



For Better Understanding on
**China–Pakistan and
CPEC**
Gleanings from the
National & Chinese Press

February 16-28, 2026

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February 16, 2026

Business Recorder

UAF marks 75th anniversary of Pakistan-China diplomatic ties

FAISALABAD: The Confucius Institute at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (CI-UAF) celebrated the Chinese New Year (Spring Festival) and 75th anniversary of Pak-China diplomatic relations.

This year has been designated as the Year of the Horse, symbolizing strength, energy, perseverance and progress. UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zulfiqar Ali, VC Government College University Faisalabad Dr Rauf e Azam, VC Government College Women University Faisalabad Dr Kanwal Ameen, VC Cholistan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences Dr Muhammad Mazhar Ayaz, Rector University of Faisalabad Dr Amanullah Malik, CI-UAF Deans Dr Saddam Hussain and Dr Zhou Changming, Assistant Commissioner Faisalabad City Adil Umer, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Farooq Yousaf, CNF Director Lt Col Zakir Ali Khan, Chen Diyi and 15 other representatives from Chinese Industries and Consulate General of China in Lahore attended the event.

Liu from the Consulate General highlighted the time-tested friendship between Pakistan and China. He said that it as a relationship built on mutual trust, respect and shared interests. He emphasised that cooperation in areas such as education, agriculture, trade and technology continues to strengthen bilateral ties, while people-to-people exchanges further promote understanding, harmony and long-term regional prosperity for both nations.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Zulfiqar Ali said that Pakistan and China are greatly benefiting from each other's academic and research expertise. He noted that collaborative research, faculty exchanges and joint innovation in diverse fields; particularly agriculture, science and technology are strengthening institutional partnerships.

He said that sharing knowledge and experience, both nations are paving the way for sustainable development and mutual progress. Chinese Dean Dr Zhou Changming Said that Language and cultural ties brought both nations closer that will also help promote scientific cooperation and learn from each other to address the common challenges. He said that Pak China economic corridor would usher a new avenue of development. Dr Saddam Hussain said that this event reflected the deep-rooted historical, cultural and strategic ties between the two brotherly nations. Speakers said that Pakistan-China friendship is a model of mutual cooperation, where shared knowledge and cultural exchange are opening new avenues for academic growth. They said such joint initiatives help students and researchers gain global exposure and practical insights. They added that these partnerships are instrumental in addressing common challenges and promoting sustainable development.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40407334/uaf-marks-75th-anniversary-of-pakistan-china-diplomatic-ties>

Pakistan Observer

PM Shehbaz greets President Xi on Chinese New Year 2026

Muhammad Mahmood

VIENNA – Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday extended his greetings to President Xi Jinping, the people of China, and the Chinese communities worldwide on the occasion of the Chinese New Year 2026. “As we welcome the Chinese New Year 2026 – the Year of the Horse – I extend my heartfelt greetings to President Xi Jinping, the brotherly people of China, and to Chinese communities around the world,” the prime minister wrote in a message on X (formerly twitter). The premier started the message with the Chinese words “Gong Xi Fa Cai” translated as “congratulations and may you prosper.” Referring to the Year of the Horse, named under the Chinese zodiac calendar featuring a 12-year cycle represented by 12 animals, the prime minister said that the Horse symbolized energy, resilience and speed – values that resonated deeply with our shared journey. Prime Minister Shehbaz, who is currently in Austria on a two-day visit, said that Pakistan and China were iron brothers, bound by an All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and a shared vision of peace, development and regional connectivity. He wished that the new year would further strengthen the enduring bilateral friendship and deepen cooperation for the prosperity of two peoples. “The entire Pakistani nation joins me in wishing our Chinese brothers and sisters continued good health, success and forward momentum in the Year of the Horse,” PM Shehbaz said.

<https://pakobserver.net/pm-shehbaz-greets-president-xi-on-chinese-new-year-2026/>

February 18, 2026

Dawn News

Two officials martyred in militant attack on police station customs office in Dera Ismail Khan

Muhammad Irfan Mughal

PESHAWAR: Two officials were martyred and two others injured when militants attacked Yarik police station and a customs office in Dera Ismail Khan on Wednesday, police said.

According to officials, attackers opened fire with automatic weapons on the Yarik police station and a nearby customs office, located along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) route.

A police spokesperson said the officials martyred in the attack were customs official Israr Khan and police constable Mohammad Bilal.

The injured, identified as Hazrat Umar and Khayal Mohammad, were shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital’s trauma centre, where they were undergoing treatment.

