

Chronology of China's reform era

China celebrated the 30th anniversary of the start of economic reforms that have transformed the country into a global economic and trading power. The following chronology highlights important milestones since then.

1978: Economic, social and cultural reforms launched under Deng Xiaoping, two years after the death of Mao Zedong. GDP per capita is 381 yuan.

1979: U.S. and China establish diplomatic relations. One-child policy introduced.

1980: First special economic zone established in Shenzhen.

1982: Population surpasses 1 billion.

1986: Deng promotes "open-door" policy to encourage foreign investment.

1988: Spiraling inflation and corruption prompt limits on foreign investment and monetary flows.

1989: Students protest in Tiananmen Square to demand economic, political and social change. Hundreds believed killed in ensuing crackdown.

1990: Communist China's first stock exchange opens in Shanghai.

1992: Deng makes southern China tour to relaunch economic reforms in face of criticism from conservatives.

1994: China connects to the Internet.

1996: Chinese currency becomes convertible.

1997: Deng dies. Jiang Zemin takes over. China regains control of Hong Kong.

1998: China injects \$500 billion into its faltering banking sector.

1999: Government outlaws Falun Gong.

2001: China joins the World Trade Organization.

2002: Entrepreneurs allowed to join the Communist Party.

2003: Hu Jintao replaces Jiang as president. SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) breaks out in China and eventually kills nearly 800 worldwide. China's first manned spacecraft orbits the earth.

2004: The United Nations estimates 1 million Chinese are infected with HIV.

2005: China becomes the world's fourth-largest economy. The government stops pegging the currency to the U.S. dollar.

2006: Three Gorges Dam and railway to Tibet are completed. China's foreign exchange reserves reach \$1 trillion, becoming world's largest.

2007: China tops the world with 210 million Internet users. GDP per capita reaches 18,900 yuan (\$2,760).

2008: Sichuan earthquake kills 70,000 people. Beijing hosts Olympic Games.