

“QUOTABLE

It is absolutely a malicious rumor. The Red Cross Society of China never charged any fee during its work related to blood donation.”

A spokesman from the Red Cross Society of China, in response to an online posting alleging that the organization raked in 3.9 billion yuan (\$640 million) in 2010 by selling blood to hospitals nationwide. The society seeks only to promote volunteer blood donations, with blood collection done by local hospitals and medical institutions, the spokesman said; it never charged any fee for its work. The society has been plagued by rumors ever since a woman claiming to be a worker from the society flaunted her wealth online in 2011 and sparked a wave of public distrust of the organization. The woman later admitted that she had lied.

21,000

YUAN
The cost of an iPhone 6 Plus sold over the weekend in Zhongguancun, an area of Beijing known for digital products, Beijing Evening News reported on Monday. One shop owner told the newspaper 300 new iPhones were in stock on Saturday and only 20 remained on Sunday. Most shop owners said the phones came from Hong Kong. The new iPhone was released in eight countries and regions on Friday, but the Chinese mainland was not included. An iPhone 6 Plus with storage of 16 GB costs about 5,000 yuan (\$800) in Hong Kong.



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Dutch global paint company bullish on China property market

By **ZHANG YUWEI** in New York
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Even with China's slower growth and cooling property market, it will still be a major driver of growth for Dutch global paints and coatings company AkzoNobel, said its CEO Ton Buchner.

“We see the growth in China slowing down, but China will remain one of the fastest growing economies in the world,” said Buchner. Even though with its single digit growth rate — because of its scale — it is one of the fastest growing markets for AkzoNobel's business.

Buchner made his comments in New York on Monday as he announced at the Clinton Global Initiative's annual meeting that AkzoNobel would join the Rockefeller foundation-supported 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) project.

The project's website defines its mission as being “dedicated to helping cities around the world become more resilient to physical, social and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st century.”

“We see a fascinating urbanization process in China, India and other emerging markets,” Buchner said in an interview prior to the announcement.

The Dutch multinational's business involves decorative paints, performance coatings and specialty chemicals.

“We don't build cities, but by coloring, by protecting heritage and making things prettier, we do make cities livable and enjoyable,” said Buchner.

AkzoNobel will help cities around the world build more resilience to the challenges of the 21st century by applying its expertise in paints, coatings and chemicals available to the program's advisory committees. The company launched its Human Cities initiative by emphasizing six elements — including color, preservation of heritage and transportation — to make living environment more enjoyable.

Joining the 100RC is a proof of



Ton Buchner, CEO of AkzoNobel

AkzoNobel's “serious commitment to tackling the many challenges being faced by some of the world's biggest urban areas,” explained Buchner, adding it also reflect the company's vision in living up to its corporate social responsibilities.

There 100 RC project has selected 32 cities so far, including Bangkok, Durban, Mexico City, Rome and New York. Even though China is not yet in the first group, the company has a strong commitment in China, where Buchner — who lived in China between 1994 and 1998 — sees increasing revenue.

About €1.6 billion (\$2 billion) or 10 percent of AkzoNobel's total revenue of €15 billion (\$20 billion) comes from China coming out of China, according to Buchner, who said he sees this rowing as more effort is put in the Chinese market.

With about 8,000 employees in China, AkzoNobel has continued to expand its China base to create more revenue out of the world's No

2 economy.

In August, AkzoNobel broke ground on its new decorative paints site in Chengdu, capital city of Southwest China's Sichuan province as it's investing in the western part of China where more demands AkzoNobel's business are showing.

The facility is part of an investment in excess of €50 million (\$64 million) to build manufacturing facilities for both powder coatings and decorative paints and will add about 100 local employment opportunities.

Earlier this year a €6.5 million (\$8 million) investment was made in its Songjiang site near Shanghai — where AkzoNobel's China headquarters is — to expand an existing research center by adding a dedicated facility for the company's performance coatings businesses.

AkzoNobel's China strategy in the coming years also includes teaming up with local partners such as local architectural firms, said Buchner.

“We focus on how to make the (Chinese) cities more livable and exciting and create a social cohesion,” said Buchner.

China, US seek ways to benefit from carp

By **WANG QIAN** in Beijing
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In China, Asian carp is considered a delicious dish, but in the United States, it is seen as a dangerous invasive species that threatens rivers, lakes and indigenous species.