Police said the attackers also fired at passenger buses travelling on the CPEC route, causing panic in the area. A customs vehicle was set ablaze during the assault.

Security personnel returned fire, prompting the assailants to flee. A heavy police contingent reached the site soon after the incident, and a search operation was launched in the surrounding area.

Investigations are underway, and officials said efforts were ongoing to apprehend those involved in the attack.

Earlier this month, at least four policemen, including a station house officer (SHO), were martyred when armed militants attacked a police party in Paniala's Wanda Budh area of Dera Ismail Khan.

On January 24, five people, including a peace committee leader, were killed, while 10 others were injured in an explosion said to be a suicide attack during a wedding ceremony in the district.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1974083/two-officials-martyred-in-militant-attack-on-police-station-customs-office-in-dera-ismail-khan>

Pakistan Observer

CPEC-BRI integration & rise of a new Eurasian economic axis

Asad Ali

THE recent visits of the presidents of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to Pakistan mark more than ceremonial diplomacy—they signal a historic shift in the economic architecture of Central and South Asia.

By advancing the strategic integration of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with the broader Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the three nations are laying the groundwork for a new era of connectivity, trade expansion and shared prosperity across Eurasia.

For decades, Central Asia's greatest economic constraint has been its geography. Landlocked and distant from major seaports, countries like Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have faced higher transportation costs and limited access to global markets. Meanwhile, Pakistan—situated at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East—has long sought to capitalize on its strategic location through infrastructure modernization and port development. The convergence of these complementary interests under the CPEC-BRI framework offers transformative potential.

The presidential visits have catalyzed a strategic trilateral partnership focused on unlocking new economic pathways. This is not merely about trade routes; it is about reimagining the region as an interconnected economic bloc. Through coordinated infrastructure investments, streamlined customs processes and harmonized trade policies, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan are building the foundations of trans-regional integration.

Uzbekistan's economic trajectory underscores its readiness to play a leading role in this transformation. With projected economic growth of 6.8 percent in 2026—driven by strong investment inflows, industrial reforms and favourable gold prices—Tashkent is positioning itself as a dynamic and outward-looking economy. Structural reforms aimed at liberalizing markets, expanding manufacturing capacity and strengthening regional partnerships have

enhanced its competitiveness. Integration with CPEC offers Uzbekistan a reliable southern trade outlet through Karachi and Gwadar, significantly reducing transit times and shipping costs.

Kazakhstan, the largest economy in Central Asia, is similarly poised to benefit. With projected growth of 5.5 percent, Astana is actively diversifying beyond its traditional dependence on raw material exports. By shifting toward finished goods production, value-added industries and logistics services, Kazakhstan is strengthening its long-term economic stability. Integration with CPEC aligns perfectly with this strategy, providing access to new consumer markets in South Asia and beyond while improving supply chain efficiency.

At the heart of this partnership lies connectivity. Pakistan's ports—Karachi and Gwadar—serve as gateways to the Arabian Sea and global shipping lanes. For landlocked Central Asia, these ports represent economic lifelines. By linking Central Asian production hubs to Pakistan's maritime infrastructure, transportation costs can be significantly reduced, boosting export competitiveness. Faster delivery times and diversified trade routes will also enhance resilience in an era marked by geopolitical uncertainty and supply chain disruptions.

The proposed Karachi-Haripur-Karakoram Highway (KKH)-China-Kazakhstan corridor exemplifies the vision of efficient logistics and strategic connectivity. This multimodal corridor would integrate road, rail and maritime networks, facilitating seamless cross-border trade. Beyond commercial gains, such connectivity deepens people-to-people ties, tourism flows and cultural exchange—essential ingredients for sustainable regional integration.

Encouragingly, the Eurasian Development Bank has expressed a positive outlook for Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan's economies, highlighting strong growth fundamentals and prudent fiscal management. This financial optimism reinforces the credibility of integrating CPEC and BRI as a viable and mutually beneficial strategy. Investors are more likely to commit capital when macroeconomic indicators signal stability and growth potential. However, infrastructure alone does not guarantee prosperity. The true promise of CPEC-BRI integration lies in industrial collaboration and value chain integration. Joint ventures in textiles, agriculture processing, mining, renewable energy and information technology could generate employment and stimulate innovation across the three countries. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under CPEC could host Central Asian investors, fostering technology transfer and industrial upgrading.

Moreover, the establishment of a trilateral maritime transport company could streamline logistics and reduce reliance on third-party carriers. By coordinating shipping services, warehousing and customs procedures, the three nations could create a more predictable and cost-effective trading environment. Such institutional innovation would signal a long-term commitment to regional economic integration.

