

From: Reuters  
Published January 16, 2008 06:04 AM

### **China wind power hits 5.6 GW**

BEIJING (Reuters) - China's wind power generating capacity surged to 5.6 gigawatts by the end of last year, but over a quarter of it is still not connected to the grid because of bad planning, an industry expert said on Wednesday. Shi Pengfei, vice-president of the Chinese wind energy association, said capacity growth in 2008 is likely to speed up, with another 4 GW expected to be added by the booming industry.

This will bring the total amount of turbines erected by the end of this year to nearly 10 GW, or twice Beijing's official target for the end of the decade.

But because local governments are keen to jump on the renewable energy bandwagon as Beijing pushes greener growth, they are approving new wind farms without proper planning, Shi said.

And as a result, only 4 GW of the new capacity is actually connected to the grid, and even facilities that are linked up can face problems selling their power because output is so variable.

The grid is not interested in wind power. More wind power means more trouble for the grid," Shi told an industry conference in the Chinese capital.

They don't like having to find back-up energy sources for less windy times, and wind power costs more than power generated with coal, he added.

Top wind turbine maker Vestas said last year that the country could be the world's top wind power market in three to five years, but would grow even faster if it reformed a subsidy system that gives wind farms only a slender premium over coal.

Beijing aims to get 15 percent of its power from renewable sources by 2020, and has set renewable energy targets for its major power producing firms but the majority of the capacity will be in major hydropower projects.

(Reporting by Jim Bai, Editing by Emma Graham-Harrison)

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