In early September, US scientists came to China to explore ways to prevent the fish's spread in their country and explore the possibility of exporting the invaders back to China.

“Chinese love eating the fish, and the US has too many of them, which makes exploring a business plan a win-win solution,” said Yang Bo, a freshwater expert from The Nature Conservancy who accompanied the US scientists during their visit. Yang made her remarks in an interview with China Daily on Monday.

But implementing such a plan won't be easy, Yang added.

Barriers to the plan include the high

costs of transportation, the tariffs and the Asian Carp Prevention and Control Act, a US law that makes transportation of the live fish across US state lines illegal.

“Although difficulties exist, we are looking for high-level discussion between the two countries,” she said.

One of the scientists, Jim Garvey, director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Center at Southern Illinois University Carbondale said he hopes that research and collaboration between the US and China will lead to greater demand for the fish and enhanced economic opportunity.

Yang said that in addition to the fish products trade, China and the US will strengthen cooperation in Asian carp research, including the water temperature and flow related to breeding, so that the US can control fish reproduction and China can boost its own.

China has made various efforts for years to protect the fish.

Asian carp were first introduced into



WANG ZICHUANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Asian carp caught in Longshui, a village in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, are shown in October.

the US from China in the 1970s to help enhance water quality in ponds. Within the past four decades, the fish escaped into major waterways, including the Illinois and Mississippi rivers.

Although it lives on plankton and algae, Asian carp are a strong competitor of native fish species because of the invasive species' large size and rapid rate of reproduction.

Garvey expressed concern that Asian carp will eat freshwater mussels into extinction. The US has the

greatest diversity of freshwater mussels in the world.

The US government has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to prevent the spread of Asian carp, including electric barriers, water guns and scent-based lures to try to catch them.

Garvey said the US government has spent nearly \$100 million on research in the past four years to determine ways to impede movement and reduce carp density in rivers.

China's 'unknown' hotels are on 'mission impossible'

By **ZHENG XIN** in Beijing
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Names like Hilton, Marriott and InterContinental are known around the world for being luxury hotels. Now independent hotels in China are trying to get out from under their shadow and capture part of the international tourist market by promoting their first-class services and facilities.

“Unlike flag-chain and global giant hotels, most of the independent hotels in China are very popular with local customers, but they are barely known by visitors from abroad,” said Yang Chen, director of sales and marketing at Hotel Kunlun in Beijing. “It's a mission impossible for a single property, independent hotel to have staff and office globally for overseas promotion, sales and marketing.”

Independent hotels have found an answer to reach that audience abroad — the Chicago-based Preferred Hotel Group. The hotel alli-

ance consists of more than 650 independent hotels and resorts in over 85 countries. The alliance does not own, operate or manage any of the hotels, but promotes them globally to increase sales.

Blaize Jing, regional director of global sales for Preferred Hotel Group in Beijing, said the company signed up another 41 hotels worldwide in the first half of 2014, six of them in the Chinese mainland, bringing the total number of member hotels there to 22.

“The first half of this year has seen a 52 percent increase in the number of reservations for the member hotels in China,” he said.

With each of its member hotels offering a unique setting, design and array of amenities, the group offers travelers a limitless variety of destinations and hotel styles to choose from, said Anthony Ross, executive vice-president of the organization's Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa sectors.

“Big and independent hotel compa-

nies in China are really good and very successful taking care of the domestic market,” he said. “The major problem for independent hotels in China is that despite world-class facilities, most lack the channels and capabilities to attract international tourists.”

And that restricts their further development in the global market, he added.

Unlike major hotel chains, many successful hotel developers don't want to surrender their control or assets to a hotel management company. Yet they still need to reach global audiences.

“We can provide those independent hotels with marketing and sales channels for them while promoting their brand recognition worldwide without massive fees,” Ross said.

Yang said his hotel joined the alliance in 2004 and since then the percentage of foreign occupancy has increased to more than 45 percent from around 30 percent. The 29-story hotel opened in 1986, has 575 rooms, with an average daily room

rate or 1,016 yuan (\$165).

“Their connections, staff and worldwide offices play a key role in enhancing the local hotel's brand, marketing and sales abroad, which we barely reach as a domestic hotel,” he said. “Many of the clients are from the world's top 500 companies, and the signing rates are pretty impressive as well.”