Critically, this emerging partnership also contributes to regional stability. Economic interdependence fosters shared interests and reduces incentives for conflict. As trade volumes expand and infrastructure networks intertwine, the prosperity of one nation becomes linked to the well-being of others. In a region historically shaped by fragmentation and geopolitical competition, this shift toward cooperative connectivity is both timely and strategic.

The integration of CPEC and BRI also holds global significance. By linking East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East through efficient corridors, the trilateral partnership enhances Eurasia's role in global trade. It positions Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan not as peripheral actors, but as central nodes in an evolving global economic order.

Skeptics may question the feasibility of large-scale integration amid global economic uncertainty. Yet the momentum generated by high-level diplomatic engagement, coupled with favourable economic projections and institutional support, suggests that the political will exists. What is required now is sustained commitment—transparent governance, regulatory harmonization and inclusive growth strategies that ensure benefits reach local communities.

In conclusion, the strategic integration of CPEC and BRI represents a bold vision for regional prosperity. The recent presidential visits have transformed aspiration into actionable partnership. By bridging Central Asia's landlocked economies with Pakistan's warm-water ports, enhancing connectivity through innovative corridors and fostering industrial collaboration, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan are charting a path toward shared growth and stability. If implemented with foresight and cooperation, this trilateral alignment could redefine the economic landscape of Eurasia—unlocking opportunities that extend far beyond the region and solidifying its role as a vital engine of global trade in the decades ahead.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-bri-integration-rise-of-a-new-urasian-economic-axis/>

February 20, 2026

Daily Times

Pak, China workers at CPEC projects celebrate Spring Festival

Chinese and Pakistani employees working on projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) came together to celebrate the Chinese Spring Festival, highlighting cultural harmony and deepening people-to-people ties. Marking the Chinese New Year 2026, staff members participated in festive activities, including experiencing the traditional art of Chinese calligraphy, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. The celebrations reflected unity and friendship, as employees from both countries shared cultural traditions and extended warm New Year greetings. "There is no better way to strengthen our bond than by sharing our cultures," participants noted, adding that the Spring Festival provided an opportunity to foster mutual understanding and teamwork. New Year messages from employees of China Energy Engineering Corporation (CEEC), also poured in on the occasion. Hafiz Naveed Khalid, Business Manager of the Asset and Finance Department at SK Hydro Private Limited, shared his greetings. "In 2025, the SK Hydropower Station celebrated the first anniversary of its commercial operation. In 2026, we will uphold our founding mission, march forward courageously, and strive tirelessly for the high-quality construction of the CPEC. Happy Year of the Horse to all, and may we ride on the momentum to achieve greater success," he said.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1453977/pak-china-workers-at-cpec-projects-celebrate-spring-festival/>

February 21, 2026

The Nation

Bahria University celebrates 75 years of Pak–China ties

ISLAMABAD - In a ceremony marked by camaraderie and cultural vibrancy, Bahria University celebrated two special occasions, the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the People’s Republic of China, along with the Chinese New Year festivities. The event brought together Chinese students, faculty members and university officers who gathered to reflect on 75 years of mutual trust, respect and cooperation between the two nations. According to a Gwadar Pro’s report, the ceremony underscored the depth of the longstanding bilateral relationship, widely described as an “All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership” and the legendary “Iron Brotherhood.” Talking to Gwadar Pro, Imran Ul Haque, Director of the Pak-China Study & Research Centre at Bahria University, said the occasion served as a powerful testament to the enduring strength of ties between Islamabad and Beijing.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/21-Feb-2026/bahria-university-celebrates-75-years-pak-china-ties>

February 22, 2026

Business Recorder

Work on York-Sago Road to begin soon

PESHAWAR: Work on 50-Kilometre York-Sago Road will start soon under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) while the Sago-Zhob project has been sent for approval and progress is underway.

This was told to Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi during a briefing by National Highway Authority (NHA) here at Governor’s House on Friday. Besides, Member NHA Ashfaq Ahmad GMC CPEC Syed Nawaz Khan, GM Chitral Zahir Khan were also present.

In the meeting, a detailed briefing was given on the ongoing and proposed highway projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The project to dualize the 127km section of the Indus Highway from Sarai Gambela to Kohat is of great importance, in which special measures are being included to prevent accidents.

The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was told that Kohat-Jand-Pindi Motorway has been completed and is expected to be inaugurated soon.

