

INDUSTRIAL PARK GROWING AS HUB FOR GLOBAL BUSINESS

By ZHANG LINWAN

Leading German auto parts manufacturer Webasto announced in July that it will build a global research center at the Sino-German International Industrial Park in Wuhan, Hubei province.

Also at the industrial park, which was launched by the governments of both countries, the industry giant founded its largest plant in the world three years ago.

The factory is capable of producing 2,000 sunroofs per day and achieved an output value of 1 billion yuan (\$146.9 million) last year.

Zhang Lihua, chairman of Webasto China, said the industrial zone offers enterprises a favorable business climate, thanks to its large talent pool and quality services.

"It only took us about 100 days from the contract signing to the factory opening thanks to the services," Zhang said.

More than 100 companies, including 68 from abroad, have been launched in the park, forming four major industries of electronic information, auto parts, smart equipment and smart home.

"We set up a special window in our service hall to help enterprises with their problems," said Yang Yuan, deputy director of Zhushan subdistrict in Caidian district, where the industrial park is located.

"In addition, we have a colleague working as an 'enterprise assistant'. He maintains close contact with enterprises and offers on-site services if necessary."

Katsuzawa Takayuki, general manager of the Japanese company Topre's Wuhan branch, said the assistant efficiently responds to enterprises' requests, including those involving registration procedures and labor employment.

"This efficiency has reassured us and allowed us to focus on research and production," he said.

The industrial park plans to bring in 20 new German-funded companies by 2025 and achieve an industrial output value of 100 billion yuan in the next five years, according to local officials.

Wuhan has worked to expand its trade and economic cooperation with foreign partners in recent years.

Official data showed that the number of foreign-funded companies in Wuhan reached 6,555 in 2021, up 4.56 percent year-on-year. A total of 396 Global Fortune 500 enterprises had invested in the city as of 2020, including 38 from Germany.

As one of the key projects for China-France cooperation, the Sino-French Wuhan Ecological Demonstration City, initiated in 2014, is progressing smoothly.

The eco-city that covers 39 square kilometers in Caidian district aims to facilitate bilateral exchanges of experience and technologies in green urbanization while promoting cooperation in culture and tourism, local officials said.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), the city plans to implement 118 projects involving industries, transportation, environmental protection and public services, according to the city's administrative committee.

All initial construction projects will be completed by 2025 and the city will have a residential capacity of housing 120,000 people, the committee said.

Wuhan has also participated in the Belt and Road Initiative by operating China-Europe freight trains.

China-Europe freight trains (Wuhan) has launched 30 routes since its opening in 2012, linking the city with 76 cities in 34 nations in Eurasia.

The freight train services not only offer local enterprises an international trading channel but promote the foreign trade of neighboring cities such as Yichang and Xiangyang, local officials said.

Wuhan welcomed a total of 340 China-Europe freight train trips in the first half of 2022, a year-on-year increase of 62 percent.

THE SCIENCE CITY

Legion of high-tech companies and research platforms expected to promote innovation

By ZHANG LINWAN

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The capital city of Wuhan in Hubei province is pushing forward the construction of the East Lake Science City as part of its efforts to build itself into a national sci-tech powerhouse.

Located in Wuhan's East Lake High-Tech Development Zone, also known as China's Optics Valley, the science city began construction in February 2021 and covers 100 square kilometers.

Focusing on two industries of optoelectronic information as well as life and health, the city will bring in a legion of high-tech companies and build numerous research platforms, according to its development plan. This includes seven provincial labs, nine scientific facilities and nine innovation centers, according to the plan.

The city is expected to serve as a key driver for Wuhan to develop into a national sci-tech center while promoting the innovation-driven development of cities in Central China, local officials said.

Among facilities in the science city, the Wuhan Supercomputing Center, China's largest container-like computing facility, was put into operation at the end of September.

The gigantic project offers computing power of 50 petaflops in the early stage, which is equivalent to 100,000 high-performance computers operating simultaneously. It will eventually provide 200 petaflops in total, said Luo Qian, head of the computing center.

The computing center as well as the Wuhan Artificial Intelligence Computing Center, another project in the science city, will build a strong computing foundation for local high-tech industries and boost the province's digital economy, local officials said.

