

Innovation key to Harbin's future

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Making enterprises the drivers of innovation is crucial to increasing the commercialization of research results, said Song Xibin, mayor of Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang province in Northeast China.

"We need to create an innovation-friendly environment and encourage companies to upgrade their innovation mechanisms and set their sights on connecting their proprietary research and development with the world's frontier technologies," Song said.

"Neither the government or companies should be afraid of investing in innovation," he added.

The city government has initiated a program for patent analysis and released industry strategic research reports since 2005 to help improve the environment for the creation, use, management and protection of intellectual property.

The reports cover various fields, including biomedicine, environmental protection, aerospace and aviation, new materials, electronics and modern agriculture.

These efforts have been successful as more than 13,000 patent applications were filed in the city last year, very nearly double the number filed in 2010.

And patent filings from companies grew by 72.4 percent in 2011, compared with 2010.

Home to hundreds of research institutions and

72.4

percent rise

in the number of patent applications by companies in Harbin last year, compared with 2010



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SONG XIBIN
MAYOR OF HARBIN

scores of universities and colleges with 37 academicians and more than 400,000 technological professionals, Harbin is at the forefront of the nation's research and development. They contributed about half of the city's total patent filings, said Li Wenyi, an official of the city's IP office.

How to turn the advantage in research into industrial strength is a pressing issue for the city, according to local officials.

The authorities have poured 10 billion yuan (\$1.57 billion) to establish a platform for the



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A robot developed by Harbin Engineering University performs a gymnastic exercise on the horizontal bar. With scores of universities and hundreds of research institutions, the city of Harbin has a strong capacity for innovation.

commercialization of research achievements early this year.

To date, it has attracted 136 major research projects from many renowned universities, including Harbin Institute of Technology, Zhejiang University and the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The city government's initiatives to commercialize patents have enabled Harbin to gain the leading position in the competition for the status of the first group of national IP model cities, said Lu Yi, deputy director of the State Intellectual Property Office's Coordination and Administration Department. SIPO unveiled the list in late April.

"Winning the honor shows that the city has entered a new stage that is characterized by innovation-driven industrial restructuring and a shift in development model," Song said. "It will bring historic opportunities for our city's sustainable development," he added.

Home to a series of well-established industries, Harbin has contributed greatly to China's successful space and deep-sea missions.

As a traditional industrial center, Harbin boasts many "firsts", such as the nation's first tractors, transistor radios, analog computers, glass-fiber reinforced plastic and arc welding robots.

Yet at the same time, due to the accumulated industrial structure, the city is vulnerable to the domestic and international macro environments.

Song, who entered office this January, said despite the overall sound economic situation, the city's GDP growth in the first half of this year was only 6.1 percent, a record low in recent years, partially resulting from a drop in industrial growth and efficiency, a reflection of its unbalanced industrial structure.

"It is imperative that Harbin use new technologies and production procedures to upgrade its traditional sectors and improve their competitiveness. At the same time it must develop strategic emerging industries and modern services, as well as accelerating the construction of a modern industrial system," he said.

"We will continue our efforts to capitalize on our rich research resources, better our IP management system, and encourage companies' proprietary innovation," he said.

He said his government will further promote the cooperation between industry, academia and research institutions to conduct industrialization-oriented and interest-sharing research, with a focus on a range of sectors including aviation, bio-products, new materials, renewable-driven equipment and machinery, electronic information and green foods.

Exploring diversified models in trade and financing to facilitate IP commercialization is also on the agenda, he said, adding that the authorities' goal is to improve the city's core competitiveness and build it into a national IP leader.

Chinese companies need to know and use their IP rights

By ZHANG ZHAO
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The innovation capacity and intellectual property rights environment of emerging countries, such as China and India, are improving sharply, noted Gan Shaoning, vice-commissioner of the State Intellectual Property Office, at an IP forum held last week in Beijing.

But he said that the global development of Chinese companies is "a long-term program that needs much effort". Chinese companies must know and utilize IP-related laws and rules to protect their rights overseas. In order to do this, "the IP administrations must take an active role in encouraging them to protect their rights and tell them how".

In this way, he said, "China will be able to deal with the increasingly severe international competition and let IP-related work become part of its national economic development".

Co-hosted by SIPO and the China Intellectual Property Society, this year's International Intellectual Property Environment Forum invited experts from home and abroad to focus on the intellectual property rights environments of India, Russia and South Africa.

