

China

Introduction

Background: For centuries China has stood as a leading civilization, outpacing the rest of the world in the arts and sciences. But in the first half of the 20th century, China was beset by major famines, civil unrest, military defeats, and foreign occupation. In 1949, the Communists established the People's Republic of China. After 1978, his successor DENG Xiaoping decentralized economic decision-making. Output quadrupled in the next 20 years and China now has the world's second largest GDP.

Geography

Location: Eastern Asia, bordering the East China Sea, Korea Bay, Yellow Sea, and South China Sea, between North Korea and Vietnam

Geographic coordinates: 35 00 N, 105 00 E

Map references: Asia

Area:

total: 9,596,960 sq km

land: 9,326,410 sq km

water: 270,550 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly smaller than the US

Land boundaries:

total: 22,143.34 km

border countries: Afghanistan 76 km, Bhutan 470 km, Burma 2,185 km, India 3,380 km, Kazakhstan 1,533 km, North Korea 1,416 km, Kyrgyzstan 858 km, Laos 423 km, Macau 0.34 km, Mongolia 4,673 km, Nepal 1,236 km, Pakistan 523 km, Russia (northeast) 3,605 km, Russia (northwest) 40 km, Tajikistan 414 km, Vietnam 1,281 km

Coastline: 14,500 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm

continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: extremely diverse; tropical in south to subarctic in north

Terrain: mostly mountains, high plateaus, deserts in west; plains, deltas, and hills in east

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Turpan Pendi -154 m

highest point: Mount Everest 8,850 m (1999 est.)

Natural resources: coal, iron ore, petroleum, natural gas, mercury, tin, tungsten, antimony, manganese, molybdenum, vanadium, magnetite, aluminum, lead, zinc, uranium, hydropower potential (world's largest)

Land use:

arable land: 10%

permanent crops: 0%

permanent pastures: 43%

forests and woodland: 14%

other: 33% (1993 est.)

Irrigated land: 498,720 sq km (1993 est.)

Natural hazards: frequent typhoons (about five per year along southern and eastern coasts); damaging floods; tsunamis; earthquakes; droughts

Environment - current issues: air pollution (greenhouse gases, sulfur dioxide particulates) from reliance on coal, produces acid rain; water shortages, particularly in the north; water pollution from untreated wastes; deforestation; estimated loss of one-fifth of agricultural land since 1949 to soil erosion and economic development; desertification; trade in endangered species

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Antarctic-Environmental Protocol, Antarctic Treaty, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands, Whaling
signed, but not ratified: Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Nuclear Test Ban

Geography - note: world's fourth-largest country (after Russia, Canada, and US)

People

Population: 1,261,832,482 (July 2000 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 25% (male 168,040,006; female 152,826,953)

15-64 years: 68% (male 439,736,737; female 413,454,673)

65 years and over: 7% (male 41,200,297; female 46,573,816) (2000 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.9% (2000 est.)

Birth rate: 16.12 births/1,000 population (2000 est.)

Death rate: 6.73 deaths/1,000 population (2000 est.)

Net migration rate: -0.4 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2000 est.)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.15 male(s)/female

under 15 years: 1.1 male(s)/female

15-64 years: 1.06 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.88 male(s)/female

total population: 1.06 male(s)/female (2000 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 28.92 deaths/1,000 live births (2000 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 71.38 years

male: 69.6 years

female: 73.33 years (2000 est.)

Total fertility rate: 1.82 children born/woman (2000 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Chinese (singular and plural)

adjective: Chinese

Ethnic groups: Han Chinese 91.9%, Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Manchu, Mongol, Buyi, Korean, and other nationalities 8.1%

Religions: Daoist (Taoist), Buddhist, Muslim, Christian

Languages: Standard Chinese or Mandarin (Putonghua, based on the Beijing dialect), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghaiese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, minority languages

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 81.5%

male: 89.9%

female: 72.7% (1995 est.)