Seven provincial labs have opened in industries such as optoelectronics, aerospace, agriculture and biosecurity.

According to the city's development plan, it will finish the initial phase of construction by 2025 and aims to become an internationally influential scientific hub by 2050.

"Two Valleys" Wuhan has achieved remarkable progress in sci-tech innovation during the past decade and created an extensive system of modern industries.

Last year, the city's investment in research and development accounted for 3.51 percent of its GDP, up from 2.66 percent 10 years ago.

The number of high-tech companies in the city surged more than tenfold during the past decade, and the added value of high-tech industries more than doubled, contributing 27 percent to GDP.

As its name suggests, the Optics Valley, established in 1988, is the birthplace of China's first optical fiber and first optical transmission system.

Today, the East Lake High-Tech Zone has become the largest R&D and production base for optical devices in the country. Its optoelectronic information industry is predicted to produce an output of 500 billion yuan (\$73.1 billion) by 2025.

Meanwhile, the zone continued to boost emerging industries as it established a group of industrial parks involving smart manufacturing, modern services and biomedicine.

Official data showed that about 4,300 high-tech enterprises are operational in the zone including the leading laser equipment manufacturer HGTECH and the tech giant Xiaomi. Last year, the zone registered an annual GDP of 240 billion yuan, up 16.4 percent year-on-year.

Wuhan is also known for its auto industry, with the Wuhan Economic and Technological Development Zone billed as China's Auto Valley.

Founded in 1991, WEIZ is home to nine vehicle enterprises, 13 auto plants and about 500 auto parts producers. It has made steady strides in new energy vehicles, new materials, and autonomous driving thanks to policy support.

In 2019, Wuhan received approval to build a national intelligent networked vehicle testing zone. Since then, WEIZ has paved 321 kilometers of testing roads and granted 117 road test licenses to 17 enterprises.

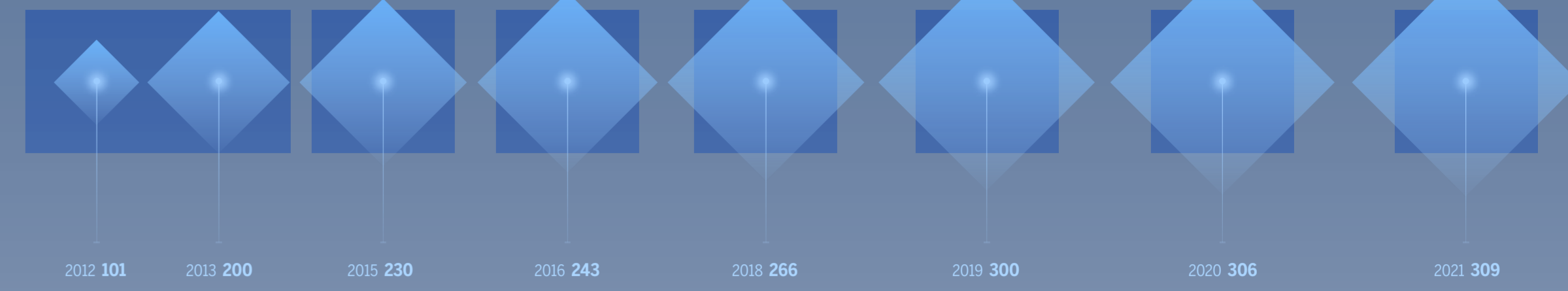
Among them, Dongfeng Usharing Technology has seen its unmanned shuttle buses handle 30,000 passengers, with an operating mileage of 200,000 km.

The testing operation is a key step in the exploration of the commercialization of autonomous driving, and will help manufacturers improve products, said Zhou Jing, chief operating officer of the company.

WEIZ has the capacity to provide 15 major application scenarios for intelligent networked vehicles including road cleaning, product delivery and shared transportation.

The zone's administration council plans to open 115.5 km of new roads this year, covering some sections of airport-centered highways, to offer enterprises more options for transportation.

