

Why is Xinjiang so important for China's energy strategy?

Xinjiang's importance to China's energy security: 40% of China's coal, world-leading solar/wind projects, a key Belt and Road hub, and a transmission corridor for powering coastal areas.



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Recently, news broke that Xinjiang is seeing a wave of high-end hotel investments. Hilton is opening new projects in Kuqa, Changji, and Korla. Tourism is booming. Roads, railways, and industries are upgrading fast. But beyond tourism, Xinjiang holds a unique place in China's energy map. Let's break it down.

1. Energy-rich land

Coal – Xinjiang has an estimated **2.2 trillion tons** of coal. That's **40%** of China's total. The three main coal bases—Zhundong, Hami, and Ili—provide **15%** of national capacity. Coal-to-chemicals projects are huge, with over **900 billion yuan** invested. Many have returns above **13%**, leading the country.

Wind and solar – Over **2,800 hours** of sunshine a year. Wind potential: **890 million kW**, **20%** of the national total. The “desert-gobi” bases in Taklamakan and Hami are building three massive clean energy hubs. Planned capacity tops **200 million kW**—enough to produce the same power as **10 Three Gorges Dams**.

Oil, gas, and minerals – **5 billion tons** of oil (**30%** of China's onshore reserves), **3 trillion m³** of natural gas (**34%** of national total). Xinjiang also leads in green mining, with **558 mining rights** granted in 2024—number one in China. Lithium, copper, and other key minerals keep the new energy supply chain secure.

2. A key power supplier for “West-to-East Power Transmission”

Channel Name	Transmission Capacity	Target Market	Latest Progress
Hami-Zhengzhou (±800kV)	8 GW	Central China	To expand to 12 GW by 2025
Changji-Guquan (±1100kV)	12 GW	Yangtze River Delta	World's highest voltage level and largest transmission capacity
Hami-Chongqing (±800kV)	8 GW	Sichuan & Chongqing	Construction starts in 2025, paired with 14.2 GW of new energy projects
Fourth Channel (Planned)	10 GW	North China	Included in the national “15th Five-Year Plan” (2026-2030) for power infrastructure

In Ruoqiang, the world's largest single-site solar project (**4 million kW**) went online in late 2024. It generates **6.9 billion kWh** a year—enough for **3 million households**.

Hydrogen and storage are growing fast. The third round of wind-solar bases brought in CATL and other big names, adding **4 million kWh** of storage to handle intermittent power output.

3. Belt and Road hub

Xinjiang shares **5,600 km** of land borders with **8 countries**. Horgos and Alashankou are the “western gateways” of China. Strategically, it sits at the heart of Central Asia—westward to Central Asia and Europe, eastward to China’s coastal cities.

80% of China’s China-Europe freight trains and **all** of its overland natural gas imports pass through Xinjiang. Local wind, solar, and coal are converted into ultra-high-voltage electricity and coal-chemical products for the whole country.

With **17 land ports** (**30%** of China’s total), Xinjiang keeps expanding its transport network—the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway, the Caspian Corridor, and the Xinjiang-Tibet Railway are in progress. Multiple energy and transport routes mean better resilience to global risks.

In the first half of 2025, Xinjiang’s trade with the five Central Asian countries reached **180.3 billion yuan**, up **32.1%**, making up **80%** of China’s total trade with the region. The Urumqi International Land Port is piloting a “China-Europe Railway + cross-border e-commerce” model, cutting delivery time to **12 days**—sea freight takes **45**.

4. Security and social stability

Energy projects create over **1 million jobs** in Xinjiang, with **40%** in the four southern prefectures. Coal-chemical and solar operations not only secure China’s energy independence but also upgrade skills in ethnic minority regions.

Energy infrastructure investment makes up **25%** of Xinjiang’s fixed-asset investment. In the first half of 2025, it grew **28.2%**, giving a strong boost to the economy.

Bottom line

Xinjiang is more than just a scenic tourist spot. It’s an energy powerhouse, a key Belt and Road hub, and a strategic buffer. That’s why China keeps pouring resources into its industries and infrastructure, securing its role in both national energy security and regional development.

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