Similarly, it was told that the dualization and up-gradation of Old Bannu Road, while the Lachi to Gundi Chowk project has been completed. Work on Peshawar Northern Bypass is progressing rapidly and will be completed soon.

Progress is also being made on Chitral Boni Mastuj Shandur Road, Chitral Uyun Bamboreit Road, Gilgit Shandur Road and Garm Chashma Chitral Road.

It was suggested to start work on Pezo Tank Road and York Tank Road soon so that a large population could benefit. The need to double the Dera Ismail Khan to Dera Ghazi Khan Road and construct two bypasses there was also emphasized.

The NHA officials said that the bridge on the Kulkarni-Kot-Jai Link Road has been completed, while the construction of roads is to be done by the provincial government, on which the Governor issued instructions to contact the Punjab government.

The Governor was informed that there is a proposal to establish an interchange at Paharpur under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40408366/work-on-york-sago-road-to-begin-soon>

February 23, 2026

Business Recorder

Pakistan, China reaffirm commitment to boost ties

Naveed Butt

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China on Sunday reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen their long-standing strategic partnership and expand cooperation in key sectors, as the Chinese Embassy marked the Spring Festival with a special ceremony in the federal capital.

The event, held to celebrate the Chinese New Year (Year of the Horse), was attended by Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik as chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, he said the Pakistan–China friendship has stood strong during difficult times and continues to grow from strength to strength. He noted that China supported Pakistan during its recent economic challenges and expressed confidence that bilateral cooperation would further help boost economic growth.

Referring to collaboration in the mining sector, the minister said both countries are already working on major projects and there is room to expand cooperation. He expressed hope that new projects would soon become operational following the success of earlier ventures.

Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong said China's trust in Pakistan remains firm and reaffirmed Beijing's commitment to working closely with Islamabad in areas including energy and minerals.

The ceremony concluded with both sides expressing optimism that the New Year would bring deeper cooperation and shared prosperity for the two countries.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40408491/pakistan-china-reaffirm-commitment-to-boost-ties>

Daily Times

Spring festival at Chinese Embassy celebrates China-Pakistan friendship

The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan hosted a special event themed "Chinese New Year, China-Pakistan Go Together" on the occasion of the Chinese Spring Festival (Year of the Horse). Celebrating the new year with Pakistani brothers and sisters and reaffirming the enduring friendship between the two nations. Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik attended the event as the chief guest, sharing in the festivities and highlighting the deep-rooted bond between Pakistan and China, said a news release issued by the Ministry of Petroleum. Extending heartfelt congratulations to the Chinese leadership, government, and people, the minister said that the Year of the Horse reflects the resilience and strength of the Pakistan-China friendship. He noted that China has consistently extended unwavering support to Pakistan, particularly during challenging economic times.

He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan has successfully overcome economic hardships and steered the country toward stabilisation, adding that China provided substantial support during this journey.

He termed economic growth as the next target and expressed confidence that continued Chinese support would help accelerate this progress.

Referring to cooperation in the mining sector, the minister stated that China and Pakistan have several joint projects and significant potential to expand collaboration in this area.

He said that following the success of the Saindak Project, the next major milestone in bilateral mining cooperation would be the Reko Diq project, expressing hope that it would be operationalized in the near future.

Reaffirming that Pakistan and China share an all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, the minister expressed confidence that the coming year would further strengthen bilateral cooperation. He emphasized that economic ties between the two countries are expanding into new domains, particularly petroleum and minerals, and reiterated that Pakistan-China relations have consistently progressed in the right direction.

Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong underscored that China's confidence in Pakistan remains unshakable. He reiterated China's commitment to working closely with Pakistan across multiple sectors, including energy and minerals, and expressed optimism that both countries would continue to collaborate for shared prosperity and the well-being of their peoples in the year ahead.

The event concluded on a note of unity and renewed commitment, symbolizing the enduring strength of the China-Pakistan friendship as both nations' steps into the new year together.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1455278/spring-festival-at-chinese-embassy-celebrates-china-pakistan-friendship/>

Dawn News

China sees record daily passenger flow in spring festival travel rush

BEIJING: China's Spring Festival travel rush hit a historic high on Feb 20, with daily cross-regional passenger trips exceeding 350 million, according to data released by the Ministry of Transport on Saturday.

On Feb 20, the 19th day of the 2026 Spring Festival travel season, cross-regional passenger traffic reached a remarkable 352.999 million trips. This figure represents a 12.3 per cent increase compared to the same day in the 2025 Spring Festival travel season, setting a new record.

