



China’s Science Cities Lead the World in Research

Beijing and Shanghai dominate global high-impact research—what does this mean for AI in space?

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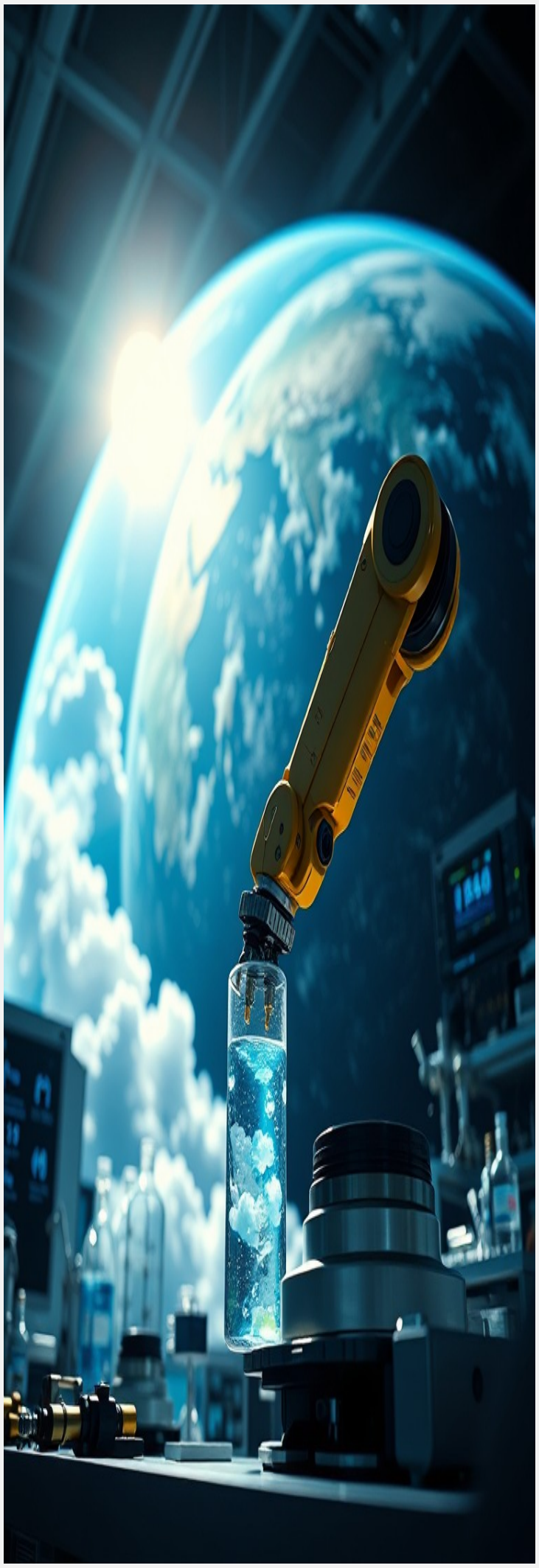
THE DATA

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Top Cities in Chemistry Research

In 2025, all top 10 global cities for chemistry research were in China.

This complete dominance reflects China’s strategic investment in foundational science, particularly in materials and chemical engineering—critical enablers for next-gen propulsion systems, satellite materials, and in-space manufacturing. The concentration of high-quality research in Chinese cities suggests a growing capability to innovate at scale in aerospace and space infrastructure.



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Research Clusters Drive Innovation

The fact that all top 10 chemistry research cities are in China indicates a tightly integrated ecosystem of universities, government labs, and industry. This clustering enables rapid iteration from lab discovery to prototype—accelerating development cycles for AI-driven space systems, such as autonomous navigation algorithms and in-orbit repair technologies.



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Global R&D Leadership Is No Longer Western

The shift in research leadership—from U.S. and European dominance to Chinese-led concentration—signals a realignment in who controls the intellectual capital behind AI in aviation and space. For Western aerospace firms, this means rethinking R&D partnerships and talent acquisition to remain competitive in a new innovation landscape.

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