China aims to build 'Three Gorges of wind power'

June 25 2009

Men share a motorcycle riding past a wind power plant in Zhangbei, northwest of Beijing near Inner Mongolia on June 16, 2009, in northern China's Hebei province. China is aiming to build a huge wind farm in the northwest by 2020 that will have energy capacity similar to the gigantic Three Gorges Dam, a senior official said Thursday.

China is aiming to build a huge wind farm in the northwest by 2020 that will have energy capacity similar to the gigantic Three Gorges Dam, a senior official said Thursday.

Feng Jianshen, a vice governor of Gansu province, told reporters that the province planned to expand the installed capacity of its wind power base

to more than 20 gigawatts in 11 years, more than 10 times the current level.

"Gansu will have built a 'Three Gorges on the land' by then," he said, referring to the country's 23-billion-dollar dam that spans the middle reaches of the Yangtze River.

The dam, the biggest hydro-electrical project in the world, currently has 26 generators with a capacity of 18.2 gigawatts, which will eventually rise to 22.4 gigawatts when six more generators are added.

One of the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters alongside the United States, China now depends on coal for nearly 70 percent of its total energy consumption.

The government has said it aims to rely more on cleaner ways to power its economic growth, with the development of wind power a focus.

It has set a target to install 100 gigawatts of wind power capacity by 2020, likely making the country the world's fastest growing market for wind energy technology.

Zhang Guobao, head of China's National Energy Administration, said last year that the government would build several "Three Gorges of wind power" by 2020 in provinces and regions including Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Gansu and Jiangsu.