

THE RISE OR FALL OF CHINA?

The new edition of *The Times Comprehensive Atlas of the World*, published on 3 September, sets out for the first time the dramatic growth of China and brings home the challenges it faces in the future...

- China is now the most heavily populated country in the world – with over 1.3 billion people, one fifth of the world's population.
- Its megacities, Shanghai and Beijing, have over 10 million inhabitants each.
- China is now a massive consumer of world energy, second only to the USA.
- It boasts the longest and highest transport links in the world.
- Due to China's increasingly dry climate and the extraction of water to support the growing population, the mouth of the Yellow River has changed shape.

The availability of fresh water in China has declined alarmingly in the last 50 years. With the Yellow River and other waterways periodically drying up, there are real fears of water running out before the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The current dust storm season in China is leading to further concerns about the effects on air quality in Beijing and the surrounding area.

China's staggeringly high rate of economic growth is propelling it up the world super power ladder.

As Sheena Barclay, Collins Geo Director says:

"In the four years since the last edition, we have seen China change beyond belief. The atlas offers a unique and timely window on a changing world – and no more so than in the Far East. At Collins we are relied upon to get these changes right."

China's growth is clearly evident in the new atlas, as massive, record-breaking transport networks emerge...

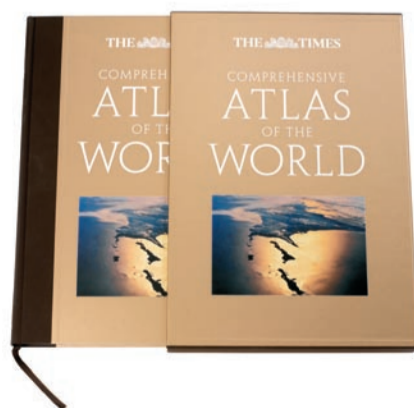
The longest transoceanic bridge in the world – Donghai Bridge

Carrying a six lane motorway, this 32.5km (20 mile) bridge links Shanghai to the deepwater port on Xiaoyang Shan Island. In 2008, this will be superseded by the Hangzhou Bay Bridge – 36 km (22.5 miles) across Hangzhou Bay. Due to open before the Beijing Olympics, it is being constructed in an S-shape to improve driving safety – on long straight roads drivers are more inclined to fall asleep.

The highest railway in the world Golmud to Lhasa

This 1118km railway, running to the Tibetan capital of Lhasa, opened in 2006. With 960km of the line running above 4000m, its highest point is 5072m where it crosses the Tanggula Shan Mountains - 632km of the line is continually frozen making it at risk from global warming. Crossing the remote and inhospitable Plateau of Tibet, the railway took 30,000 workers five years to build and cost more than £2.3 billion. In its first year over 1.5 million passengers have used it to reach the Himalayan region.

Four years in the making, *The Times Comprehensive Atlas of the World* is the world's most prestigious and authoritative atlas – painstakingly researched by a dedicated team of over 50 cartographers, with changes to the database made every 3.5 minutes using a 24-hour-a-day news feed.



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