multiculturalism, creating intangible assets that support long-term stability and connectivity.

Analytically, Jilin's integration into the BRI represents a sophisticated exercise in comparative advantage arbitrage. The initiative connects Jilin's manufacturing heft and agricultural surplus with the natural resource endowments, energy bases and logistics corridors of other regions.

Rather than a zero-sum extraction model, this is a complementary strategy. China is strategically positioning itself at the core of emerging value chains, particularly in green technologies, by leveraging its manufacturing scale, innovation capacity and infrastructure ecosystem, with the BRI acting as the transmission mechanism for this industrial policy. This reflects China's broader function in a global economy transitioning from a unipolar center of gravity to a multipolar, distributed architecture, where major emerging economies act as stabilizing nodes, reducing systemic concentration risks and broadening access to finance and investment.

Jilin functions as a critical institutional gateway for China's northward opening-up and serves as a hub for Northeast Asian economic integration. Platforms hosted by the province foster multinational cooperation, explicitly mandated by the central leadership to integrate deeply with the BRI as an internal mechanism for national strategic revitalization.

Critically, Jilin's BRI participation is not a standalone trade endeavor but a dual-use strategy: an external logistics play that simultaneously spurs domestic innovation and upgrades legacy state-owned enterprises, like the automotive giant FAW Group, while elevating local living standards. This makes the province a living laboratory for translating global connectivity into local socio-economic value.

Jilin's transformation from a landlocked industrial base into a vibrant logistics and trade corridor provides an actionable model for regions like Balochistan and Gwadar. The province's freight line, launched in 2015, is a critical link that seamlessly integrates Northeast China's industrial core with European manufacturing assembly points, exemplified by automotive glass shipments to Audi's plants in Germany.

This success is underpinned by a dual-port infrastructure system: an expanded international airport and a massive inland rail port, which has repositioned the capital, Changchun, as a premier transit network. This model can be directly mirrored in Pakistan: pairing a deep-sea hub at Gwadar Port with a dry port in Karachi to create a synergistic rail-integrated transport system, thereby driving connectivity, factor productivity and development.

The Hunchun Border Rail Port, situated at the province's easternmost point, is another success story in cross-border transit, demonstrating how high-capacity traffic and rapid customs clearance can dramatically elevate freight volumes. Furthermore, a funded joint cooperation mechanism between Jilin and Zhejiang Province, via the Ningbo Zhoushan Port Co., demonstrates strategic inter-provincial collaboration to bolster the maritime economy.

Perhaps most compelling is the diplomatic-economic maneuver that secured Russia's approval for Vladivostok to serve as a cross-border transit port for Jilin's domestic trade. This masterstroke of integrated economic statecraft effectively converts a landlocked province into one with cost-effective sea access, demonstrating how strategic trust and development diplomacy can redraw a region's logistical geography.

Jilin's economic health is robust, having closed the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25) with a GDP of 1.5 trillion Yuan and sustained grain output above 40 billion kilograms for five consecutive years. By end-2025, its installed new and renewable energy capacity reached 33.90 million kW, a commanding 65.8% of the total power mix. In the first quarter of 2026, this momentum continued with total retail consumer sales climbing to 113.53 billion Yuan (a 4.3 percent year-on-year increase) and fixed-asset investment surging 11.9 percent. The province's concept of a "BRI Winter Sports" corridor is poised to further catalyze its macro-economy and services sector.

Looking forward, Jilin's new 15th Five-Year Plan outlines a "2266" modern industrial system. This involves cultivating two trillion-Yuan-level industrial clusters in agriculture/agri-processing and tourism, alongside driving key sectors such as new energy vehicles, new materials, AI and hydrogen energy.

The trajectory targets upgrading legacy industries through intelligent, green and high-value development pathways, raising installed new energy capacity to 70 million kW by 2030 and accelerating the development of zero-carbon industrial parks. The plan aims to scale production of green hydrogen, green ammonia and green methanol, targeting an annual green hydrogen capacity of 1 million metric tons by 2030, fully pivoting the old industrial base toward a green and digital frontier.

In conclusion, Jilin Province's strategy is a masterclass in combining endogenous industrial upgrades with exogenous connectivity into a cohesive economic resilience framework. For Pakistan, these are not isolated success stories but a replicable modular system, from logistics

hub development to public-private partnership models that can de-risk investment and maximize value capture from CPEC 2.0.

