



President of the European Central Bank Jean Claude Trichet, (centre), leaves a plenary entitled 'Finding the Balance in the Global Economy' at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Saturday.

## Trade ministers seek to break accord deadlock

GENEVA (Xinhuanet) — Trade ministers ending a meeting in the Swiss resort of Davos said on Saturday they were hopeful of breaking a deadlock over a global free trade accord to strike a deal by the end of the year.

They said agreement had been reached on a timetable for a deal on lowering barriers in major areas of the global economy, Swiss Radio International reported.

"We have a precise timetable which will allow us to measure progress. There is also a strong commitment to push ahead and conclude the talks based on the meeting in Hong Kong in December," said Swiss Economics Minister Joseph Deiss, who hosted the informal ministerial meeting on

the sidelines of the annual World Economic Forum conference.

The timetable was designed to set intermediate targets showing what and when negotiators should achieve in the detailed technical talks over the coming weeks and months, Deiss said.

Ministers from some 20 World Trade Organisation (WTO) members, including the US, the EU, Japan, Brazil, India, etc., were present at the two-day gathering, which was the first ministerial meeting since a conference in Hong Kong last December.

The Hong Kong conference concluded with an agreement to remove all farm export subsidies by 2013, a

swift end to cotton subsidies and the opening of rich country markets to more goods from the world's poorest nations.

But the 149 WTO members failed to achieve the full framework for the Doha Round launched in 2001, leaving out the most contentious issues, especially those on farm trade.

While being optimistic on a final trade deal, Deiss warned on Saturday that a lot of work still lay ahead for the WTO members.

"We have just reached the beginning of the final stage. But flexibility and a willingness to compromise is crucial for a successful conclusion of the trade deal," he said.

## Vietnam 3rd biggest in rubber exports

HANOI (VNA) — Vietnam exported a record 550,000 tonnes of rubber last year, earning US\$787 million, according to the General Statistic Office.

The exports increased by 31.9 per cent in value and 11.9 per cent in volume over 2004, the office reported.

The figures also exceeded the government's targets on rubber exports for 2010 and maintained Vietnam as the third largest exporter on the international market. In addition, the rubber industry achieved the second largest export value after the food industry.

The Vietnam Rubber Corporation (Geruco) last year sold 316,000 tonnes, 25,000 tonnes higher than in 2004. It gained a record of VND3 trillion (US\$188.6 million) in revenue, an increase of VND785.6 billion

over 2004, including VND2.8 trillion from rubber products.

Le Quang Thung, Geruco's director, said the large profits were due to an increase in demand for rubber products and in prices on the world market.

In addition, the corporation improved its capacity for rubber production to 1.72 tonnes per hectare in 2005 from 1.41 tonnes in 2001, he said. Nine rubber companies in the southeastern region reached 1.81 tonnes per hectare.

Thung said the average export price climbed to US\$1,370 per tonne last year from US\$1,163 per tonne in 2004. He also expected the price to hit US\$1,500 per tonne this year and continue the increase until at least 2007.

Vietnam's key export rubber markets include China, Germany, the UK and Denmark.

## India pitches for higher FDI flows

DAVOS (TNA) -India on Saturday pitched for higher foreign investment to the tune of US\$15 billion in 2006-07 to push up growth to over 8 percent, but made it clear that the money should not replace or displace jobs.

In the 'India breakfast' meet here, three top Indian leaders - Finance Minister P Chidambaram, Commerce Minister Kamal Nath and Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia - assured potential global investors that New Delhi was committed to reforms and making the industrial climate more congenial for FDI.

The meet was attended by some of the most prominent global CEOs, including Michael S Dell, Chairman Dell Computers, Kevan V Watts, Chairman Merrill Lynch International Inc. and Andrew Crockett, President JP Morgan Chase International.

Kamal Nath said the focus

was to get incremental FDI, especially into rural areas. He said the big issue for India to achieve the growth rate of eight per cent and above was to address the issue of under-employment and generating purchasing power in rural India.

Ahluwalia said it was important to review policy issues that hold development in rural areas. The focus needs to be on policies that constrain export of agro products. There was a need to catch up with China in the area of infrastructure.

The Planning Commission Deputy Chairman said that quality of water in rural areas for drinking and irrigation was also very important.

On education and the need to develop high skilled people for future growth in employment in India, Ahluwalia said the government was working on primary and higher education to improve the standard.

## Chinese banks reduce non-performing loans

BEIJING (Xinhuanet) — Chinese banks have seen their average Non-Performing Loan (NPL) ratio drop to single figures for the first time, reports the banking watchdog.

In their latest report, the China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) revealed the banks' NPL ratio has shrunk 4.2 percentage points in 2005 to 8.6 percent.

Their outstanding NPLs came to 1.31 trillion yuan at the end of last year, 517.6 billion yuan less than in the previous year.

The Big Four state banks, namely the Bank Of China, China Construction Bank, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and Agricultural Bank of China, and a dozen national shareholding banks, which were viewed as the bedrock of China's banking system, posted a reduction of 4.3 percentage points in NPL ratio to 8.9 percent.

The government is overhauling the banks by encouraging investment from overseas and listing them on the

stock market ahead of the full opening of China's financial industry before the end of the year.

Their current NPL ratio, however, is still well above the 1-2 percent level reported by the renowned international banks.

According to an earlier CBRC report, the major Chinese banks recorded 185 billion yuan in pre-tax profits last year. Their equity capital shot up 24.5 percent from the previous year to 1.1 trillion yuan, increasing at a faster pace than loans, assets and deposits for the first time ever.