Russia recently became a member of the World Trade Organization, and Gan said that its participation "will increase the importance of developing nations in WTO negotiations".

Aleksey Zalesov, deputy managing partner and head of the legal department of Sojuzpatent, Russia's leading IP law firm, said that the economic ties between Russia and China are increasing every year.

"The activity of Chinese companies in Russia is increasing, however, compared with the activities of Western companies, it's still small," said Zalesov, who encouraged Chinese entrepreneurs to apply for more patents in Russia.

"Not only invention patents,

but also utility model patents are important for Chinese companies to compete in Russia," he said.

He said Russia has a "very effective patent system" and Russian companies are given real competitiveness from patents, as patents can be used as a weapon in the market.

A number of reports were unveiled at the forum, covering analyses of IP law systems, service organizations and case studies of IP disputes in emerging countries.

Since 2009, SIPO has been analyzing the intellectual property environment of China's major export destinations, including their related laws and policies, lawsuit studies and the strategies of local companies.

SIPO has so far released 12 reports on the intellectual property rights environment of various countries and regions, including the United States, the European Union, Japan and South Korea.

Organized by SIPO and hosted by the China Intellectual Property Society, the first International Intellectual Property Environment Forum was held in July 2010, with the aims of guiding companies to protect their rights overseas, and help them understand relevant foreign IP laws and information.

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1 LIAONING Neusoft workers arrested

More than 20 employees of Neusoft's medical and healthcare department were recently arrested by Shenyang police, who charged the workers with infringing on the company's intellectual property rights.

The suspects say they were instructed by a Neusoft executive to use the company's resources to develop outside projects.

Some of them claim that they did not know they were doing something that constituted IP infringement and thought it was just part of "normal work".

THE ECONOMIC OBSERVER

2 HUBEI Chef sues publisher, wins

An intermediate court in Huangshi ruled that Qingdao Publishing Group should apologize to plaintiff Chen Xurong, a renowned chef, and pay him more than 2,000 yuan (\$313) for violating his copyright.

Chen who has developed a series of recipes based on local cuisine authorized the publishing house to release several cookbooks. Another cookbook published by the same company contained a recipe, the text and graphics of which were almost identical to one in his book.

The court said the recipe at issue in the case is not one that is commonly known among the public, and it contained innovations by the chef.

The court ruled that the company, as a publisher of Chen's books, was aware that he is the creator and still used the words without authorization, which constituted piracy.

CHINA INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY NEWS

3 GUANGDONG Bottled water bandits busted

Industrial and commercial enforcement officials in Huiyang district, Guangzhou raided two shops suspected of selling fake Yibao bottled mineral water.