The Spring Festival, which is also known as Chinese New Year, falls on Feb 17 this year, and the official holiday lasts nine days. The annual travel rush, "chunyun," is often described as the world's largest human migration. It is expected to see a record 9.5 billion inter-regional passenger trips during the 40-day rush from Feb 2 to March 13 this year.

During this year's Spring Festival, many Chinese chose to celebrate abroad, discovering that distance did little to dull the holiday's joy vibrant dragon dances, glowing lantern displays and lavish festive feasts proved that the spirit of the Chinese New Year transcends borders.

Across the globe, Spring Festival celebrations are creating memorable experiences for both tourists and locals, not only showcasing Chinese culture through performances and traditional events, but also fostering travel and cross-cultural exchanges.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1975114/china-sees-record-daily-passenger-flow-in-spring-festival-travel-rush>

Pakistan Observer

Chinese embassy hosts spring festival celebrating China-Pakistan friendship

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Celebrating the new year with Pakistani brothers and sisters and reaffirming the enduring friendship between the two nations.

Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik attended the event as the chief guest, sharing in the festivities and highlighting the deep-rooted bond between Pakistan and China, said a news release issued by the Ministry of Petroleum.

Extending heartfelt congratulations to the Chinese leadership, government, and people, the minister said that the Year of the Horse reflects the resilience and strength of the Pakistan-China friendship. He noted that China has consistently extended unwavering support to Pakistan, particularly during challenging economic times.

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Reaffirming that Pakistan and China share an all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, the minister expressed confidence that the coming year would further strengthen bilateral cooperation.

He emphasized that economic ties between the two countries are expanding into new domains, particularly petroleum and minerals, and reiterated that Pakistan–China relations have consistently progressed in the right direction.

Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong underscored that China’s confidence in Pakistan remains unshakable.

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<https://pakobserver.net/chinese-embassy-hosts-spring-festival-celebrating-china-pakistan-friendship/>

The Nation

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<https://www.nation.com.pk/23-Feb-2026/chinese-embassy-hosts-spring-festival-event-celebrating-china-pakistan-friendship>

February 24, 2026

The Express Tribune

China's DeepSeek trained AI model on Nvidia's best chip despite US ban, official says

WASHINGTON: Chinese AI startup DeepSeek's latest AI model, set to be released as soon as next week, was trained on Nvidia's most advanced AI chip, the Blackwell, a senior Trump administration official said on Monday, in what could represent a violation of US export controls.

The US believes DeepSeek will remove the technical indicators that might reveal its use of American AI chips, the official said, adding that the Blackwells are likely clustered at its data center in Inner Mongolia, an autonomous region of China.

The person declined to say how the US government received the information or how DeepSeek obtained the chips, but emphasized that US policy is: "we're not shipping Blackwells to China".

NVIDIA declined to comment, while the Commerce Department and DeepSeek did not respond to requests for comment.

The Chinese embassy in Washington said Beijing opposes “drawing ideological lines, overstretching the concept of national security, expansive use of export controls and politicizing economic, trade, and technological issues”.

Asked about the Reuters report at a regular Chinese foreign ministry briefing on Tuesday, spokesperson Mao Ning said they were not aware of the circumstances and that China had earlier repeatedly clarified its stance on Washington's treatment of US chip exports to China.

US government confirmation of DeepSeek obtaining the chips, first reported by Reuters, could further divide Washington policymakers as they struggle to determine where to draw the line on Chinese access to the crown jewels of American AI semiconductor chips.

White House AI Czar David Sacks and Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang argue that shipping advanced AI chips to China discourages Chinese competitors like Huawei from redoubling efforts to catch up with Nvidia's and AMD's technology.

But China hawks fear chips could easily be diverted from commercial uses to help supercharge China's military and threaten US dominance in AI.

"This shows why exporting any AI chips to China is so dangerous," said Chris McGuire, who served as a White House National Security Council official under former President Joe Biden.

"Given China's leading AI companies are brazenly violating US export controls, we obviously cannot expect that they will comply with US conditions that would prohibit them from using chips to support the Chinese military," he added.

US Concerns

US export controls, overseen by the Commerce Department, currently bar Blackwell shipments to China.

In August, US President Donald Trump opened the door to Nvidia selling a scaled-down version of the Blackwell in China. But he later reversed course, suggesting the firm's most advanced chips should be reserved for US companies and kept out of China.

Trump's decision in December to allow Chinese firms to buy Nvidia's second-most-advanced chips, known as the H200, drew sharp criticism from China hawks, but shipments of the chips remain stalled over guardrails built into the approvals.