FORTUNE GLOBAL 500 COMPANIES



EFFORTS FUEL STRONG GROWTH OF TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

By YIN RUOFEI

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As a major transportation hub in China, Wuhan has a robust network composed of railways, ferries and flights stretching to domestic and international destinations, but the city refuses to rest on its laurels as it further refines its transportation infrastructure.

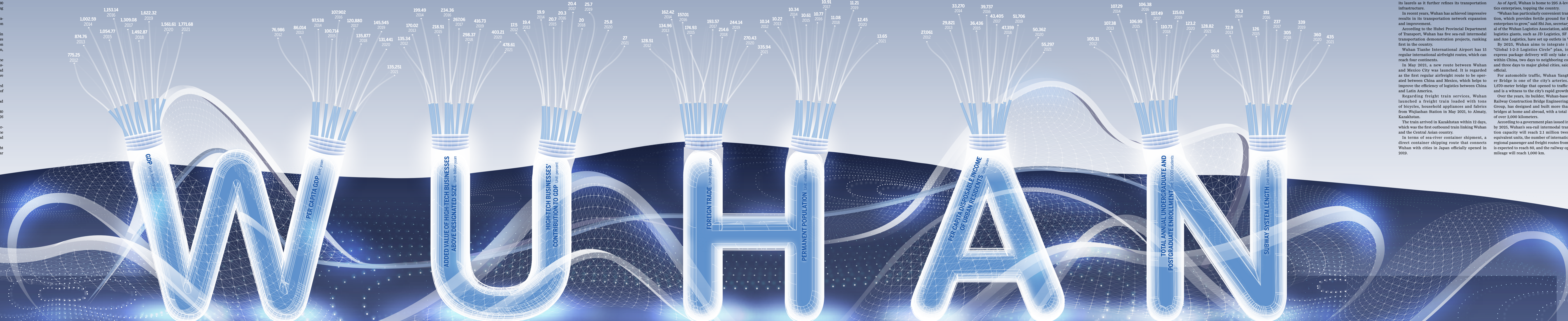
Wuhan has particularly convenient transportation, which provides fertile ground for logistics enterprises to grow," said Shi Jun, secretary-general of the Wuhan Logistics Association, adding that logistics giants, such as JD Logistics, SF Express and Ane Logistics, have set up outlets in Wuhan.

By 2025, Wuhan aims to integrate into the "Global 1-2-3 Logistics Circle" plan, in which express package delivery will only take one day within China, two days to neighboring countries, and three days to major global cities, said a local official.

For automobile traffic, Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge is one of the city's arteries. It is a 1,670-meter bridge that opened to traffic in 1957 and is a witness to the city's rapid growth.

Over the years, its builder, Wuhan-based China Railway Construction Bridge Engineering Bureau Group, has designed and built more than 2,000 bridges at home and abroad, with a total mileage of over 2,000 kilometers.

According to a government plan issued in March, by 2025, Wuhan's sea-rail intermodal transportation capacity will reach 2.1 million twenty-foot equivalent units, the number of international and regional passenger and freight routes from Wuhan is expected to reach 80, and the railway operation mileage will reach 1,000 km.



LIGHTING THE WAY TO GOOD FORTUNES

1981-85
The new tower, built during 1981-85, generally replicates its Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) appearance but is constructed from modern materials.

3,219
The Yellow Crane Tower has a floor space of 3,219 square meters.

The obverse of the gold and silver commemorative coins issued by the People's Bank of China in 1987 feature the Yellow Crane Tower.

51.4
Designed during the Qing Dynasty, it stands 51.4 meters high and has five floors.

The Return of the Yellow Cranes, a bronze consisting of cranes as well as a turtle and snake — all of them auspicious animals in Chinese culture — stands 50 meters west of the Yellow Crane Tower.

An inscription carved in marble on the second floor. It records a piece of prose by a Tang Dynasty writer, which is about the tower's origin and development, as well as related historic figures and anecdotes.

The top of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) Yellow Crane Tower is made of bronze. This bronze top was all that remained after the tower was destroyed in a fire. It now sits in front of the tower.

756
glazed pottery plates were used in the making of this mural.

