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Employers boost wages in bid to attract workers

DATE: 2008/03/03

Companies in the Pearl River Delta area, the country's manufacturing powerhouse, are raising wages to attract migrant workers amid fears of a worsening labor shortage, a survey has shown. The survey was conducted by the service center of Guangzhou human resources markets, which looked at 252 companies with at least 200 employees each. The poll found out that the average monthly salary offered to new staff was up 13 percent from last year at 1,160 yuan (\$162).

The survey also showed that nearly 70 percent of the companies said they will hire new employees this year, up 20 percent from the same period of last year. Still, the number of job-hunters has decreased and are said to be more picky, the Guangzhou Daily reported.

The first job fair in Guangzhou after the Spring Festival break on Friday reportedly offered about 7,000 vacancies, but attracted only 4,000 job-seekers. Figures from the Guangzhou labor authority showed that sectors such as the textile, toy-making, construction, catering, electronics and service industries were top of the list for workers. It was particularly difficult for the textile and toy-making industries to hire workers since such companies could offer an average monthly salary of just 960 yuan, far below what is available across the board, the labor authority said.

The situation was said to be similar in other cities in the Pearl River Delta region, such as Shenzhen and Dongguan, which has seen industrial restructuring and experienced the impact of the new labor law, researchers said. However, research by the Asian Footwear Association showed that close to 1,000 shoemaking factories closed or moved out of the Pearl River Delta region last year, with 25 percent setting up in Southeast Asian countries, 50 percent in other mainland cities and about 25 percent adopting a wait-and-see approach.

"The industrial repositioning of the Pearl River Delta region has forced some of the companies in the region, especially those with less competitive edge in the market, to close or move out," Ding Li, a researcher with Guangdong Academy of Social Sciences, said. "The flow of migrant labor has been a clear indication of that."

The appreciation of the yuan, raw material price hikes and adjustment of export policies have also seen many private firms and companies funded by businesses from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan slowing down demand for migrant workers, the Guangdong labor authority said.

Source: China Daily

Premier ensures employees in China to have paid vacations

DATE: 2008/03/06

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao promised here Wednesday the government will try to ensure all employees in the country to have annual paid vacations. "We will institute a system of annual paid vacations for employees," said Wen in his report on government work to the First Session of the 11th National People's Congress that began here Wednesday morning.

Source: Xinhua

Nation vows full protection of IPR

DATE: 2008/03/05

The mechanism to protect intellectual property rights (IPR) will be implemented fully across the country this year, a top IPR official has said. "The mechanism is vital for the improvement of the country's IPR system and spurring the economy and scientific development," State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO) commissioner Tian Lipu said recently. The mechanism was adopted in July 2005 with the aim of spreading IPR knowledge among the Chinese to enhance their awareness.

The government will set up about 40 service centers to help implement the IPR mechanism. The subsidized centers will offer consultations and financial support to people who cannot afford to apply for IPR protection. Encouraging hi-tech development among enterprises will get priority under the mechanism, Tian said. And 17 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, including as Guangdong, Guizhou, Shandong and Shanghai have already issued regulations to develop independent hi-tech projects under IPR protection.

Domestic companies and research institutes submitted 5,401 applications for PCT (Patent Cooperation Treaty) last year, up 38 percent year-on-year, reflecting the growing awareness of IPR laws. And most of the authorized applicants were from the fields of traditional Chinese medicine and food and soft drink, according to SIPO figures. China, of course, accepts IPR applications from abroad under the WTO framework, and the requirements for them are the same as those for domestic ones, Tian said. But the number of Chinese applying abroad for PCT is less than those from overseas applying in China. The number of applications submitted from abroad reached 92,000 last year, up 4.5 percent over 2006.

