

FACTSHEET 1

1. The Three Gorges Dam is scheduled for completion in 2009.
2. The dam is the biggest engineering project for China since the Great Wall went up 2000 years ago.
3. The dam is rising in the Chinese village of Sandouping.
4. Floods have killed 300,000 Chinese in the 20th century.
5. Another name for the Yangtze River is Chang Jiang, which means Long River.
6. The Three Gorges Dam will be 607 feet high and over a mile wide.
7. The source of the Yangtze is melting ice off the Tibetan Plateau.
8. The mouth of the Yangtze is Shanghai on the coast of the Yellow Sea.
9. The dam will stretch nearly a mile across and tower 575 feet above the river.
10. The reservoir will be 370 miles long.
11. Locks will bring prosperity through maritime commerce to the interior.
12. At peak load 26 turbines of 400 tons each will generate 18,200 megawatts of electricity equivalent to the output of 18 nuclear power plants.

13. The Chinese government says this dam will cost seventeen billion dollars.

14. Critics say the region would be better served by a series of smaller dams.

15. Sedimentation will make Chongqing's deep draft harbor unusable, and it will impede the generation of electricity.

16. An annual flow of quarter trillion gallons of raw sewage together with effluents flushed from abandoned factories will kill aquatic species.

17. China has a crew of approximately 250,000 workers employed in building the Three Gorges Project.

18. The Three Gorges hydropower station will be hooked up with thermal power and hydroelectric grids in central and eastern China thus improving the economy and reliability of the electric grids.

19. The Three Gorges Reservoir Area has emerged as a hot destination for investment of monies from overseas.

20. A senior engineer claims that the ship lock walls have been crumbling so badly that work on them has been halted until the problem can be solved.

21. There have been predictions that many of the 1.2 million people who are being displaced by the dam will resist their forcible evictions.

22. A series of smaller dams would be better than the one large dam.

23. The river is washing away the massive boulders being used to complete the cofferdam. This is an indication that engineers have miscalculated the river flow.

24. The cofferdam has not been designed to withstand earthquakes.

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25. The Chinese government claims that the energy produced by the dam's huge turbines will provide at least ten percent of the electricity in China.

26. Proponents claim that the dam's generation of electricity by hydropower will significantly reduce China's output of dangerous atmospheric pollution. Upper respiratory problems are identified as the greatest single cause of death in China.

27. With limited highway connection it is extremely difficult for truckers to get through so the river is important as a pathway for the movement of goods.

28. It is claimed that the dam would increase capacity for shipping fivefold and decrease shipping costs by about 35 percent.

29. China has one quarter of the world's population.

30. 1.9 million people will be forced from ancestral homes and farms and relocated elsewhere.

31. Opponents to the dam charge that costs could run as high as 75 billion.

32. Many international lending institutions have refused to help finance largely out of concern for potential environmental problems.

33. The reservoir will take 240,000 acres of cropland out of production. The Yangtze watershed encompasses 700,000 square miles, which is one fifth of China's total land area.

34. The Yangtze River carries three fourths of China's internal waterborne commerce.

35. The people being relocated should be thankful that the government is helping to move them.

36. Arsenic, cyanide, and methyl-mercury will leach out of drowned factories and contaminate the reservoir.

37. Eighty percent of China's cities have no sewage treatment facilities.

38. Each year the Yangtze River discharges so much water into the sea that if it were spilled over the continental USA, it would cover all of it eight inches deep.

39. The Three Gorges Dam will generate eighteen billion watts of electricity.

40. The Three Gorges Dam will have a pair of locks capable of raising 10,000-ton ships up from the river to the reservoir.

41. The Yangtze River is the world's third longest.

42. A 1996 flood killed 2,700 people; as many as 140,000 died in a 1931 flood.

43. When filled, the reservoir will extend more than 650 km and cover more than 1000 square kilometers.

44. The Three Gorges Dam anticipates producing the equivalent of fifty million tons of coal per year and therefore spare China's atmosphere of one to two million tons of sulfuric dioxide, ten thousand tons of carbon monoxide and one hundred fifty thousand tons of dust.

