

LG Chem energizing innovation

Chemical giant sponsors electric vehicle battery contest for students

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Park Hyun-shik, president of LG Chem China

South Korean chemical giant LG Chem Ltd has sponsored the first electric vehicle battery innovation contest for Chinese undergraduates in a bid to cultivate talented individuals and empower them to unleash the next wave of innovation in the industry.

The competition, which kicked off last November, has attracted teams from prestigious institutes. Contestants from Peking University, Tsinghua University and Tongji University received Best Innovation awards this month in Beijing.

“College students shoulder the responsibility of fueling innovation in China, and the future of the entire industry lies within their spirit of creativity,” said Park Hyun-shik, president of LG Chem China.

“LG Chem will always adhere to openness and innovation, and commit itself to cultivating young talents for electric vehicle batteries, and share the innovations rooted in China with the rest of the world,” he said at the award ceremony.

Positioned as a global leader in the battery industry, LG Chem has actively developed new products based on its proprietary technologies and has secured the battery production capacity as a global player to raise the dominance in the next-generation energy market.

According to the company, 41 percent of its research and development expenditure goes to batteries. It has formed two joint ventures with Huayou Cobalt in China to secure stable supplies of cobalt for making electric batteries.

Experts said this electric vehicle battery competition laid a good foundation for college students to engage in future pioneering work, which could inject vitality into the battery industry.

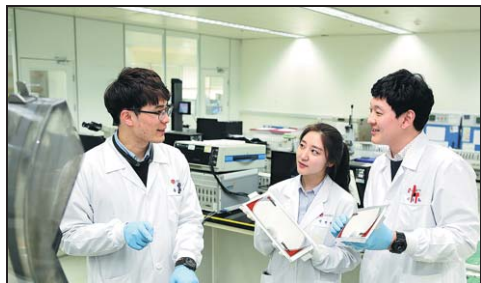
“Development of new energy vehicles is one of China’s national strategies. Making vehicles cleaner is an important way to help improve the environment,” said Wang Binggang, a sen-

ior expert on China’s national new energy car initiatives. “In the long term, electric vehicles will be the mainstream and their development will rely on battery quality.”

Qiu Xiping, a professor at Tsinghua University, said: “Some contestants’ proposals on improving the energy density of batteries are wise. Battery performance can be doubled without increasing material costs.” A high energy density system can store a vast amount of energy in a small space.

“It can be imagined that if their proposals are put into mass production, the cost of producing batteries could drop drastically while the driving range of electric vehicles would be increased substantially,” Qiu said.

China is the world’s largest car market, and stepped up efforts to develop new energy vehicles with the aim of shifting consumers away from combustion engines. Industry data shows the battery segment in China registered a hefty growth of 324 percent year-on-year in 2016, and climbed 78.6 percent in 2017. After years of market stimulation, the country has been cutting financial incentives for new energy cars. Subsidies will cease altogether by the end of 2020, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.



Researchers from LG Chem hold discussions about electric vehicles at their center. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Airbnb to promote sustainable tourism

By FAN FEIFEI
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Airbnb Inc, a United States-based home-sharing service provider, has inked a partnership with Friends of Nature, a prominent NGO focusing on environmental protection issues, to promote sustainable tourism in China.

The partners will promote sustainable travel in China and for Chinese travelers, jointly consult, advise, educate and operate sustainable short-term stays, host a series

of lectures to educate the Airbnb community on sustainable tourism as well as conduct workshops for hosts on sustainable hospitality standards and practices.

“We are committed to a healthy and sustainable alternative to mass travel that helps local communities benefit from the growth of tourism,” said Liz Jarvis-Shean, Airbnb’s global head of public affairs.

An Li, vice-president of Airbnb China, said: “As tourism continues to grow in China, Airbnb is offering



Farmers pick tea on a plantation in Zheng'an county, Southwest China's Guizhou province. ZHAO YONGZHANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

58 Group joins poverty fight in Guizhou

By YANG JUN in Guiyang
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Online marketplace 58 Group will provide tailored services to Zheng'an county, Guizhou province, with the aim of alleviating poverty through the integration of local industry and e-commerce.

Zheng'an signed the agreement with 58 Group for poverty alleviation at the 2018 China International Big Data Expo.

Ma Lan, Party secretary and public service director of 58 Group, said the group plans to establish Zheng'an as an example of a poverty alleviation county by providing online marketing services and offline vocational training for local residents by cooperating with the local government.

Zheng'an boasts a favorable environment for planting tea, and is known for its white tea.



Workers make guitars in a manufacturing plant in Zheng'an county, Southwest China's Guizhou province. ZHAO YONGZHANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

It is also the biggest guitar producer in western China, selling millions of instruments overseas each year.

“After preliminary investigation into local industries, we will focus on developing the Zheng'an brand by creating more online sales of white tea and guitars,” Ma said.

“Better cloud services are also needed to cover all the 19 townships in Zheng'an and 58 Tongcheng will be promoted to the local people,” Ma said. Public service platform, 58 Tongcheng, already serves thousands of towns in China, providing information such as job adverts, government

notices and public service messages for rural residents.

In addition to online services, free offline vocational training will be offered. While more than 200,000 migrant laborers left the area in 2017, there are still 380,000 long-term permanent residents, including many women and people with disabilities who lack work skills, said Jiang Ge, director of the Zheng'an Investment Promotion Bureau.

Aimed at creating more job opportunities for them, Ma said “58 Group will organize training classes for local women focusing on domestic services, to help them meet the large demand for housekeepers in surrounding cities. In addition, public service centers will offer skills training for those with disabilities to help them find jobs.”

Li Hanyi contributed to the story.