Also SIPO will intensify efforts this year to identify people who tend to submit fake innovations for PCT to cash in on their claims in advertisements. Responding to the doubts raised by some foreign countries on the quality of authorized IPR application in China, Tian said SIPO has set up a special computerized supervision system to help block excessive junk applications. It can reject similar or repeat applications. The country is alert against IPR for the big two events, the Beijing Olympic Games and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, too, he said.

The Beijing Intellectual Property Administration (BIPA) will open an IPR information website on April 1 to spread Olympic and IPR knowledge among the public. People can report IPR violations on the Beijing Olympics either on the website or dial the hotline 12315 to report trademark infringement cases, BIPA official Zhang Boyou said. And the National Copyright Administration of China will strengthen supervision across the country to safeguard the copyright for songs and music related to the Olympics, spokeswoman Duan Yuping said. Shanghai, too, is intensifying efforts to deal with IPR infringements for the 2010 World Expo.

The central and municipal governments have released a number of IPR regulations, which observers say are unprecedented for a single event in China. The move is aimed at encouraging worldwide exhibitors to display their innovative works at the expo. So far, 194 nations and international organizations have confirmed participation in the Shanghai World Expo, the first to be held in a developing country. More participants are expected to join them. The world expos have served as a platform to showcase or promote many a great invention such as telephone, television, elevator and hamburger.

"IPR is the foundation of a successful World Expo," said Zhou Hanmin, deputy director of the Bureau of Shanghai World Expo Coordination Committee. "That's why China's State Council (the country's cabinet) passed the Regulation on the Protection of World Expo Logo Marks in a short period of four months and seven days" in October 2004. "Since then, public awareness on IPR protection has risen, measures against infringement activities intensified, and the regulation produced very good results," Zhou said. Last year, Expo organizers put forward an "action outline" for IPR issues related to the event, detailing steps to better protect exhibitors' IPR and intensify the crackdown on illegal activities. "As part of our overall IPR protection strategy, we are adding details to the outline," he said. "IPR is the greatest concern of expo organizers."

Organizers of the Shanghai event have even promised exhibitors they would implement the same regulations to protect IPR as those used at previous expos. That's why visitors to the Shanghai World Expo will be barred from shooting photographs or videos in exhibition halls unless the exhibitors allow them to. The organizers have invited some IPR protection experts from China's universities and government think tanks to provide consultation service. Other government agencies, including the Customs and the Shanghai Intellectual Property Administration, have vowed to coordinate with the organizers to safeguard IPR. "We take the issue very seriously," Zhou said. For instance, IPR protection will be applied to Urban Best Practices Area, a zone set aside for cities from across the globe to showcase their way of life at the Shanghai World Expo. "Although whatever will be shown in the area already exists, innovations will be involved and their IPR will be protected as well," he said.

Till date, 80 cities have submitted 108 cutting-edge architecture and design concepts, which will be short-listed to about 30 by a group of experts and shown at the expo.

Source: China Daily

Peru ready for 2nd round FTA talks with China

DATE: 2008/03/03

Peru is ready for a second round of talks for a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) with China, the Council of Ministers announced Thursday. The Peruvian ministry of foreign trade has requested the presence of Peru's Intellectual Property Institute (Indecopi) in the negotiations, it said. "The participation of an Indecopi official in the negotiations is important because it will grant the technical support" for relevant issues at the talks, it added.

Source: China Textile Network Company

The first round of trade talks was held on January 20-24 in Peru's capital Lima. Peru has disagreed with China's proposal to exempt 5 percent of the tax for Peru's sectors considered sensitive in FTA talks, which include textile and footwear, among others.

Source: xinhua

Trends in fashionable nursery furniture & bedding

DATE: 2008/03/07

To help new and expectant parents design their baby's nursery, long considered one of the most exciting baby-planning experiences, Babies"R"Us revealed seven predominant trends in fashionable nursery furniture and bedding. Babies"R"Us leveraged its unique insights as the baby products authority to identify the latest trends in design themes that will be crawling into nurseries across the country this year.

