



CHINA

FACTS & FIGURES

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The People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded on October 1, 1949. This year marks the 50th anniversary of its founding. Beijing is the capital of China, and the national flag of the PRC is a red flag with five stars.



Peking Opera is the largest type of traditional operas in China, having developed for more than 200 years.



The volume of imports and exports totaled US\$324 billion in 1998.



Given the serious population problem, China has been practicing family planning, encouraging each



The general level of retail price dropped 2.6 percent

in 1998 from the previous year, and that of the consumer price fell 0.8 percent.



女子学院 0148005

NEW STAR PUBLISHERS

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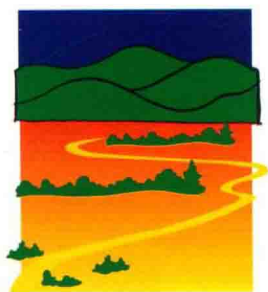
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NATIONAL CONDITIONS



TERRITORY



China is situated in the eastern part of Asia, on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean. It has a total land area of 9.6 million square kilometers, about one-15th percent of the world's total. The Chinese mainland is flanked by the Bohai, the Yellow, the East China and the South China seas in the east and south, with a total water surface of more than 4.7 million square kilometers.

The topography of China is complex, high in the west and low-lying in the east. Mountains, hills and plateaus account for 65 percent of the country's land area. A feature of the topography is many mountains. Among the world's 19 mountain peaks, 8,000 meters above sea level or higher, China has seven. China also abounds in rivers and lakes. The total length of rivers runs to 220,000 kilometers. More than 5,000 rivers have a



China sits in the east of the Asian Continent on the west banks of the Pacific Ocean.



China has a land area of 9.6 million square km, ranking third in the world, next only to Russia and Canada.



catchment area exceeding 100 square kilometers. More than 2,800 lakes are more than one square kilometer in size, among which 13 have a water surface of more than 1,000 square kilometers.

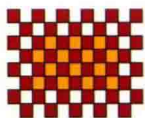
CLIMATE



About 98 percent of the land area of China lies between Latitude 20°N. and Latitude 50°N. The area in the temperate and subtropical zones is very large. Owing to the location, China has a climate dominated by monsoonal winds. Winds by north prevail in winter and winds by south prevail in summer. There are four distinct seasons. The raining season is also hot. Cold waves, intermittent drizzles and typhoons are common. Continental climate is notable in China. The feature shows in the radical change in temperature and rainfall. Compared with other countries on the same Latitudes, the winter temperature in China is much lower while the summer temperature is much higher. The annual rainfall in a place decreases as it goes farther from the coast line. The annual precipitation along the southeastern coast is more than 1,000-2,000 millimeters while that in the northwestern region is less than 100-200 millimeters.

China is divided into three large natural regions according to the difference in regional climate: 1. the Eastern Monsoon Region: about 45 percent of China's land area with 90 percent of the total cultivated land and 95 percent of the total population of the country. This region is much influenced by monsoonal winds which make it wet or semi-wet. Most of the region is under the altitude of 1,000 meters. There are broad plains and many rivers, making the region a major farming area; 2. The Northwestern Dry Region: about 30 percent of China's total land area with 10 percent of the total cultivated land and 4 percent of the total population of the country. The climate is dry or semi-dry. Main natural vegetation is desert grassland or dry grassland, making the region a major pasture area in China. 3. The Qinghai-Tibet High and Cold Region: about 25 percent of China's total land area with 0.8 percent of the total cultivated land and 0.8 percent of the total population of the country. The average elevation is more than 4,000 meters. Most part of it belongs to the inland river drainage areas. The region is cold and the effect of glaciers is strong.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS



According to the Constitution, China is divided for administrative purposes as follows:

1. The country is divided into provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government; 2. The provinces and autonomous regions are divided into prefectures, autonomous prefectures, counties, autonomous counties, and municipalities; 3. The counties and autonomous counties are divided into townships, ethnic townships, and towns. Autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties are autonomous places of various ethnic groups. The State can establish special administrative regions as it sees necessary. At present there are four municipalities directly under the central government: Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Chongqing; 23 provinces: Hebei, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Fujian, Jiangxi, Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, Hainan, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Gansu, Qinghai, Liaoning and Taiwan; five autonomous regions: Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Tibet, Ningxia and Xinjiang. Under the jurisdiction of them are 30 autonomous prefectures, 185 prefecture-level cities, 262 county-level cities and 1,919 other county-level units. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region was established on July 1, 1997. The Macao Special Administrative Region will be established in December this year.