Jilin's Hunchun border zone model may be replicated in CPEC Special Economic Zones by aggressively ensuring the availability of raw materials. The corridor must be anchored in a clear "Made in Pakistan" industrial policy. Moreover, further diversification of routes, in which CPEC 2.0 should play an important role, can improve connectivity with Iran, Central Asia and maritime trade routes, ensuring that no single geopolitical chokepoint holds Pakistan's entire trade lifeline.

Last but not least, the formation of a "corridor-linked cluster" by developing supply chains under CPEC 2.0 can create a regional manufacturing cluster. Thus, Pakistan needs Jilin's strategy for CPEC 2.0.

<https://pakobserver.net/beyond-cpec-2-0-the-jilin-parallel-and-the-quest-for-economic-revitalization/>

Digital Media Strengthening China-Pakistan Shared Narratives

Muhammad Zamir Assadi

The communication landscape between China and Pakistan is entering in a new phase of media diplomacy. Over the decades, the two nations have primarily collaborated through traditional media to narrate their stories of bilateral relations, common development and prosperity, particularly in relation to China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Digital media has established a brand-new world today. It permits journalists, academics, young content producers and common people to take part in the development of the understanding of this partnership. A more human-focused and technology-driven communication ecosystem will provide greater opportunities to the two nations to enhance cooperation as well as to respond to the western baseless narratives on Pak-China relations.

Joint digital research and documentary projects are also one of the biggest opportunities. Conventional media in the two nations have been significant in reporting infrastructures and economic collaboration but the internet platforms can incorporate dimensions of human aspects and details that were previously hard to record. There can be collaborative multimedia projects in which the voices of Gwadar, Kashgar, Gilgit, Shanghai, Lahore, Islamabad and Beijing can be featured so as to enable the global audiences to visualize the social change that CPEC is producing to communities. The entrepreneurs, students, engineers and farmers with whose lives connectivity and development touched could be featured in TikTok and YouTube series created by Chinese and Pakistani young journalists. As soon as the human aspect is put into the middle of the story, it becomes more believable and recognizable.

There is also a possibility of using digital media to counter some of the stereotypes that may persist around China and CPEC that are circulated by some quarters in the international circles. Simple topics like energy projects, industrial collaboration or professional training can be divided into short videos, interactive explainers, infographics and podcasts. Pakistani journalists that have studied in China or were or have visited the CPEC sites may use their

experiences in local languages and Chinese content creators may demonstrate their followers the cultural richness and diversity of the cities and villages in Pakistan. These kinds of exchanges are better able to cut through the misinformation than the usual statements or reports since audiences have a tendency to believe the first-hand experience.

The digital transformation of China provides significant learning opportunities to the Pakistani media. Such digital platforms as Bilibili and Douyin demonstrate how the inventive forms and the spaces of youth may co-exist along with knowledgeable information. Online classes are delivered to the rural population in China. Such models may be altered to fit the Pakistani audiences to describe the CPEC-associated technologies or climate-friendly practices or innovations in agriculture. Such communication does not only make information available but also encourages participation that builds trust in people.

The other potential field is the application of the digital innovation to cross-border academic cooperation. Webinars and digital archives can enable scholars in both nations to collaborate in the creation of research on communication, development and regional integration. A China-Pakistan Digital Media Lab can be formed to observe the online opinion and social trends as well as training the future generation of journalists who know what is sensitive in the global discourse. These spaces would assist in developing a common intellectual basis in future collaboration.

Combining the influence of the newspaper and TV with the reach of social media could be possible through integrated newsrooms. As an illustration a Pakistani news outlet of great size might jointly produce a documentary with a Chinese media outlet and the same footage may become a series of short episodes on TikTok or Douyin. This multi platform strategy helps to make sure that all audiences regardless of their age are able to receive the same message using the various formats. It also establishes balance between the old and new types of journalism that is important in the long term and stable collaboration.

The building of digital narratives is much more than the creation of promotional communications. It is able to create new platforms of cultural exchange and common creativity. The collaboration on joint music videos, traveling videos, playing games and the virtual tourism project can explore the Chinese youth to Pakistani heritage and the young Pakistani to the rich modern culture of China. China-Pakistan startup forums or virtual exhibitions can be held on such platforms as LinkedIn or business networks specific to a region. Technological and entrepreneurial influencers can emphasize the potential of E-Commerce and AI, green energy and vocational education. The second stage of the cooperation between China and Pakistan is going to be decided not by the works created on the ground but also the stories narrated on the internet. The digital media provide each of the two societies with the opportunity to define these narratives collaboratively in their own voices with precision creativities and mutual respect. Through integrating the trustworthiness of conventional media and the dynamism of digital platforms the two nations will create a communication ecosystem that will establish a new pattern in the international collaboration in the digital age. <https://pakobserver.net/digital-media-strengthening-china-pakistan-shared-narratives/>