China's banking institutions also include city and rural commercial banks, rural credit cooperatives and banks from overseas.

A total of 53 Chinese banks reported that their capital adequacy ratio a measure of their own capital in proportion to outstanding loans topped the 8 percent minimum requirement, which is the international standard.

## Business in brief

### Cambodia to spend US\$2b on public projects

PHNOM PENH (VNA) — The Cambodian Government has decided to spend nearly US\$2 billion on public projects in the 2006-08 period.

According to a statement issued by the Cambodian Council of Ministers on Jan. 27, the capital will be injected into 617 public projects, including 298 projects in progress, 36 approved for implementation, and 283 in the "high priority" category for future implementation.

The Cambodian Government and international donors have pledged US\$1.4 billion towards the projects in addition to US\$563.4 million that was disbursed on the projects over the past years.

### Chile, EU agree to talks on agro products

SANTIAGO (Xinhuanet) — Chile and the European Union (EU) have agreed to begin talks on liberalising trade in agricultural products, according to Chile's foreign ministry. In a statement published on Friday, the ministry said this step was originally outlined in the political and trade cooperation agreement signed in 2002. The EU has pledged to provide Chile with 34.4 million euros (about US\$40 million) from 2002 to 2006 to help boost Chile's modernisation drive, business promotion and implementation of the accord.

### Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport opens late June

BANGKOK (TNA) — Repairs to the catering kitchens section of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (THAI) at Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi International Airport which burned during a fire earlier this month will be completed within five months, in time before the airport is open for commercial purposes, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said Saturday. In his weekly radio address, Mr Thaksin said only 30 percent of the facility was damaged during the fire and only some parts of the structure need heavy repair. Repairs will be completed within five months, and the airport will be opened for commercial service in late June.

### Oil quota will continue, says Algerian oil minister

ALGIERS, Algeria (AP) — OPEC will maintain its current production quota at next week's meeting, Algeria's oil minister said on Saturday. Speaking to reporters in Algiers ahead of Tuesday's meeting in Vienna, Chakib Khelil predicted economic growth in the world would continue and keep oil prices high. High demand in the United States and China as well as shortages of refining capacity were underpinning the market price not supply shortfalls, he said.

### Vacancy announcement for

### Deputy Program Support Coordinator/Capacity Development Specialist, GPARLSP Khammouane

SNV is looking for a Deputy Program Support Coordinator/Capacity Development Specialist for the Preparatory Assistance (PA) project to support Governance Reform and Livelihood Strengthening Programme in Khammouane (GPARLSP Khammouane) province.

The project is jointly supported by SNV, UNDP and the World Bank. The Preparatory Assistance will provide a sound foundation through governance reform and preparatory studies, for a longer-term provincial programme that can strengthen livelihoods and facilitate rapid economic growth in Khammouane Province. The Deputy Program Support Coordinator will: i) assist and support in the operational management and program support coordination, ii) Assist in the piloting, managing and coaching in a new Senior and Junior Manager Development Programme, iii) support facilitation of implementing a sustainable Capacity Development strategy in the province.

The duty station will be in the project office in Khammouane Province.

#### Main responsibilities:

- Assist the program Manager in the Production of programme outputs according to the project documents
- Assist the project coordinator in establishing strong linkages with all partner offices
- Facilitate and follow-through Capacity Development Activities as agreed upon by the programme team.
- Assist in the piloting, managing and coaching in a new Senior Management Development Programme
- Facilitate a lasting Capacity Development of the Office of the Government and other stakeholders
- Supporting technical advisors and in facilitating technical backstopping as needed.
- Assist the Project Director and Project Coordinator in programme management, project administration, and coordination.
- Provide other support as may be required by the Project Director and Project Coordinator.

#### Qualifications:

- Minimum Bachelor degree in public administration/ management or relevant field. Additional qualifications in development studies, project management or administration will be an advantage.
- Experience in supervising and managing development projects.
- Five years experience in field such as governance reform, capacity building, institutional development, strengthening livelihoods, rural development and/or economic development, project administration and management
- Good oral and written English communication skills, result-oriented, team player.
- Sound judgment, flexibility, adaptability, cultural sensitivity.
- Understanding and acceptance of the government's policy directions and priorities with respect to governance.

#### SNV can offer:

- One year contract with a possible extension
- The opportunity for training and development
- An inspiring working environment, good atmosphere with a lot of personal responsibility
- Possibilities for personal growth and professional career development

#### Competitive benefit packages include:

- Allowances for relocation, settling, communication, education for children, duty travels
- Pension fund, social security fund, end of year payment, terminal grant
- Health, life and accident insurances for staff members and health insurance for spouses and children

#### How to apply:

Interested applicants should submit an application letter with a Curriculum Vitae and copies of relevant certificates by 6 February 2006 to: Mr. Phoungoume Khamphouong, HR Assistant, SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, PO Box 9781, Nongbone Road, Vientiane. Email applications: [pkhamphouong@snvworld.org](mailto:pkhamphouong@snvworld.org) Enquiries: (021) 413 290-1 ext 122

All application documents will be treated in confidence and only short listed candidates will be contacted.

SNV Lao PDR is committed to building the capacity of all staff and provides opportunities for training and, where appropriate, international experience. We aim for gender balance amongst our staff and offer child education support.

SNV is a dedicated to a society where all people enjoy the freedom to pursue their own sustainable development. Our advisors contribute to this by strengthening the capacity of local organisations.



Connecting People's Capacities