The hotel alliance also sends teams of consultants to educate and coach the hotels on how to attract more foreign people, he said, and endorses hotels in terms of quality to clients.

“We first came to China around 2007 and we were pretty unknown, but with the surge of China's middle class and increase in Chinese tourists, there was the realization that we needed to be known in China,” he said.

Ross said the alliance has added offices and staff in China during the past six months, and is preparing to increase staff in the next six to 12 months, to help sell the independent hotels domestically and abroad.

Award: City has goal to become environmentally friendly

FROM PAGE 1

The new energy vehicles have already cut CO2 emissions by 160,000 tons between 2009 and 2013, and the city plans to reduce by 820,000 tons between this year and next. Shenzhen has a long-term goal of reaching a zero emission ecosystem.

In the category of finance and economic development, Shenzhen was a finalist for having launched a carbon trad-

ing market in June of last year, created to help the city reduce carbon intensity.

“Steered by the Shenzhen Development and Reform Commission, the city carefully monitors the market at each step, including initial prices fixed by the city and frequent assessment reports. It aims to allow Shenzhen to reach its goal of becoming an environmental friendly city, not just at the municipal level but also among businesses and citizens,” the leadership

awards finalist page said.

“From our perspective, China's cities are extremely active. They do have a lot of challenges — pollution, need for energy, transport — but we see a lot of engagement,” said Roland Busch, managing board member of Siemens.

The City Climate Leadership Awards began awarding cities for climate action innovation in 2013, with the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40) collaborating with Ger-

man technology conglomerate Siemens to provide recognition to cities around the world for taking action to combat climate issues.

Other 2014 finalists included London, Vancouver, Seoul, New York, Jakarta, New Orleans, Melbourne, Taipei and Mexico City.

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Microsoft's Xbox gets grounded on liftoff

Launch postponed as 'glitches' need some ironing out

By **SHI JING** in Shanghai and **GAO YUAN** in Beijing

Monday was not a great day for Microsoft Corp's Xbox One game console in the Chinese mainland.

The launch, set for that day, was postponed without a new one being set. And a meeting with prospective users had to be called off as a typhoon struck Shanghai.

In an announcement on Saturday, Microsoft said that it might need “some more time” to make last-minute preparations to provide the best gaming and entertainment experience for Chinese users.

The United States-based software company said that the Chinese version of the Xbox One, which is being co-launched with Shanghai-based BesTV Network Technology Development Co Ltd, will hit the market “by the end of this year.”

Yusuf Mehdi, Microsoft's corporate vice-president for devices and studios, said that it is working with 25 game developers in China and overseas to provide more than 70 games for users in China. Microsoft is also working with more than 4,000 distribution centers in 37 Chinese cities to ensure that the initial offerings of the game consoles can meet demand.

So far, pre-orders have exceeded Microsoft's expectations, Mehdi said.

Xie Enwei, general manger of Xbox China, said that it will provide gifts with the consoles to the consumers who made pre-orders once the Xbox One is officially released.

However, Gu Haoyi, an analyst at consultancy Analysys International, said that the launch delay will hurt Xbox's China sales and requests for refunds are set to increase.

“Some rumors say that the Ministry of Culture is considering a video game rating mechanism, meaning all games have to go through a classification process before entering the Chinese market,” he said.

He added that such a system would be good news for the Chinese gaming industry in the long run.

“The console is not likely to be launched before the end of this year if the government is involved. Months will be spent to draw up new regulations for the industry,” said Gu.

China Daily was unable to confirm possible government involvement as of Monday evening.

“There are no signs of a last-minute strategy shift by Microsoft for the Xbox unit. The available clues point to a sudden government policy change,” said Gu. The delay will help Sony Corp's PlayStation to catch up with the pace of the Xbox, he said.

Sony announced in late May that it would set up two joint ventures in the China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone with A-share listed Shanghai Oriental Pearl (Group) Co Ltd, for the production, sale, research and development of Sony's best-selling PlayStation consoles. But no date for the console's release in China has been announced.

The Shanghai Customs District cleared the first shipment of Xbox One devices on Aug 29, with the total value amounting to \$2.3 million.

Since Sony released its PS4 devices in November, about 10 million have been sold globally. According to statistics released by Microsoft in April this year, global shipments of Xbox One consoles stood at about 5 million.

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