45. Chongqing (a city at the west end of the reservoir) will become the world's largest inland seaport.

46. The bridges now crossing the Yangtze River are not high enough to allow the larger deep draft ships to sail under them.

47. The reservoir will trap more than 75% of silt entering it thus depriving downstream areas of replenishment of soil nutrients.

48. Shanghai may be vulnerable to intrusion of salty ocean water if it loses its delta.

49. The dam needs to be built, regardless of all risks and dangers and losses.

50. Deposits of silt above the dam is a major concern since the Yangtze River carries one of the heaviest loads of sediment of any river in the world.

51. Downstream of the Three Gorges Dam site is the “Great Lakes of China.” The shrinking and damming of the river will speed up the shrinking of the lakes.

52. Drowning so many kilometers of land will reduce the habitat of many animals and thousands of acres of forest will be destroyed.

53. Areas above the dam will be more prone to flooding because the higher water level caused by the reservoir will not allow floods to flow downstream quickly.

54. Relocating over a million people cannot happen without serious social consequences.

55. The weight of water behind a dam of this size makes the area more prone to earthquakes.

56. West of the Three Gorges Dam, the Yangtze River water will be diverted northward.

57. The dam will be vulnerable to terrorists and will require military protection.

58. There is worldwide criticism over the wisdom of building the dam.

59. Supporters of the dam promise flood control and, as a fringe benefit, increased water for irrigation.

60. The vast reservoir may have an impact on the climate and temperature of the region, thus affecting the plants and animals.

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61. The best aspect of the dam is that it will eliminate all flooding anywhere near the Yangtze.

62. Tangerines, a major cash crop that is altitude specific, may not survive a move to higher ground.

63. Mulberry tree plantations, which nurture the valuable silkworm, will be submerged.

64. Species such as the Chinese alligator, the cloud leopard, and the Yangtze River sturgeon most probably will not survive.

65. The river provides habitat for the Siberian white crane which might be eliminated from the area.

66. Most endangered is the Chinese river dolphin. It is already threatened by ship's propellers, long fishing lines and explosives used for illegal fishing.

67. Increased deforestation once the resettled farmers move further up the river's banks to clear land for their new farms exemplifies a hidden environmental cost.

68. The still waters of the reservoir may create a pollution problem.

69. A small snail which produced a parasitic flatworm called schistosomiasis flourishes in still waters and may pose a serious health threat once the flow of the Yangtze is slowed in the reservoir region.

70. The Three Gorges Dam will use more material than 44 great pyramids.

71. There is a struggle going on between a government building for the future and archaeologists trying to preserve the past.

72. The Yangtze River Basin which originates on the Tibetan Plateau has lost 85% of its original forest cover.

73. The cofferdam has not been designed to withstand earthquakes.

74. Dams in China are designed not to hold floodwater but to generate electricity.

75. Government retreat from the Three Gorges Dam project would cost too much in national prestige.

76. Approximately 370 miles of land and 1,500 cities, town and villages will be submerged underwater when the dam is completed.

77. An annual flow of quarter trillion gallons of raw sewage together with effluents flushed from drowned factories will kill aquatic species.

78. The reservoir will have a series of locks so that large ships can pass through.

79. In China, 140.2 million people have already been relocated from other dam projects. About 70% of them live in extreme poverty.

80. China will be able to extend electricity to more of its people without further polluting the air from coal-powered plants.

81. The Chinese government has imprisoned and persecuted critics of the dam.

82. The 370-mile reservoir will be deep enough for ships 10 times the size of those used today.

83. The government will pay each family that must relocate a relocation allowance and will help them find a new home.

84. It is projected that warmer and more still water in the reservoir will provide an aquaculture base for raising shrimp, shellfish, fish, geese, ducks and crabs.

85. Although some scenic spots will be submerged, it is projected that the remaining ancient cultural and historic sites will boost tourism.