Read: US AI giants accuse Chinese rivals of mass data theft

"Chinese AI companies' reliance on smuggled Blackwells underscores their massive shortfall of domestically produced AI chips and why approvals of H200 chips would represent a lifeline," said Saif Khan, who served as director of technology and national security at the White House's National Security Council under former President Joe Biden.

The official declined to comment on how the latest news would impact the Trump administration's decision on whether to allow DeepSeek to buy H200s.

The model they helped train likely relied on the "distillation" of models made by leading-edge US AI companies, including Anthropic, Google, OpenAI, and xAI, echoing allegations made by OpenAI and Anthropic, the official added.

The technique known as distillation involves having an older, more established and powerful AI model evaluate the quality of the answers coming out of a newer model, effectively transferring the older model's learnings.

Hangzhou-based DeepSeek shook markets early last year with a set of AI models that rivaled some of the best offerings from the US, fueling concerns in Washington that China could catch up in the AI race despite restrictions.

The Information previously reported that DeepSeek had smuggled chips into China to train its next model. Reuters is reporting for the first time on the US government's confirmation of the chips' use for that purpose in DeepSeek's Inner Mongolia-based facility.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2594293/chinas-deepseek-trained-ai-model-on-nvidias-best-chip-despite-us-ban-official-says>

Nine days, billions spent: China's Spring Festival sparks consumer frenzy

BEIJING: China's record-breaking nine-day Spring Festival holiday has unleashed a powerful wave of consumer activity, delivering a broad-based boost to travel, retail, dining and entertainment and offering policymakers an encouraging early-year signal for the world's second-largest economy, according to the Chinese media.

By extending the traditional seven-day Lunar New Year break to nine consecutive days in 2026, authorities effectively created a "segmented holiday" model. Families were able to complete customary reunions and still carve out time for leisure travel or discretionary spending. The result has been a surge in mobility and consumption that economists say reflects both pent-up demand and the impact of targeted pro-consumption policies.

The annual Spring Festival travel rush, known as Chunyun, has once again highlighted the scale of China's domestic mobility. China State Railway Group forecast 15 million passenger trips on a single peak day, adding nearly 1,500 extra trains to meet demand. As of early Friday morning, 298m railway tickets had been sold via the 12,306 ticketing platform.

Overall, the 40-day travel period running from early February to mid-March is expected to generate a record 9.5 billion cross-regional passenger trips, spanning rail, road, air and waterways.

Air travel data point to a visible demographic shift: the mobilisation of the "silver economy". According to the online travel platform Qunar, travellers aged 60 and above sharply increased their bookings compared with last year, with many older passengers flying for the first time to reunite with children in major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. The longer holiday appears to have reduced time pressures, enabling elderly parents to combine family visits with sightseeing.

International mobility has also climbed. The National Immigration Administration forecast that average daily inbound and outbound trips would exceed 2.05m during the holiday, up

more than 14% year-on-year. Qunar reported a 20% increase in domestic flight bookings made with non-Chinese passports, with foreign travelers visiting more than 100 cities nationwide.

Beyond transport hubs, cinemas and theme parks have been packed. China's box office surpassed 6b yuan (about \$868m) in total revenue including pre-sales by mid-holiday, with the Spring Festival period alone contributing more than 3.4b yuan.

Family-friendly blockbusters led the charge, including Pegasus 3, Scare Out (also known as Silent Awakening) and Boonie Bears: The Hidden Protector. The strong performance highlights the growing "film+" model, in which movie releases stimulate adjacent consumption in dining, retail and tourism.

Theme parks have been among the biggest beneficiaries of multi-generational travel. According to Qunar, Beijing Universal Resort and Shanghai Disneyland ranked among the most popular destinations, reflecting a surge in family package tours. Tuniu, a major online travel agency, reported that trips involving three generations traveling together rose sharply during the extended break.

Outbound tourism has also rebounded, with Chinese travelers flocking to Asian cities such as Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Seoul, drawn by short-haul flights, accessible visa policies and family-friendly climates.

At home, brick-and-mortar retail and catering businesses enjoyed brisk sales. Data from the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China showed that average daily sales at key retail and dining enterprises rose 8.6% year-on-year during the first four days of the holiday. Traffic and revenue at 78 major shopping streets and commercial districts both posted solid gains.

Gold jewellery once again emerged as a festive favourite. Despite elevated gold prices, zodiac-themed ornaments and lightweight items such as one-gramme "golden beans" sold briskly. For younger consumers, these small purchases offered an accessible blend of tradition and investment, especially as bullion prices hovered at historically high levels.