Fifth floor: One of a series of murals created by contemporary Chinese painter Lou Jialun on the fifth floor of the Yellow Crane Tower. Human, or In Times Gone By, depicts the myths and legends of the tower.



This photo shows the rebuilt Yellow Crane Tower during the Qing Dynasty, which was destroyed in a fire in 1884. It is the only photographic image of the ancient tower, preserved in modern times, based on which the tower was rebuilt in 1985.

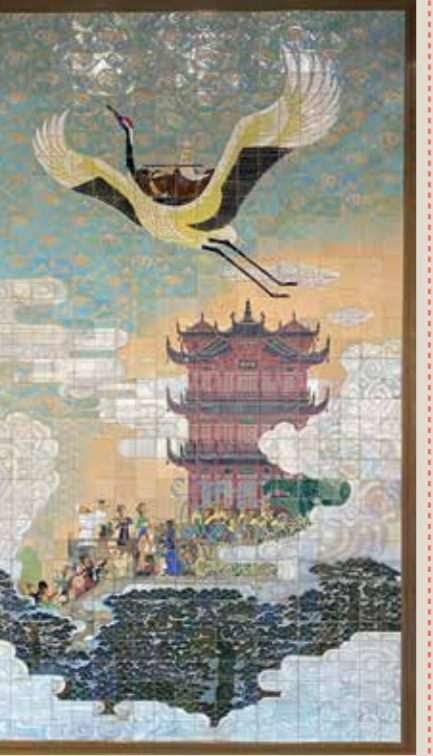
LEGEND OF THE YELLOW CRANE TOWER

In the legend, the tower was built by a tavern boss surnamed Xie. One day, a poor Taoist monk came to ask for a cup of wine. Xie had sympathy for him and agreed to give him the wine at no cost. The Taoist monk came to tavern regularly in the following years and Xie remained generous to him, continuing to offer him free drinks. In return for Xie's kindness and generosity, the monk painted a crane on the tower's wall before he left the city. The picture of the bird would come to life and dance when people requested, which attracted a growing number of people to the tavern. As a result, Xie became rich and had the Yellow Crane Tower built in gratitude for the changes the Taoist monk had brought about.



Ceiling patterns in the Yellow Crane Tower.

A 7-meter-tall couplet stands in front of the porcelain mural centerpiece on the ground floor of the tower.



The top of today's Yellow Crane Tower is 5 meters tall and weighs 4 tons. Its base is 4.4 meters in diameter. The outside is adorned with 200 glazed tiles.

GRADUATES CHOOSING WUHAN FOR PROMISING CAREERS

By ZHANG LINWAN
In 2016 when Liu Qi, aged 29, was a PhD candidate at Huazhong University of Science and Technology in Wuhan, Hubei province, he founded Fellis Intelligent Technology at the city's East Lake High-Tech Development Zone, also known as the Optics Valley of China.

Liu said he had investigated Beijing and Shenzhen before deciding to stay in Wuhan. The first reason behind his decision is that I have close connections with the city. I've been in Wuhan for more than 10 years for my studies and career," Liu said. Besides, the city has created a favorable environment for entrepreneurship, he said. "There are a lot of universities, high-tech industrial parks and startups like us." "We were given supportive policies and became motivated in such an open and friendly atmosphere," he added.

Liu's company was recognized as a national high-tech enterprise in 2021. Its major products, including unmanned aerial vehicles and UAV intelligent stations, have been used in such industries as wind power, fire safety and environmental monitoring. Liu is among millions of university graduates who chose Wuhan to launch their career and achieve success. Official data showed that the city received a total of 1.73 million fresh graduates between 2017-21. In 2021 alone, the number of university graduates gaining employment in Wuhan hit a record high of 945,200. In the past, young people preferred first-tier cities such as Beijing and Shanghai as they are home to legions of businesses that can provide ample job opportunities, said Jing Yungdi, director of the career guidance and service center at Huazhong University of Science and Technology.

By ZHANG LINWAN
More than 100 years ago, gunfirs in Wuchang, now a district of Central China's Wuhan, sounded the start of a true democratic revolution in modern China.

