

# China groups to invest \$300m in Dubai ventures

They will enter retail and property sectors

By SHAKIR HUSAIN

Staff Reporter

**Dubai** Two Chinese business groups are set to pour \$300 million into retail and real estate ventures in Dubai.

Zhongon Construction Group, which is working on \$30 billion worth of projects in China, will invest about \$100 million in real estate projects in Dubai, according to the group's partner in the UAE. "We have identified four residential and commercial projects in Dubai," said Tariq Nizami, CEO of Fkamber Holdings.

The Chinese company, which also runs a steel factory and construction materials business, aims to deliver two to three towers every year, he said.

Zhongon has received a road project in Bahrain and is in talks to build a resort in Kuwait and a tunnel in Iran, Nizami said.

Dubai's retail sector is set to receive more than \$200 million in investments from Dalian-based Dashang. The retail giant owns 130 large and medium-sized stores in 26 Chinese cities which generated revenues of \$2.85 billion in 2005.

It is currently in the process of finalising details of its first Gulf venture.

## KEY FACTS

### UAE biggest trade partner of Asian giant

- With \$10 billion trade, the UAE was China's biggest trading partner in the GCC in 2005.
- China-GCC trade amounted to more than \$32 billion.
- Representatives of 14 Chinese manpower firms were in Dubai recently and held talks with labour agencies and contractors to explore ways of providing workers for construction sector.
- "The aim of our visit is to understand Dubai's market, salary structures and working conditions. We can supply workers for various sectors here," said Wang Yuguang, director of Yunnan Labour Centre.

Nizami said CEO Clubs UAE, a business networking group that he heads, is working with several Chinese companies to bring their products and services to the UAE.

"Currently we are discussing a number of projects with potential Chinese partners in different sectors. These are in mining, petroleum, entertainment, commodities, trading," he said, adding that Chinese companies want to take advantage of Dubai's strategic geographical location.