Hilton cuts use of plastic in Asia-Pacific

By WANG ZHUOQIONG
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Hospitality service provider Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc has announced it will eliminate plastic straws across its managed hotels in the Asia-Pacific region including the Chinese market by the end of 2018, and transition away from plastic bottles in its conference and event spaces.

Qian Jin, president of Hilton China and Mongolia, said: “China has prioritized ecology maintenance in recent years and proposed the concept that green hills and clear waters are gold and silver.”

“As one of the global leading hospitality companies in the industry, Hilton will take an active role in its development endeavor and spare no effort to contribute toward the long-term sustainable development of China.”

The move follows the company’s global commitment to cut its environmental foot-

print in half and double its social impact investment by 2030.

The company will also double the amount it spends with local and minority-owned suppliers, and double its investment in programs to help women and young people around the world.

These goals are part of Hilton’s Travel with Purpose corporate responsibility strategy to further the United Nation’s 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

“As a global hospitality company operating more than 5,300 hotels in over 100 countries and territories, we are committed to have a positive impact on the communities we operate our hotels in,” said Alan Watts, executive president, Asia-Pacific, Hilton.

“We believe waste is a solvable problem,” Watts said.

“By focusing first on plastic straws and plastic water bottles, we take another step forward in our journey to ensure that the destinations where

30 percent

reduction in carbon emissions and waste by Hilton compared with that of 2008

travelers work, relax, learn and explore are vibrant and resilient for future generations to come.”

For example, the company’s hotels have begun to intensify efforts to reduce single-use plastics in its operations. Across China, its managed hotels removed plastic water bottles from meetings and events, health clubs and spas in September 2017.

Its managed hotels in China collaborate with soap recycling partners including Soap Cycling, Soap Aid, Diversey, Sundara and Clean the World to recover, recycle and distribute soap to communities in need.

Hilton has been an envi-

ronmental leader in the industry. Since 2008, the company has reduced carbon emissions and waste by 30 percent, and energy and water consumption by 20 percent, saving more than \$1 billion in operating efficiencies.

“The World Tourism Organization commends Hilton’s focus on sustainability, which is in line with our overall commitment as the UN’s agency that is dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism for development worldwide,” said Zurab Pololikashvili, secretary-general of the World Tourism Organization.

The company’s corporate responsibility practices in China also include its efforts in supporting women. Hilton encouraged one of its suppliers to become certified by WEConnect, and further supported this women-owned business with a contract to provide uniforms for its Hilton Garden Inn properties in China.

fits of short-term letting.

Since its launch in 2008, more than 300 million guests have stayed at Airbnb listings around the world, and there are now nearly 5 million homes listed on Airbnb’s platform. From the beginning, the industry has shown its potential as a more sustainable option for travel.

Through partnerships, programs and events, Airbnb will enhance its efforts to build on this momentum and further support environmentally friendly travel in China.

Airbnb also announced the winners of the second annual Belo Awards, a prize celebrating and recognizing excellence in hosts and showcasing

their stories to influence the wider community.

Founded in August 2008 and based in San Francisco, Airbnb is a major player in the international sharing economy. Nathan Blecharczyk, chairman of Airbnb China, said in an earlier interview with China Daily that the domestic market has been the company’s fastest growing market around the world, and the country is also Airbnb’s second fastest growing out-bound market.

The company will open operations in several key cities and regions in 2018, with China projected to be the largest tourist source country for Airbnb by 2020.

Briefly

Tencent Music sets up charity project

Tencent Music Entertainment Group, a subsidiary of technology giant Tencent Holdings Ltd, announced on June 21 it will launch a charitable music project. The project will cover three areas: music education, music care and music heritage. For music education, Tencent Music and its partner the Chen Yidan Foundation will offer financial support to children from less developed areas to improve their music learning experience. The music care program will offer music therapy for individuals with autism, and is still under development. The music heritage efforts will highlight the discovery and promotion of pieces with traditional Chinese elements. Peng Jiaxin, CEO of Tencent Music, said that music has the power to bring changes to people’s lives.

Local kids perform at Rongshui festival

A second children’s music festival was held on June 15 in Rongshui, a county in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. Choirs from four local elementary schools performed at the festival. The choirs were organized and managed by the local government, after it introduced a charitable music education program called Let the Voices Spread in Rongshui, in the hope of offering students proper musical education in less developed villages. Initiated in 2013 by the Chengmei Charity Foundation, the project has been sponsoring volunteer teachers in poverty-stricken areas facing difficulties in offering music education.

Internet-powered outreach planned

China’s Social Participation in Poverty Alleviation and Development, an organization that promotes regional development and poverty alleviation, announced on June 20 it will cooperate with over 100 Beijing-based companies in targeted alleviation activities with internet-powered outreach. Ma Xinming, a Beijing-based government official specializing in poverty alleviation, said that the internet will be a good platform to raise awareness, and the development of e-commerce will also contribute to poverty alleviation efforts. Han Yu, another Beijing-based government official, said that the use of the internet will provide great support in poverty alleviation actions.

Tianjin to ramp up coordinated efforts

The Tianjin government announced on June 19 it will ramp up the promotion of the city’s poverty alleviation drive. Liu Lihong, a local government official, said that the city will highlight the importance of charitable organizations in its poverty alleviation efforts. NGOs especially will connect helpers — such as companies and volunteers — with people in need, Liu said. The Tianjin authorities also called for local companies to offer financial support to five counties in Chengde in Hebei province as part of the efforts.

Justice fund to reward city heros

The Beijing Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau has offered prizes for 1,685 people who have offered help to those in need or in danger. The bureau has set up a system to discover, evaluate and record related cases. Recipients will be granted cash prizes, compensation, or housing and education benefits. The city has been cooperating with the Capital Foundation for Justice and Courage, which has set aside funds of 60 million yuan (\$9.1 million) to offer compensation for those who have died or been injured.