CPEC Consortium of Universities to lead Sino-Pak AI, Innovation Drive

Muhammad Junaid

ISLAMABAD – Pakistan's drive to build knowledge-based economy gets another boost as Higher Education Commission (HEC) turned spotlight on CPEC Consortium of Universities, unveiling a stronger Pakistan-China academic partnership focused on artificial intelligence, semiconductors, green technologies and other future industries. Chairing meeting of the Pakistani member universities of the CPEC Consortium of Universities, Higher Education Commission (HEC) Chairman Dr. Niaz Ahmed Akhtar urged universities to adopt a more proactive and results-oriented approach in their engagement with Chinese counterparts, emphasizing that academic partnerships must now translate into meaningful achievements. The high-level meeting reviewed the consortium's progress and outlined future priorities for strengthening Pakistan-China educational collaboration. It was attended by HEC Executive Director Dr. Zia-ul-Haq, senior HEC officials, and vice chancellors and rectors representing universities from across the country. During the session, HEC Director General (Global Engagement/CPEC Unit) Ayesha Ikram highlighted the remarkable growth of the CPEC Consortium of Universities, noting that since its establishment in 2017, the platform has expanded to include 93 Pakistani universities and 40 Chinese universities, creating one of the largest academic collaboration networks between the two countries. She said the consortium has already delivered notable achievements, including the establishment of six China Study Centres, joint research grants, faculty and student exchange programmes, training and capacity-building initiatives, and stronger institutional linkages between universities in Pakistan and China. Referring to feedback received during his recent visit to China, Dr. Niaz Ahmed Akhtar said that while numerous Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed over the years, the time has come to convert those agreements into concrete outcomes that benefit higher education, research and industry.

The HEC chairman identified artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductors, integrated circuits, biotechnology, public health, cybersecurity, agriculture, green technologies and other emerging industries as priority areas where the CPEC Consortium of Universities can play a transformative role in promoting joint research, innovation and knowledge exchange.

He observed that China's rapid advances in technology, higher education, infrastructure and innovation offer valuable lessons for Pakistan and encouraged universities to make full use of the opportunities available through deeper collaboration with Chinese institutions.

With its growing membership and expanding research agenda, the CPEC Consortium of Universities is increasingly emerging as a key academic pillar of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, helping connect universities, researchers and students while supporting innovation, technology transfer and human resource development.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment from HEC and member universities to transform the CPEC Consortium of Universities into a more dynamic platform capable of producing impactful research partnerships and strengthening the long-term strategic relationship between Pakistan and China.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-consortium-of-universities-to-lead-sino-pak-ai-innovation-drive/>

Chinese Newspapers

July 17, 2026

People's Daily

China's top diplomat meets Pakistani FM

SHANGHAI, July 16 (Xinhua) -- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar in east China's Shanghai on Thursday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, welcomed Dar, who is in China to attend the upcoming World Artificial Intelligence Conference and sign an agreement on establishing the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization (WAICO) on behalf of the Pakistani government.

Pakistan's accession to the WAICO will serve the long-term interests of Pakistan and its people, Wang said.

Wang noted that China, as a responsible major country, promotes the establishment of the organization with like-minded countries, aiming at building international consensus, advancing practical cooperation and enhancing capacity building, so that all countries, especially Global South countries, can benefit equally from the development of artificial intelligence.

China and Pakistan should jointly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries and accelerate the building of a closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future, Wang said.

Dar said establishing the WAICO is a great initiative proposed by China, adding that Pakistan is honored to be a founding member of the organization, and looks forward to strengthening cooperation with China in the field of artificial intelligence.

Dar said Pakistan stands ready to make all-out efforts to ensure the safety of Chinese personnel, institutions and projects in Pakistan and promote the continuous development of bilateral relations.

<https://en.people.cn/n3/2026/0717/c90000-20478837.html>

July 18, 2026

People's Daily

Pakistan-China pharmaceutical cooperation to accelerate CPEC 2.0

ISLAMABAD, July 18 (Xinhua) -- A two-day Pakistan-China healthcare investment conference opened Friday, bringing together leading Pakistani pharmaceutical, health care and biotechnology companies with Chinese investors, manufacturers, technology providers and industry leaders.

Addressing the Pakistan-China B2B Investment Conference on the pharmaceutical, healthcare and biotechnology sectors here, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that

the event will provide a significant platform for strengthening collaboration between the pharmaceutical industries of Pakistan and China.

