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HEADLINE: Western regions become new clean energy base in China

BODY:

URUMQI, April 25 (Xinhua) -- Dotted with numerous solar and wind power facilities, once barren desert areas in western China have become a new clean energy base in the country.

Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur, which is rich in wind power, began building a wind power project with a generating capacity of 188,000 kw this year at a place 40 km away from Urumqi, the regional capital, said Wang Liming, senior engineer of the regional wind power research institute.

The Inner Mongolia, another major wind power producer, is also making use of its troublesome sandstorms to produce more electricity to facilitate its people and those in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. The region is preparing to build a wind power project with a generating capacity of 300,000 kw, tripling the region's wind power projects build in the past 10 years.

Last year, China installed 1,292 wind power generating units with a combined capacity of 764,000 kw, up 34.7 percent over the previous year.

With operation of 20-plus solar energy stations in Xinjiang over the past three years, more than 1,000 residents living around the Taklimakan Desert, the world's second largest of its kind, have been provided with adequate electricity and water supply.

The Xinjiang New Energy Co. Ltd. has installed 30,000 solar energy devices at desert areas, making 48 townships with no electricity to bid farewell to the life of being in dark at night.

China is now being challenged by a nationwide short supply of power. Consequently, the country will give a major boost to the development of renewable energy, including wind power, to benefit 23 million people living in hinterland areas or on the coastal islands by 2010.

Currently, the reserve of available wind power in China tops 270 million kw, 70 percent

of which are produced in Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang. Other leading producers include Gansu Province and the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region in northwest China. The total wind power installed capacity exceeds 190 million kw., equivalent to the installed capacity of 10 Three Gorges Project, the largest hydropower project in China and the world as well.

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