From parents desiring designs that extend their home decor into the baby's room, to finding natural and organic baby products to raise a "green" baby, Babies"R"Us offers a broad assortment of fresh, contemporary furniture and bedding to satisfy modern sensibilities.

The four furniture trends - Regal for the Reasonable, Delicious Color, The Organized Infant and Room to Grow - and three bedding trends - Bedding goes Green ... and Brown ... and Pink, A Bold Palette and "P" is for Pattern - will help parents design dream nurseries.

"While every parent wants their baby's room to be special and full of love, ongoing conversations with moms and dads who visit Babies"R"Us stores from California to New York have revealed similar style and color preferences in the furniture and bedding they want for nurseries," said Cari Shapiro, Vice President, Divisional Merchandise Manager, Babies"R"Us.

"Throughout the year, Babies"R"Us works diligently to identify and stay at the forefront of trends in nursery design to help parents create tranquil yet stylish rooms for their babies. Our new assortment of modern and contemporary nursery furniture and bedding will help parents design fashionable, functional and affordable nurseries that can easily transition into rooms for older children to maximize the investment." Following are predominant trends in nursery decor identified by Babies"R"Us, accompanied by some of the best examples of the furniture and bedding collections representative of these themes. The collections are arriving in select Babies"R"Us stores now and throughout the coming months, and can also be viewed online.

Source: www.ccct.org.cn

Benetton sales and earnings rise

DATE: 2008/03/05

Preliminary results from Benetton indicate that group turnover increased by 9% to more than €2.0 billion in its 2007 financial year and operating profit by 27% to €337 million. "Benetton Group continued a significant upward trend in both mature and emerging markets, winning new consumer segments in the former and increasing penetration in the latter," said a statement from the company's board.

During 2007, United Colors of Benetton (UCB) Adult grew by 9.0% as a result of the expansion of the collections offered to specific market segments. UCB Children grew by 15% focussing on

Source: China Textile Network Company

prenatal and baby wear for children up to five years old. With an increase in sales of around 6% in 2007, Sisley confirmed the growth expectations associated with the new “glamour” identity of the brand, said Benetton. Substantial growth at Playlife, up by 23%, was the result of a global project to redefine the positioning of the brand, with a more clear-cut identity inspired by the world of the American college.

Alongside the continuous identification of growth opportunities in established markets, Benetton has identified five priority growth areas: India, Turkey, Eastern European countries, Mexico and China.

The increase in revenues in Europe exceeded 12% compared with 2006, with particularly significant results in Italy (+11%), Spain (+11%), Greece (+24%), Portugal (+11%) and France (+15%). A very high growth rate was achieved in Russia, greater than 40%, as in all Eastern European and ex-Soviet Union Countries in general. Excellent growth was also achieved in India (+58%). Final results for 2007 will be considered by the company’s board on March 19, 2008.

Source: Inteletex

5th Central Asian International Textile Expo coming soon

DATE: 2008/03/05

5th Central-Asian International "Textile Expo Uzbekistan" exhibition is scheduled to be held on 15 - 17 October 2008. The Republic of Uzbekistan occupies vast territories in the very middle of the Central Asia, and in the "heart" of the Great Silk Road. The population of Central Asia exceeds 57 mln, over 27 mln. of which reside in Uzbekistan, the biggest consumer market in the region. This land is considered to be one of the hearths of the most ancient civilizations. Its history, original unique beauty and colors left their imprint on traditions and modern trends in the art of design and creation of fashionable style.

Nevertheless, local producers cannot satisfy the essential needs of the market and population, especially in the part of textile products and their components, items of fashion and design, not produced domestically. Special demand is observed for high quality fabrics, garments and accessories, lingerie and underwear, home textiles and other textile products, not produced domestically, in terms of increasing population and its improving and diversifying preferences.