Government

Country name:

conventional long form: People's Republic of China

conventional short form: China

local long form: Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo

local short form: Zhong Guo

abbreviation: PRC

Data code: CH

Government type: Communist state

Capital: Beijing

Administrative divisions: 23 provinces (sheng, singular and plural), 5 autonomous regions* (zizhiqu, singular and plural), and 4 municipalities** (shi, singular and plural); Anhui, Beijing**, Chongqing**, Fujian, Gansu, Guangdong, Guangxi*, Guizhou, Hainan, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Jilin, Liaoning, Nei Mongol*, Ningxia*, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Shandong, Shanghai**, Shanxi, Sichuan, Tianjin**, Xinjiang*, Xizang* (Tibet), Yunnan, Zhejiang, Taiwan, and the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau

Independence: 221 BC (unification under the Qin or Ch'in Dynasty 221 BC; Qing or Ch'ing Dynasty replaced by the Republic on 12 February 1912; People's Republic established 1 October 1949)

National holiday: National Day, 1 October (1949)

Constitution: most recent promulgation 4 December 1982

Legal system: a complex amalgam of custom and statute, largely criminal law; rudimentary civil code in effect since 1 January 1987; new legal codes in effect since 1 January 1980; continuing efforts are being made to improve civil, administrative, criminal, and commercial law

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President JIANG Zemin (since 27 March 1993) and Vice President HU Jintao (since 16 March 1998)

head of government: Premier ZHU Rongji (since 18 March 1998); Vice Premiers QIAN Qichen (since 29 March 1993), LI Lanqing (29 March 1993), WU Bangguo (since 17 March 1995), and WEN Jiabao (since 18 March 1998)

cabinet: State Council appointed by the National People's Congress (NPC)

elections: president and vice president elected by the National People's Congress for five-year terms; elections last held 16-18 March 1998 (next to be held NA March 2003); premier nominated by the president, confirmed by the National People's Congress

Legislative branch: unicameral National People's Congress or Quanguo

Renmin Daibiao Dahui (2,979 seats; members elected by municipal, regional, and provincial people's congresses to serve five-year terms)

elections: last held NA December 1997-NA February 1998 (next to be held late 2002-NA March 2003)

Judicial branch: Supreme People's Court

Economy

Economy - overview: Beginning in late 1978 the Chinese leadership has been moving the economy from a centrally planned economy to a more market-oriented economy. To this end the authorities have switched to a system of household responsibility in agriculture in place of the old collectivization, increased the authority of local officials and plant managers in

industry, permitted a wide variety of small-scale enterprise in services and light manufacturing, and opened the economy to increased foreign trade and investment. The result has been a quadrupling of GDP since 1978. In 1999, with its 1.25 billion people but a GDP of just \$3,800 per capita, China became the second largest economy in the world after the US. Agricultural output doubled in the 1980s, and industry also posted major gains, especially in coastal areas near Hong Kong and opposite Taiwan, where foreign investment helped spur output of both domestic and export goods. In late 1993 China's leadership approved additional long-term reforms aimed at giving still more play to market-oriented institutions and at strengthening the center's control over the financial system; state enterprises would continue to dominate many key industries in what was now termed "a socialist market economy". At the same time, the government struggled to (a) collect revenues due from provinces, businesses, and individuals; (b) reduce corruption and other economic crimes; and (c) keep afloat the large state-owned enterprises. From 50 to 100 million surplus rural workers are adrift between the villages and the cities. A long-term threat to continued rapid economic growth is the deterioration in the environment, notably air pollution, soil erosion, and the steady fall of the water table especially in the north. China continues to lose arable land because of erosion and economic development.

GDP: purchasing power parity - \$4.8 trillion (1999 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 7% (1999 est.)

GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - \$3,800 (1999 est.)

GDP - composition by sector:

agriculture: 15%

industry: 35%

services: 50% (1999 est.)

Population below poverty line: 10% (1999 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: 2.2%

highest 10%: 30.9% (1995)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): -1.3% (1999 est.)

Labor force: 700 million (1998 est.)

Labor force - by occupation: agriculture 50%, industry 24%, services 26% (1998)

Unemployment rate: urban unemployment roughly 10%; substantial unemployment and underemployment in rural areas (1999 est.)

Budget:

revenues: \$NA

expenditures: \$NA, including capital expenditures of \$NA

Industries: iron and steel, coal, machine building, armaments, textiles and apparel, petroleum, cement, chemical fertilizers, footwear, toys, food processing, automobiles, consumer electronics, telecommunications

Industrial production growth rate: 8.8% (1999 est.)