The B2B agreements signed between Pakistani and Chinese companies during the event mark another important step in advancing cooperation under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) 2.0, according to him.

He said it would encourage private-sector partnerships in the co-production of medicines, vaccines, and other life-saving healthcare products while opening new avenues for investment and industrial cooperation.

Sharif noted that Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector offers immense potential for growth and investment, adding that the collaboration between Pakistani and Chinese investors in pharmaceutical manufacturing, vaccine production, biotechnology, and research and development would strengthen the country's healthcare industry, enhance local production capacity, and contribute to economic development.

He expressed confidence that deeper cooperation in the sector would further expand bilateral economic ties and support the high-quality development of CPEC 2.0.

Speaking at the conference, Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan said the event would play a key role in promoting industrial cooperation, attracting foreign direct investment, and facilitating technology transfer.

He said the conference brought together leading Chinese companies represented by a large number of delegates, along with more than 200 Pakistani companies, making it one of the largest business gatherings between the two countries in the pharmaceutical, healthcare, and biotechnology sectors.

Khan said the conference aims to accelerate industrial development, increase foreign investment, promote local manufacturing, generate employment opportunities, and modernize Pakistan's healthcare industry.

He added that discussions focused on six priority areas, including active pharmaceutical ingredients, biotechnology and vaccines, medical devices, generic medicines and injectables, clinical trials and research, as well as herbal medicines and Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Highlighting Pakistan's dependence on imported pharmaceutical inputs, Khan said the country currently imports around 90 percent of the raw materials required by its pharmaceutical industry.

He said Chinese investment, advanced technology, and expertise could significantly strengthen domestic manufacturing, reduce reliance on imports, improve supply chain resilience, and boost exports.

Addressing the gathering, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong reaffirmed China's commitment to strengthening economic and industrial cooperation with Pakistan. He said the Chinese embassy would continue to facilitate closer engagement between enterprises of the two countries and provide support to expand bilateral investment and business cooperation.

Jiang also expressed hope that Pakistan would continue to provide a stable security environment and favorable business conditions for Chinese enterprises operating in the country.

Noting that China's vast market presents new opportunities for Pakistan, Jiang said enhanced business cooperation would deliver mutual benefits while strengthening the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between the two countries.

The conference, which runs from Friday to Saturday, features B2B matchmaking sessions and one-on-one meetings between companies from both countries to form joint ventures, technology partnerships, and long-term industrial collaboration.

<https://en.people.cn/n3/2026/0718/c90000-20479258.html>

July 20, 2026

People's Daily

Protecting the Indus River Dolphin: A new dimension of Pakistan–China friendship

Zamir Ahmed Awan

The Indus River Dolphin is not merely a rare aquatic animal. It is a living symbol of Pakistan's natural heritage, the ecological importance of the Indus River and the centuries-old relationship between humanity and one of the world's great river systems. The launch of the Indus Dolphin Rescue and Mobile Awareness Ambulance, supported by telecom operator Zong in partnership with WWF-Pakistan, therefore represents much more than a corporate social responsibility project. It is a practical conservation intervention and a distinctive new dimension of cooperation between Pakistan and China.

The initiative was formally inaugurated at the WWF-Pakistan office in Islamabad. Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr. Musadik Malik, Zong Chairman and CEO Huo Junli, WWF-Pakistan Director General Hammad Naqi Khan and Chinese embassy representative Yang Guangyuan attended the ceremony, along with senior representatives of the participating organizations. Their presence demonstrated that wildlife conservation requires cooperation among governments, businesses, environmental organizations and local communities.

Known locally as the bhulan, the Indus River Dolphin is found primarily in Pakistan's Indus River system. It is functionally blind, but blindness should not be understood as a weakness. The dolphin has adapted remarkably to the Indus River's naturally muddy and sediment-rich waters. It uses highly developed echolocation—repeated sound signals and returning echoes—to navigate, identify objects and locate fish. Its unusual habit of swimming on its side also helps it move through shallow river channels. These adaptations make it one of the most scientifically distinctive freshwater mammals in the world.

The species is listed as endangered and faces several interconnected threats. Dams and barrages have divided its natural habitat into isolated sections, while the diversion of water for irrigation has reduced freshwater flows in some areas. Dolphins may accidentally enter

irrigation canals, where falling water levels can leave them stranded. Pollution, fishing-net entanglement, habitat degradation and declining fish stocks create additional pressures. WWF reports that the species is now confined to only a fraction of its former natural range.