Meanwhile, intelligent consumer goods recorded particularly strong growth. Sales of smart wearable devices climbed nearly 20% year-on-year in the holiday's first three days. Smart glasses more than doubled in sales, while smart blood glucose monitors jumped almost 50%, reflecting rising health awareness and demand for tech-enabled lifestyles.

Economists attribute part of the consumption boom to policy support. In the lead-up to the holiday, authorities rolled out a nationwide campaign to spur spending, including consumer goods trade-in programs, prize invoice lotteries and local consumption vouchers.

The consumer goods trade-in initiative alone has generated more than 196b yuan in sales so far this year, benefitting over 28m consumers. Vice Commerce Minister Sheng Qiuping said that 62.5b yuan in fiscal funds had been disbursed to local authorities to support the programme in 2026, while an additional 2.05b yuan was allocated by local governments for vouchers and digital cash red packets.

Service consumption has also strengthened. The commerce ministry reported that domestic travel spending on major platforms rose 4.5% year-on-year in the first three days of the holiday, while car rental orders surged 26%.

Dai Bin, president of the China Tourism Academy, said that the rise of folk, cultural and technology-themed tourism — alongside study tours for teenagers — is encouraging longer-distance travel and boosting rural as well as urban participation.

For policymakers, the holiday spending surge serves as a key barometer of consumer confidence. Analysts say the extended break amplified demand by giving households more time and flexibility to allocate discretionary income. Combined with targeted fiscal measures, the result has been a broad consumption rebound spanning transportation, hospitality, entertainment and retail.

While it remains to be seen whether momentum will carry through the rest of the year, the Spring Festival's record mobility and spending offer a strong start. In an economy seeking to consolidate recovery and rebalance toward domestic demand, the nine-day holiday has provided a timely and tangible lift.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2594183/nine-days-billions-spent-chinas-spring-festival-sparks-consumer-frenzy>

The News International

China rolls out new AI-powered 'DeepRare' technology for efficient medical diagnosis

Hafsa Naeem Baig

Researchers based in China have created an artificial intelligence (AI)-based tool that combines a mixture of patient information, including genetic data, clinical symptoms, and doctors' notes, to help diagnose rare diseases more quickly and accurately.

The project, led by Shenhua Hospital and the university's School of Artificial Intelligence, has already attracted over 1,000 specialized users from more than 600 medical and research institutions worldwide.

Tests show DeepRare achieves 57.18 percent accuracy using only clinical data, marking a 24-point improvement over previous models. Including genetic data raises accuracy above 70 percent, showing potential to improve diagnosis in areas without advanced testing.

The system draws on an extensive knowledge base of medical literature and real-world cases. Its cycle of hypothesis, validation, and self-review boosts reliability and fills reasoning gaps, surpassing the limits of traditional AI models.

Rare diseases are defined as conditions affecting fewer than 1 in 2,000 people collectively impact more than 300 million people worldwide, with more than 7,000 distinct disorders identified to date, approximately 80% of which are genetic in origin, the investigators wrote in the paper describing their work in Nature.

“Despite their cumulative burden, rare diseases remain notoriously difficult to diagnose due to their clinical heterogeneity, low individual prevalence, and limited clinician familiarity.”

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1393454-china-rolls-out-new-ai-powered-deep-ai-technology-for-efficient-medical-diagnosis>

Chinese Newspapers

February 18, 2026

People's Daily

Shared joy of Spring Festival resonates with expats across China

BEIJING, Feb. 17 (Xinhua) -- As the Chinese New Year festivities reach their peak, expats across China have joined the celebrations, not merely as spectators, but as active participants in what has become a global cultural phenomenon.

At the Feng Jicai Museum at Tianjin University, in north China's Tianjin Municipality, dozens of international students found themselves immersed in the jubilant ambiance, surrounded by lanterns and traditional decorations.

For Pakistani student Muhammad Israr Ul Haq Naqeebi, the traditional New Year paintings on display revealed something profound. "These paintings do more than just decorate homes," he said. "They carry memories and good wishes."

Kirana Vesarachkitti from Thailand also perceived deep meanings. "The door god images embody the beautiful hopes of safeguarding the home, ensuring family harmony, and warding off evil to welcome good fortune," she observed.

After trying her hand at writing the Chinese character "Fu" (meaning good fortune), Indonesian student Jesslyn Beatrice Faustina said she was struck by "how ancient traditions coexist seamlessly with modern life."

