

be built over an area of eight hectares; 100 weavers will be employed there. The aim of these projects is to encourage tourism to the area.

Trade with Ukraine

TRADE between Vietnam and Ukraine reached US\$254m last year, a 2.1% year-on-year increase, with Vietnam's exports to Ukraine amounting to US\$40m.

Vietnam exports rice, natural rubber, textiles, clothing and footwear to Ukraine which, in return, provides it with steel, fertiliser, machinery and chemicals. The two countries have signed more than 20 co-operation agreements in many key areas, including economic and commercial fields, marine and aviation transportation and investment encouragement and protection.

Ukraine currently has five projects operating in Vietnam with total investment capital of around US\$30m. Vietnam has invested about US\$27m in Ukraine, mainly in foodstuff processing and packaging.

PHILIPPINES

Objectives outlined

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal Arroyo presented government targets in five key areas at her recent state of the nation address: job creation and economic growth; energy independence and savings; social justice and basic needs; education improvement and youth opportunity; and an anti-corruption campaign.

The President vowed to create economic opportunities at home and abroad. She cited the contributions of the growing industrial, service, and micro-enterprise sectors, as well as a thriving agribusiness industry in providing jobs to millions of Filipinos. To generate even more jobs, the government would prioritise investments in infrastructure and energy, which provide the greatest multiplier effect for growth and job creation.

She also pledged to give special focus on the poor by providing them with jobs, implementing land reform, and providing clean water, medicine, and electricity.

Arroyo promised to take bolder steps and tougher decisions to put the country's economy back on track by bringing down the budget deficit to a manageable level, raising revenues, re-engineering the bureaucracy, and expanding government services, among others.

THAILAND

Specialist IT systems

INFORMATION technology vendor XeBusiness

Retail clothing price changes

(%)	Month-on-month			Year-on-year		
	Latest	As of	Over	Latest	As of	Over
Brunei						
Cambodia						
Indonesia	+0.2	4-04	3-04	+5.3	1-04	1-03
Laos						
Malaysia	-0.9	8-04	7-04	-1.8	1-04	1-03
Myanmar						
Philippines	+0.3	8-04	7-04	+2.2	8-04	8-03
Singapore	-2.4	2-04	1-04	-0.1	2-04	2-03
Thailand						
Vietnam	+0.5	9-04	8-04			

reports a growing trend amongst smaller apparel and textile companies to replace generic accounting and business management systems linked to spreadsheets with trading systems developed specifically for the sector.

The UK-based company reports several recent business contracts from suppliers finding their legacy business systems inadequate and cumbersome in dealing with the challenging quick response, cost management and logistics issues that competition and global sourcing are imposing within the sector.

For example, TPI UK, which sources children's and women's nightwear from Thailand, has awarded a contract for the specialist XeBusiness warehouse management system module and a further contract to manage effective sourcing and distribution of product to the company's retail customer base that includes Bhs, Littlewoods, Dunnes Stores and Ethel Austin.

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MALAYSIA

PM's vision

PRIME Minister Abdullah says Malaysia has to move up the global value chain. The country is looking to shift from low-cost manufacturing/ assembling toward more downstream and support activities in areas such as supply chain management, research and development, product design and branding, particularly in traditional sectors of electronics manufacturing and palm oil.

Malaysia is also looking to develop and strengthen new sectors, such as Islamic finance, ICT services, tertiary education, health, tourism and professional consultancy, as part of a drive toward diversifying their economic base.

Both government and industry recognise the shortage of "brain power" in Malaysia, which, if not addressed, is likely to hinder the development of this economic diversification.