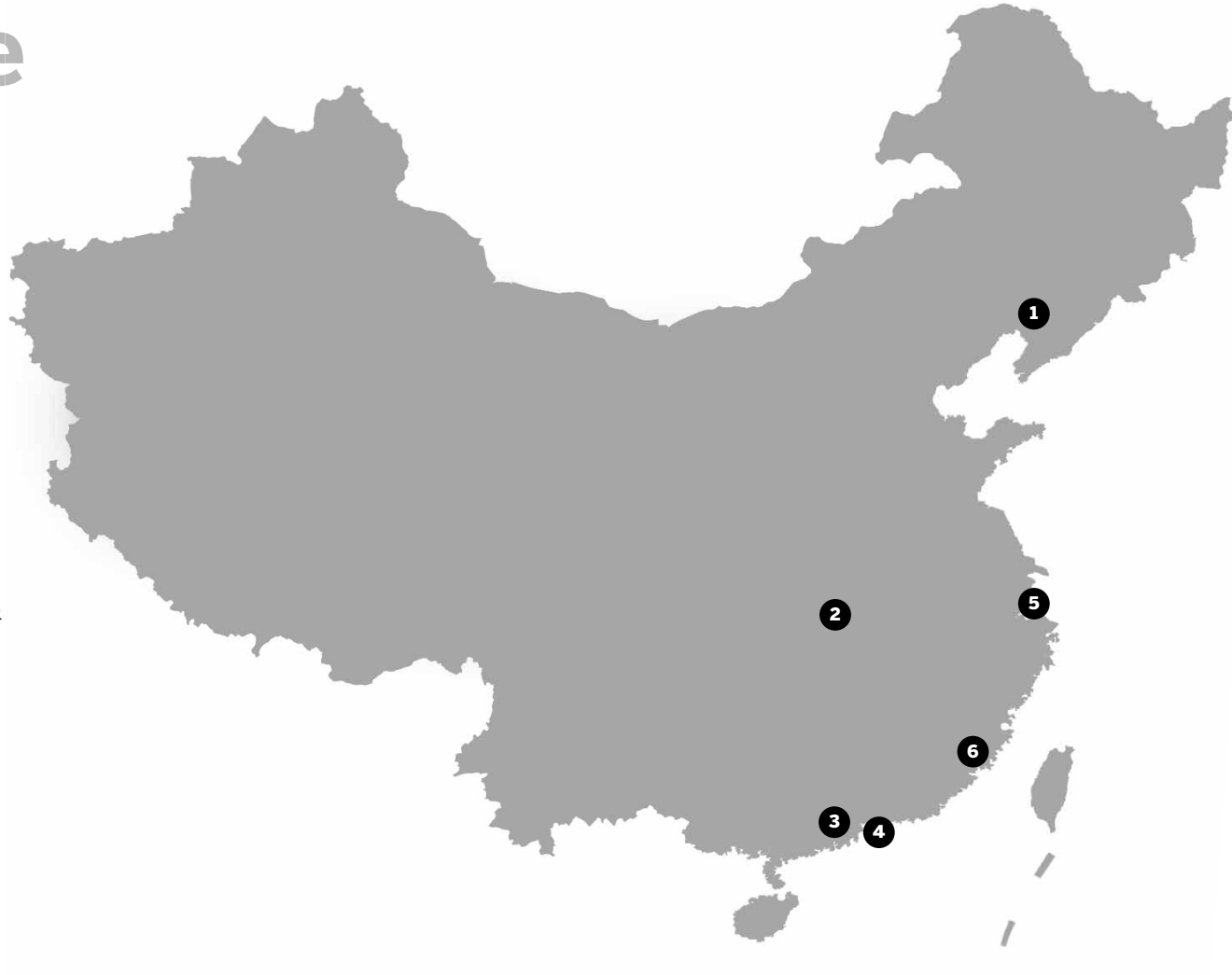
The suspects failed to prove that they bought the products through legal channels. The counterfeits were bottled in some small, unknown factories using water from the tap or nearby streams, according to enforcement officials.

"Without required procedures including disinfection, they could pose serious product safety risks," they said.

SOUTHERN DAILY

4 HONG KONG HK, Guangdong mark 10 yrs as partners

Hong Kong and Guangdong IP authorities celebrated the 10th anniversary of cooperation between the two sides.



Since 2003, the two sides have co-held a seminar on IP and development of small and medium-sized enterprises, an event that has taken place in many cities of Guangdong, including Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Dongguan and benefited more than 2,000 companies.

Uniform standards for IP management co-released by the Guangdong provincial IP office and HK Productivity Council began to take effect in October 2010.

And during a campaign to fight counterfeits and piracy nationwide that lasted from November 2010 to June 2011, the two sides further enhanced their already close ties and initiated an operation named "Sea Dragon". Guangdong customs investigated 43 infringements involving HK and Macao, and HK customs handled 13 cases of infringement. The move was listed among the 10 major national IP protection events of last year.

CHINA INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY NEWS

5 SHANGHAI City aims to be Asian IP center

The Chinese mainland's financial center also aims to lead the Asia-Pacific region in terms of intellectual property by 2020, according to the city's IP strategy.

China has developed a more mature IP system that is adapted to its own specific situations and now needs to have a greater voice in international rule-making, said Lu Guoqiang, chief of the city's IP office.

The number of patent applications in Shanghai grew at an average annual rate of 24 percent and the average annual growth in the

number of registered patents was 30 percent from 2004 and 2010.

Patent applications from the city reached around 80,000 filings last year, 45,000 of which were granted.

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6 FUJIAN New facility to drive innovation

An IP education and research center is expected to be unveiled soon at Xiamen

University of Technology.

Co-founded by the school and the Xiamen IP Office, the center is designed to offer training and consultancy, popularize IP awareness, conduct research and promote the commercialization of patents.

Xu Wendong, chief of the city's IP office, said at the signing ceremony in July that he hopes the center can make full use of the university's advantages in manufacturing and information majors to foster IP professionals in law, policy and management.

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ZHOU DONGCHAO / CHINA DAILY

Financial hub Shanghai also plans to be the IP center of the Asia-Pacific region.