Nowadays Uzbekistan has a broad class of consumers, preferring ecologically safe, high-quality and stylish textiles products lacking in the local market, which resulted in the inflow of the production of well-known world brands into the country. Fashion weeks has recently started to be organized in Tashkent, attracting more international fashion experts year after year. At the same time great demand is observed for high quality leather, fur, textile haberdashery, accessories and trimmings, clothing subsidiary items: interlinings, zippers, buttons, laces, hotfix items, labels, threads and other accessories, textile chemicals and dyes, as well as trading equipment and items needed for emerging local textile and garment industry.

The exhibition is designed for foreign companies, “C producers” and traders of fabrics, garments and apparel, accessories as well as raw materials and components for textile and garment manufacturing, willing to enter and strengthen their position in the market of Uzbekistan and Central Asia, to find reliable partners and customers among the specialists of the industry.

Source: fibre2fashion

Source: China Textile Network Company

China : Global intermediates leader signs first PTMEG licensing project

DATE: 2008/03/04

INVISTA, a world leader in fibers, intermediates and polymers, has signed a technology licensing agreement with Sichuan Tianhua Fubang Chemical Co Ltd to license its BDO and PTMEG manufacturing technologies to the Chinese company. Sichuan Tianhua Fubang intends to invest RMB2.4 billion in building manufacturing plants to produce these two products in Hejiang County of Luzhou City, Sichuan Province.

Mr. Richard Dobzelecki, Asia Pacific vice president for Intermediates at INVISTA, and Mr. Yang Dong, chairman of Sichuan Tianhua Fubang Chemical Co Ltd, were present at the signing ceremony which was held in Chengdu on January 28, 2008, along with senior representatives from both companies and senior government leaders from Sichuan Province, Luzhou City and Hejiang County. "We are excited about this project. Tianhua Fubang was our first BDO licensee, and has now become our first PTMEG licensee. We have found Tianhua Fubang to be a company of the highest integrity with a strong technical background, an excellent operational capability, and a commitment to their customers," said Mr. Dobzelecki. "As a global leader in intermediates with leading technology INVISTA is proud to be working with major local players such as Tianhua Fubang to help grow the high performance elastomer industry."

The licensing agreement covers the manufacturing processes, required technologies, product formulations as well as expert engineering services for the two plants with annual capacity of 60,000 tons of BDO and 46,000 tons of PTMEG respectively. Both BDO (1,4 Butanediol) and PTMEG (Polytetramethylene Ether Glycol) are chemical intermediates. BDO is used in making polyester resins and polyurethanes, while PTMEG is a polyether glycol and is used as a building block in high performance polyurethanes, polyesters co-polymers and other polymers.

Typical end uses for PTMEG include spandex fibers, thermal plastic elastomers, and cast elastomers for apparel, automotive, heavy and light industrial uses. INVISTA has been licensing its leading technologies in chemical intermediates and polymers in China since its first polyester license in 1990. The total investment of INVISTA's Chinese licensees has now exceeded RMB30 billion. In addition to licensing its technologies, INVISTA has also been active in growing in the country through investments and acquisitions.

Last November the company signed a Land Reservation Agreement with the Shanghai Chemical Industry Park Development Company for the construction of a state-of-the-art production plant at the Shanghai Chemical Industrial Park to meet the region's demand for nylon 6,6 intermediates and polymer. In the same month it also announced expansion of its joint-venture spandex facility in Foshan, Guangdong Province and expansion at the company's LDZ joint-venture spandex site in Lianyungang of Jiangsu Province. In addition, the company is building a nylon 6,6 airbag fiber plant and acquired a nylon carpet fiber plant, both located in Qingpu, Shanghai.

"We are committed to our growth in China for the long term, and we hope to help advance the development of technology and related industries through our various growth initiatives in China," said Mr. Dobzelecki. In China INVISTA has sales and administrative offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hong Kong SAR, as well as wholly owned and joint-venture manufacturing plants in Shanghai, Lianyungang and Foshan.

Source: INVISTA