Electricity - production: 1.16 trillion kWh (1998)

Electricity - production by source:

fossil fuel: 80.31%

hydro: 18.46%

nuclear: 1.23%

other: 0% (1998)

Electricity - consumption: 1.014 trillion kWh (1998)
Electricity - exports: 7.935 billion kWh (1998)
Electricity - imports: 89 million kWh (1998)
Agriculture - products: rice, wheat, potatoes, sorghum, peanuts, tea, millet, barley, cotton, oilseed; pork; fish
Exports: \$194.9 billion (f.o.b., 1999)
Exports - commodities: machinery and equipment; textiles and clothing, footwear, toys and sporting goods; mineral fuels, chemicals
Exports - partners: US 22%, Hong Kong 19%, Japan 17%, Germany, South Korea, Netherlands, UK, Singapore, Taiwan (1999)
Imports: \$165.8 billion (c.i.f., 1999)
Imports - commodities: machinery and equipment, plastics, chemicals, iron and steel, mineral fuels
Imports - partners: Japan 20%, US 12%, Taiwan 12%, South Korea 10%, Germany, Hong Kong, Russia, Singapore (1999)
Debt - external: \$159 billion (1998 est.)
Economic aid - recipient: \$NA
Currency: 1 yuan = 10 jiao
Exchange rates: yuan per US\$1 - 8.2793 (January 2000), 8.2783 (1999), 8.2790 (1998), 8.2898 (1997), 8.3142 (1996), 8.3514 (1995)
note: beginning 1 January 1994, the People's Bank of China quotes the midpoint rate against the US dollar based on the previous day's prevailing rate in the interbank foreign exchange market
Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications

Telephones - main lines in use: 110 million (1999 est.)
Telephones - mobile cellular: 23.4 million (1998)
Telephone system: domestic and international services are increasingly available for private use; unevenly distributed domestic system serves principal cities, industrial centers, and many towns
domestic: interprovincial fiber-optic trunk lines and cellular telephone systems have been installed; a domestic satellite system with 55 earth stations is in place
international: satellite earth stations - 5 Intelsat (4 Pacific Ocean and 1 Indian Ocean), 1 Intersputnik (Indian Ocean region) and 1 Inmarsat (Pacific and Indian Ocean regions); several international fiber-optic links to Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Russia, and Germany
Radio broadcast stations: AM 369, FM 259, shortwave 45 (1998)
Radios: 417 million (1997)
Television broadcast stations: 3,240 (of which 209 are operated by China Central Television, 31 are provincial TV stations and nearly 3,000 are local city stations) (1997)
Televisions: 400 million (1997)
Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 3 (1999)

Transportation

Railways:
total: 65,650 km (including 5,400 km of provincial "local" rails)
standard gauge: 62,050 km 1.435-m gauge (12,150 km electrified; 20,250 km double track)

narrow gauge: 3,600 km 0.750-m gauge local industrial lines (1998 est.)

note: a new total of 68,000 km has been estimated for early 1999

Highways:

total: 1.21 million km

paved: 271,300 km (with at least 24,474 km of expressways)

unpaved: 938,700 km (1998 est.)

Waterways: 110,000 km navigable (1999)

Pipelines: crude oil 9,070 km; petroleum products 560 km; natural gas 9,383 km (1998)

Ports and harbors: Dalian, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Haikou, Huangpu, Lianyungang, Nanjing, Nantong, Ningbo, Qingdao, Qinhuangdao, Shanghai, Shantou, Tianjin, Xiamen, Xingang, Yantai, Zhanjiang

Merchant marine:

total: 1,746 ships (1,000 GRT or over) totaling 16,637,023 GRT/24,552,567 DWT

ships by type: barge carrier 2, bulk 325, cargo 840, chemical tanker 21, combination bulk 11, combination ore/oil 1, container 125, liquefied gas 20, multi-functional large load carrier 5, passenger 8, passenger/cargo 46, petroleum tanker 251, refrigerated cargo 24, roll-on/roll-off 21, short-sea passenger 43, specialized tanker 2, vehicle carrier 1 (1999 est.)

Airports: 206 (1996 est.)

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 192

over 3,047 m: 18

2,438 to 3,047 m: 65

1,524 to 2,437 m: 90

914 to 1,523 m: 13

under 914 m: 6 (1996 est.)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 14

1,524 to 2,437 m: 8

914 to 1,523 m: 5

under 914 m: 1 (1996 est.)

Notes to Visitors and Users:

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