Feng Jicai is a renowned Chinese writer and cultural scholar. The museum bearing his name houses abundant cultural relics and artworks. "We invited those who stayed on campus during the holiday to share in the Spring Festival, a cultural heritage passed down for thousands of years and shared by humanity," he said. "They are not just guests, but participants in this celebration."

In rural Jizhou, Tianjin, a time-honored fair drew Umar Suleimanov, a 26-year-old Tajik student from Nankai University. Squeezing through bustling stalls laden with festive goods, sampling local snacks and watching traditional dances, he said: "It's so lively! I've seen the vibrant, down-to-earth spirit of the Chinese New Year."

Meanwhile, aboard a train bound from Nanchang in east China's Jiangxi Province to Beijing, an entirely different celebration took place. Eight international students from different countries joined railway staff in a "train gala," dressed in Hanfu and carrying their hometown delicacies.

As ancient Chinese music filled the carriage, Aliia Iakupova from Russia stepped forward in Hanfu, greeting passengers with a traditional fist-and-palm salute. "This is my first Spring Festival in traditional Chinese clothing," she said. "It has given me a real sense of the Chinese concepts of 'traditional ritual' and 'year,' which is far more vivid than what I learned from books."

Lekouga Foula Jeannica Darlia, a student from Gabon, presented her hometown dish of cassava leaf stew. "For me, this dish is the taste of happiness, shared with family," she said. "I want to bring this flavor to my Chinese friends, so two cultures, thousands of miles apart, can come closer through our shared longing for reunion."

Later, Darlia sang the Chinese pop song "Across the Ocean to See You," a tune she had been practicing for over a month. "This song tells my own story," she explained. Having crossed an ocean to study in China, she now considers Nanchang her second home. "I feel the city's vitality and the kindness of the people."

In Nanning, capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, a multi-lingual transnational Spring Festival gala brought together young performers from countries including China, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Indonesia. The event featured lion dance, intricate paper-cuts, and vibrant Zhuang brocade crafts.

Indonesian student Yusuf Maulana Furdaus, who is studying image design in China, showcased some unique costume designs on stage. He incorporated some cool paper-cutting techniques he picked up in his free time. "Integrating traditional Chinese craftsmanship into stage costume design is a creative fusion of cross-cultural elements that can inject new vitality into cultural innovation," he said.

Brazilian martial arts enthusiast Gabriel joined the gala for the second time, performing Tai Chi with Guangxi athlete Tang Chenkun. Their flowing movements embodied both Tai Chi philosophy and the beauty of cross-cultural communication.

The global embrace of the Spring Festival reflects its growing international influence.

In late 2024, UNESCO inscribed "Spring Festival, social practices of the Chinese people in celebration of traditional new year" on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

"The shared pursuit of reunion, renewal and hope across different civilizations has made the Spring Festival a cross-cultural, transmissible and empathetic 'world language,'" said Wang Ruotong, a researcher with Tianjin Foreign Studies University.

<https://en.people.cn/n3/2026/0218/c90000-20426872.html>

February 23, 2026

Xinhua News

Spring Festival celebration event held in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Feb. 23 (Xinhua) -- The Spring Festival celebration event themed "Chinese New Year, China Pakistan Go Together," hosted by the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, was held here on Saturday evening.

Representatives from different sectors of Pakistani society, overseas Chinese, Chinese enterprises, and media attended the event.

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong welcomed Pakistani friends to the embassy to celebrate the Chinese New Year of the Horse together. He said that during this year's Spring Festival, going to China to celebrate the Chinese New Year has become a new trend among foreign friends. They enjoyed delicious food, beautiful scenery, and a wonderful time in China in tranquility, harmony, and joy.

Jiang hoped that the Pakistani friends could also spend a wonderful Chinese New Year at the Chinese Embassy and join hands to write a new chapter for China-Pakistan friendship.

On behalf of the Pakistani government, Pakistani Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik extended his Spring Festival greetings to the Chinese people, wishing Chinese friends and China's development success in the new year.

The guests enjoyed Chinese tea art, learned to make dumplings, and watched various performances on site. Mohammad Kamran, a student from the National University of Modern Languages of Pakistan, recited an ancient Chinese poem The Moon over the River on a Spring Night on the stage.

He said that making dumplings with his own hands during the Spring Festival was very exciting for him, hoping that the people of the two countries could strengthen exchanges and enhance friendship through their respective traditional festivals.

<https://english.news.cn/20260223/47d245798c2c4062860664a080ea771b/c.html>