Protecting the dolphin is also essential for protecting the Indus River itself. River dolphins are top predators and important indicators of freshwater ecosystem health. A stable dolphin population generally suggests that a river still supports adequate water flows, fish populations and ecological diversity. Conversely, a decline in dolphins can warn of pollution, overfishing or wider deterioration in water quality. Protecting the dolphin consequently benefits fish, birds, riverbank vegetation, agricultural communities and millions of people whose livelihoods depend directly or indirectly on the Indus.

Pakistan's conservation experience provides reasons for cautious optimism. WWF-Pakistan's first major survey in 2001 recorded approximately 1,200 Indus River dolphins. Following years of cooperation involving WWF-Pakistan, the Sindh and Punjab wildlife departments, researchers, fishing communities and other partners, the estimated population has increased to around 2,000. Since the dolphin rescue program began in 1992, more than 200 stranded dolphins have reportedly been rescued and released into the river. These achievements show that determined and continuous action can help an endangered species recover.

However, previous progress must not produce complacency. A population of approximately 2,000 remains highly vulnerable, particularly when divided by barrages and exposed to climate-related changes in river flows. More frequent heatwaves, droughts, irregular rainfall and extreme flooding can alter freshwater habitats and increase pressure on aquatic species. As Dr. Musadik Malik observed, climate change is affecting Pakistan's rivers, wildlife and natural heritage, making effective and coordinated action increasingly necessary.

The new dolphin ambulance can address an important operational weakness in conservation: the time required to reach a stranded or injured animal. When dolphins enter irrigation canals or become trapped in unsuitable sections of water, a delayed response can be fatal. A dedicated mobile unit will enable trained teams to transport rescue equipment, monitor emergencies and support the safe relocation of stranded dolphins to the main river.

The unit will focus particularly on the stretch between the Guddu and Sukkur barrages in Sindh, which supports the world's largest remaining concentration of Indus River dolphins. The program also aims to engage more than 1,500 fisherfolk and members of riverine communities as frontline conservation partners and conduct 50 awareness sessions in remote settlements. This community component is essential because local fishers, boat operators and residents are often the first people to observe a stranded dolphin, illegal fishing activity or a sudden change in river conditions.

Zong's role gives the project additional significance. Zong, formally China Mobile Pakistan, is a wholly owned subsidiary of China Mobile Communications Corporation. Since entering Pakistan in 2007, the company has become an important participant in the country's telecommunications and digital-development landscape. By supporting the dolphin rescue ambulance, Zong is extending its contribution beyond connectivity and technology into biodiversity conservation and environmental stewardship.

This is an important example of how businesses can move beyond conventional philanthropy. Instead of limiting assistance to a short-term donation or publicity campaign, the project provides an operational asset with measurable functions: rescue, monitoring, awareness, community mobilization and safe translocation. Its success can be assessed through response times, rescue outcomes, community participation and improvements in ecological data.

The initiative also adds a unique environmental dimension to Pakistan–China relations. Cooperation between the two countries already covers infrastructure, trade, energy, telecommunications, education, science, technology and cultural exchange. Wildlife protection, however, represents a particularly humane and future-oriented form of collaboration. It demonstrates that friendship between states is not limited to roads, power projects or commercial investment. It can also protect rivers, ecosystems and endangered species that cannot speak or advocate for themselves.

Pakistan has good reason to express sincere appreciation to Zong and WWF-Pakistan for turning environmental responsibility into practical action. The participation of the Chinese embassy further reflects the supportive spirit behind the initiative. The people and Government of Pakistan also value the wider goodwill of the Chinese people and government, whose longstanding friendship has created opportunities for cooperation in both traditional and emerging fields.

Nevertheless, the ambulance should be regarded as the beginning of a broader mission rather than its conclusion. Pakistan still requires stronger controls on river pollution, more effective regulation of harmful fishing practices, improved management of environmental flows, and scientific monitoring and rapid-response networks across the dolphin's entire habitat. Universities and technology companies can contribute through acoustic monitoring, satellite tracking, water-quality sensors, geographical information systems, and mobile reporting platforms.

The survival of the Indus River Dolphin is a test of Pakistan's ability to balance development with ecological responsibility. The partnership among Zong, WWF-Pakistan, government institutions, and local communities offers a credible model for achieving that balance. By protecting this rare species, Pakistan and China are not only preserving an exceptional animal; they are protecting the health of the Indus River and demonstrating that international friendship can produce meaningful benefits for nature and future generations.

<https://en.people.cn/n3/2026/0720/c90000-20479503.html>