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SABMiller Will Introduce Miller Brand Beer in China

By **MEI FONG**
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BEIJING -- **SABMiller PLC**, one of the world's biggest brewing companies, will be introducing its premier Miller brand in China, the world's largest beer market.

Humor Wang, general manager at China Resources Snow Breweries Co., SABMiller's joint venture in China, said yesterday that CR Snow's board has approved "in principle" a plan to introduce SABMiller's Miller brand in China. SABMiller owns 49% of CR Snow, and **China Resources Enterprise Ltd.** owns 51%.

"China means a huge opportunity," said Wayne Hall, SABMiller's financial director for China. China became the world's largest beer market in terms of sales volume in 2003, overtaking the U.S.

CR Snow and SABMiller officials didn't say when the beer would go on sale. Nigel Fairbrass, head of media relations for SABMiller, said it is a "timing matter."

CR Snow has 47 breweries across the country and sells some 40 brands locally, including New Three Star, Snow and Blue Sword.


Mr. Fairbrass said SABMiller's Chinese joint-venture operation contributes about 20% of the company's global sales volume. He said that in China, however, the company was still in investment mode and it would take a few years before its Chinese joint venture started to make a "good" profit.

SABMiller also said it plans to expand in India. Yesterday, Chief Executive Graham Mackay said SABMiller will invest \$100 million each year in India going forward. The brewer has so far invested \$500 million in India, including \$120 million to acquire the Foster's business and brand in India in September. The company is continuing to scout for brewery acquisitions in India, where it has 10 breweries with a total annual capacity of 3.5 million hectoliters.

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