On Oct 30, 1911, Chinese revolutionaries represented by Sun Yat-sen launched the Wuchang Uprising, which ended the millennium-long absolute monarchy in the country and brought about the establishment of Asia's first republic. Contemporary academics believe that Wuhan has historically served as a busy port city of commerce and trading due to its superb location and transport network.

By ZHANG LINWAN
The Chenhu wetland in Wuhan, capital of Hubei province, has become a paradise for waterfowls thanks to sustained efforts in wetland conservation and green development. Covering an area of 11,600 hectares in Caidian district, it is the city's first provincial-level wetland nature reserve. It has an abundance of wildlife, including four plant species and 64 bird species under national special protection, according to the administrative bureau of the reserve.

Hi, I'm Wuhan

Powerhouse of high-tech industry and trade has dynamic roots going back to 1911 Revolution

As China's second-largest city at that time, Wuhan had strengths in finance, industry and trade. Throughout history, Wuhan, capital of Central China's Hubei province, has always been honored as a heroic city, stunning the world with its brave people and indomitable spirit. Wuhan is located at the confluence of the Yangtze River and one of its major tributaries, the Hanjiang River. It was appointed as the governor of Hubei and Hunan provinces in 1908. Zhang governed the province until 1907. During this time, he carried out the Western Affairs Movement by setting up Hanyang Steel Plant, Hubei Arsenal, and Hubei Weaving Mill as well as building railway lines.

Meawhile, Zhang introduced educational reform, founded several modern educational organizations such as Langhu (Human and Hubei) Academy and Self-Strengthening Academy in Wuhan, and selected many students to study abroad.

RESTORED WETLANDS ATTRACT RARE BIRDS

Wetlands across Wuhan now occupy 162,000 hectares, accounting for 18.9 percent of the city's total area. Included in the city's wetland network are 63,000 hectares of small and micro wetlands and six national wetland parks. In June, Wuhan was awarded a wetland city accreditation by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The 14th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands will be held on Nov 5-13. The main venue is to be in Wuhan with a parallel session in Geneva, Switzerland. It will be the first time China hosts the international event. The meeting will discuss the future development of the convention, announce a new batch of wetlands of international importance, and tell the Chinese story of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, an official from the National Forestry and Grassland Administration said.

SMILE OF THE YANGTZE FINLESS PORPOISE

The Yangtze finless porpoise is found in the main channel of the Yangtze River and connecting lakes. They are found solely in fresh water, making them different from other finless porpoises. Last year, the government revised the List of Wild Animals under State Priority Conservation, upgrading the protection of Yangtze finless porpoises to the highest level.

Diet
The Yangtze finless porpoises generally eat fish, prawn, shrimp, and squid. The most common fishes in their diet are *Coilia brachygnathus*, *Pseudorasbora simoni*, *Pelteobagrus nitidus*, and *Hemiculter bleekeri*.

'Spy-hopping'
This is when they extend their heads out of the water in a vertical direction as if they are standing in the water.

Behavior and Habit
Yangtze finless porpoises live in small groups of two to six individuals. They have been observed darting about just below the surface of the water, changing direction quickly and often.

WUHAN YANGTZE RIVER BRIDGE

It is the first double-deck road and rail bridge over the Yangtze River. Standing at 80 meters tall, it is comprised of a two-way, four-lane highway on its upper layer — with a pavement on both sides for pedestrians — and double railway lines on its lower layer, allowing two trains to run in opposite directions at the same time. Under the truss bridge, large vessels can pass through all year-round. Lying between Guishan Mountain on the northern bank of the river and Sheshan Mountain on the southern bank, the bridge has served as a main artery in Wuhan since it was put into service in October 1957. Construction on the bridge started in September 1955. The bridge has greatly improved the transportation of the capital city of Hubei province and facilitated the connections between northern and southern China. It was included among the country's seventh batch of key heritage sites in 2013 and has become a landmark attraction in the city.

1,670 m
Total length including the main deck with a span of 1,156 meters.

80 m
The bridge is supported by 8 pillars with a gap of 128 meters between each and connected at both ends by approach bridges totalling 314 meters.

5-6 ft in length
Each porpoise weighs approximately 45 kg.



GRAPHICS BY MARSH MOHAMMAD / CHINA DAILY