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China Never Included Pakistan in Visa-Free Entry List, Debunking Claims

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Recent social media claims suggesting China removed Pakistan from its visa-free entry list have been debunked, as Pakistan was never included in the list to begin with. Despite the strong Pakistan-China partnership, Pakistani citizens have always required visas to enter China—a fact confirmed by multiple credible sources. This clarification addresses

widespread misinformation, emphasizing the importance of accurate reporting amid the two nations' deep diplomatic ties.

The controversy arose from a viral social media graphic by *Media Bites*, which claimed, “*China just announced visa-free entry for 74 countries, but Pakistan didn't make the list.*” The post, which garnered over 19,000 views and was widely shared on X (formerly Twitter), including by Afghan and Indian accounts, misleadingly implied that Pakistan had been removed from a previously existing visa-free arrangement. In reality, Pakistan has never been part of China's visa-free list.

A fact-check by iVerify Pakistan, a project of the Centre for Excellence in Journalism (CEJ) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), confirmed that ordinary Pakistani passport holders are not eligible for visa-free entry into China and must apply for visas through the Chinese Embassy. This policy remains unchanged.

In July 2025, China expanded its visa-free policy to 75 countries, allowing their citizens to enter for up to 30 days to boost tourism and trade. This list includes countries like France, Germany, Malaysia, and Thailand, but excludes Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh—a reflection of China's cautious visa strategy, often based on security assessments and bilateral agreements.

While holders of diplomatic and official Pakistani passports are granted visa-free entry for up to 30 days, ordinary citizens are not covered under this exemption. Despite this, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) remains a cornerstone of bilateral cooperation, and Pakistan continues to maintain strong diplomatic and strategic relations with Beijing.

The misinformation prompted criticism, with social media users pointing out the inaccuracy of such claims and urging for more responsible digital reporting. One user noted the dangers of “posting without verification,” stressing how false narratives can damage public perception and undermine trust in international relations.