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International News Special Report CHINA RISING

NEWS

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China is the globe's biggest agricultural producer, feeding about 22 per cent of the world's population with 10 per cent of its arable land. China was the world's largest economy for much of recorded history. Until the 15th century, it was the technological leader.

China has 100 cities of more than a million people. By comparison, India has 18 cities of a million-plus people, Indonesia has 16, Brazil 13, Japan 12, and the United States nine.

Chongqing claims to be the world's largest city, if peasants in surrounding areas and resident of outer suburbs are counted – for a population equal to that of Canada.

China has fewer police per capita than most of the world, but the 1.7 million officers it does have make up a quarter of the country's civil servants. Last year, China saw 58,000 “mass incident,” the official euphemism for public protests. The three million people involved represented a 14.4-per-cent increase from 2002.

By 2010, nearly half of all China's people will live in urban areas. The move from the countryside is the largest human migration in history.

More than 100 million people leave the farm each year, and they send back \$45-billion (U.S.) to their relatives. Without this money, many villages would wither and die.

China became a net importer of crude oil only in 1996.

The country still has a modest share of global oil demand, at 8 per cent, but it has been responsible for nearly two-fifths of the increase in globe consumption since 2000.

In 2002, 81 per cent of the world's executions took place in three countries, says Amnesty International: China (1,060), Iran (113) and the United States (71).

Recently, in the name of expediency, instead of the traditional Chinese execution (a bullet to the back of the neck), the state has resorted to lethal injections in mobile execution vans.

China has seven major dialects and 80 spoken tongues. Yang Huanyi, the last woman to communicate secretly using a rare script, died recently. Nushu was used exclusively by women to share feelings, including fears about arranged marriages.

Every month, five million Chinese people sign up for cellphone service. With 300 million mobile-phone users,

the market is by far the largest in the world.

Taiwanese companies have invested an estimated \$100-billion (U.S.) or more in China over the past decade and a half.

There are 50,000 Taiwanese businesses in China, employing more than 10 million Chinese workers.

The wealth of the Chinese diaspora scattered around the world (excluding Taiwan) is estimated at \$1.1-trillion (U.S.) by American academic **George Haley**.

Wal-Mart's trade with China accounts for 1 per cent of the country's gross domestic product.

Coal mining, which supplies two-thirds of China's energy needs, is by far the country's most dangerous industry. On an average day, 14 coal miners die. For every million tonnes of coal extracted, there are four mining deaths in China, compared with 0.312 in the United States. Some experts think the Chinese statistics mask the real death toll.

Eleven years ago, 67 per cent of China's exports passed through Hong Kong's ports and airports; today, only 28 per cent do. China has 87 million Internet users, more than half of whom are under the age of 24. More than 20 per cent of Chinese Web surfers use Internet cafes, which employ 910,000 people.

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