

Concerns over Shanghai board

Analysts fear B-share market may be rendered redundant.

> Page 14



Organic food sales growing

Regulating quality proves to be a big challenge for retailers.

> Page 15



Countdown to a new GPS

Companies hope to cash in on auto navigation services.

> Page 16

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High-tech science park gets big boost

Beijing's Zhongguancun area aims for global recognition and growth

By WANG XING
CHINA DAILY

BEIJING — Zhongguancun may be hailed as China's most famous village by foreigners. Dubbed as "China's Silicon Valley", the country's biggest high-tech park in west Beijing is not only home to Chinese high-tech companies such as Lenovo, Baidu and Sohu.com, it is also the China headquarters of world-renowned technology companies such as Google, Microsoft and Intel.

As part of China's efforts to build an innovative economy, the State Council, China's Cabinet, recently approved a development plan called the Zhongguancun National Innovation Demonstration Zone (2011-2020) that allows companies in the area to try out new measures and pilot projects.

The plan, which includes a drive to boost the total revenues of companies in Zhongguancun to 10 trillion yuan (\$1.8 trillion) in 2020

from 1.55 trillion yuan last year, is designed to help the area become one of the world's most famous technology hubs. The predicted income increase will come from increased sales on the back of tax incentives for companies moving there and research and development subsidies.

"Zhongguancun has entered a new phase of development," said Yang Jianhua, deputy director of the administrative committee of Zhongguancun Science Park. "I think in the next 20 years Zhongguancun will have the three top technology industry clusters in the world and will form a grouping of the world's top technology entrepreneurs."

Zhongguancun's history can be traced back to a crowded electronic avenue in the 1980s. Close to China's top universities and national academies, China's biggest technology hub first emerged as a small market for electronic components and devices for technicians and researchers.

In October 1980, Chen Chunxian, a researcher at the

Chinese Academy of Sciences, founded a technological development service department under the Beijing Society of Plasma Physics in Zhongguancun, making it the first civilian-run scientific and technological institution in the area.

As China's economic reform and opening-up policy started to unfold, a group of domestic technology companies including Stone Group, Founder Group and Lenovo Group became established in subsequent years.

In the early days of Zhongguancun, many of the companies in the area had close connections with the country's academic world.

For example, Founder is a technology company that was spun off from Peking University. Lenovo Group was spun off from the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). Liu Chuangzhi, a former researcher at CAS, later led Lenovo's purchase of IBM's personal computer division for \$1.75 billion in 2005.

"In China, you can't find another place like Zhongguancun that is so close to the country's technology academia. So when China started to encourage the commer-



CHEN XIAOGEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Zhongguancun-based companies garnered business revenues of 380 million yuan (\$69 million) in the first quarter of this year, up 12 percent on a year-on-year basis. The State Council recently approved a development plan called the Zhongguancun National Innovation Demonstration Zone (2011-2020) that allows companies in the area to try out new measures and pilot projects.

cialization of technology after the economic reforms of the 1980s, Zhongguancun became the first place to exploit the opportunity," said

Xia Yingqi, former deputy director of the administrative committee of Zhongguancun Science Park.

He said it is Zhongguan-

cun's close connections with China's technology academies that made Zhongguancun become China's most influential innovation center in

the next decades.

Unlike many other government-funded high-tech parks,

SEE "PROJECTS" PAGE 16

Logging on to find Mr and Mrs Right digitally

By TUO YANNAN
CHINA DAILY

BEIJING — Li Huijuan is a highly-educated woman who was born in Hunan province and works in Beijing. Her family is pushing her to get married because traditionally in China a woman is supposed to find a husband before she reaches 30.

However, in big cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai, the average age for marriage has been postponed to 35 or 40 because of the fast pace of life and work.

Like most metropolitan women, because of her busy work schedule, Li doesn't have much time for meeting people and finding a boyfriend. "A few months ago, some of my co-workers encouraged me to register with an online matchmaking website to find a boyfriend," she said.

Although she is accustomed to using the Internet for online shopping and socializing, it was still a new experience for her to find romance on the Web. "I registered at night," Li said. "I was surprised to receive more than 10 messages the following morning."

Nowadays, the number of single men and women is a hot topic in China. The country has 180 million adults who are single and an increasing number of them are going online to find their "Mr or Mrs Right". According to a report released by the All-China Women's Federation and matchmaking website Jiayuan.com, 60 percent of single people have attempted to find a partner online.

The chief executive officer from one of China's three largest matchmaking websites, Gong Haiyan, found her husband through her own company.

When she was 27, Gong registered and became a member of two matchmaking websites. However, she found that the websites didn't provide the services she wanted. Afterward, she spent 1,000 yuan (\$182) to register her own website, Jiayuan.com, which in Chinese means "good karma".

Gong graduated from Peking University with a degree in Chinese literature, so she posted a poem on the front page of her website. Her future husband, a member of the website, saw the poetry and was touched by her intelligence. Eventually, they became couple.

After finding her own happiness, Gong's aim now is to help more people to find

happiness and love online. Her website has become the largest matchmaking website in China with 32 million subscribers.

Gong says her website is for "serious matchmaking". Every day she helps users solve their romance problems. Although she already has more than 400 employees, she still insists on personally replying to her subscribers' questions.

According to China Internet Network Information Center, China had more than 450 million Internet users as of the end of 2010 — more than any other country. Matchmaking websites see a good opportunity in the huge number.

Tian Fanjiang, CEO of matchmaking website Baihe.com, said in an earlier report that his website had a 100 percent growth rate in sales revenue from the first quarter of 2009 to the same period in 2010. "In 2010, we had 6 million new users, and online sales revenue hit 100 million yuan, up 10 times from the previous year," said Tian.

With an increasing number of Internet users, Li said the number of people who are using the Internet to find a boyfriend or a girlfriend is growing fast.

The annual VIP membership for a matchmaking website costs between 200 yuan to 300 yuan on average, according to Jiayuan.com. With about 15 percent of subscribers willing to pay for a VIP membership, the market has huge monetary potential in the future.



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