POPULATION, ETHNIC GROUPS AND LANGUAGE

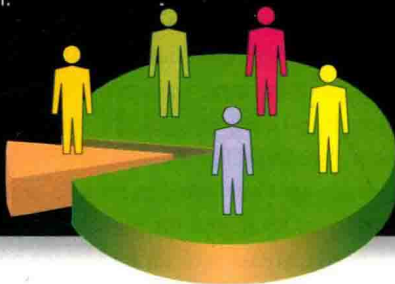


China has the largest population in the world: 1.2481 billion, accounting for approximately 22 percent of the world's total. The density is great, but the population is distributed unevenly. In the 11 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government along the coast, the density is 320.6 persons per square kilometer; while in the 18 hinterland provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government, the density is only 11.8 persons



per square kilometer.

By the end of 1998, China had 1,248.1 million population, making up slightly over one-fifth of the world's total. It now has 108 million hectares of cultivated land, accounting for only 7 percent of the world's total. China faces a great pressure of population.



The education level of the Chinese people keeps rising. In 1949, about 80 percent of the total population were illiterate. By the time of the first census conducted in 1964, the illiterate rate had been reduced to 38 percent. By 1997 the illiterate rate among people in their prime ages had decreased to 5.5 percent. The natural population growth has kept decreasing thanks to the continued practice of China's basic national policy of population control and family planning. The net growth of 1998 was 11.84 million, at an annual rate of 9.53 percent, 0.53 per thousand points lower than that of the previous year. The urban population in China today is 379.42 million, accounting for 30.4 percent of the national total; the rural population is 868.68 million, accounting for 69.6 percent of the national total. The average family size is 3.63



Given the serious population problem, China has been practicing family planning, encouraging each couple to have only one child.

persons.

China is a multi-national country, peopled by 56 ethnic groups. Besides the Han majority, there are 55 minority ethnic groups including the Zhuang, Hui, Uygur, Yi, Miao, Manchu, Tibetan, Mongolian, Tujia, Korean, Dong, Yao, Bai, Hani, Kazak, Dai, and Li. Of these latter, 15 number over a million people each, 13 number over 100,000 people each; and seven number over 50,000 each.

The Han people live all over the country but mainly in compact communities in the valleys of the three major rivers of Yellow, Yangtze and Pearl, and the Songhua-Liaohe Plain. The Han people play the guiding role in the country's political life. Though with a small population, the minority ethnic groups are distributed in an area making up about 50-60 percent of the national total, and the places they live are rich in natural resources. Minority areas have an important position in the construction and development of the country. The Han people have established extensive political and economic ties and cultural exchanges with minority nationalities and formed interdependent relations for mutual development.

The national language of China is *putonghua* (the common speech), which is used by the largest number of Chinese, but many of the 55 minority nationalities have their own languages.



With betterment of living standards, the quality of the Chinese population is improving.

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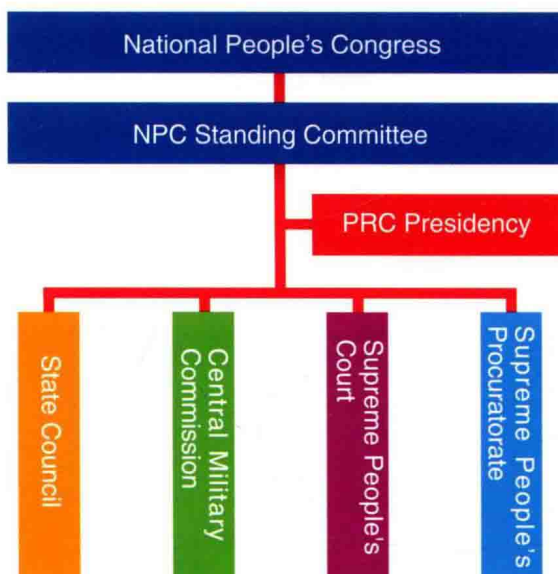
POLITICS



STATE ORGANS



The Constitution of the People's Republic of China (PRC) stipulates that the country's central state organs comprise six components: the National People's Congress (NPC), the PRC Presidency, the State Council, the Central Military Commission, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate.



The five organs — the Presidency, the State Council, the Central Military Commission, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate — are formed by the NPC, and are responsible to the NPC and its Standing Committee.