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**HYUNDAI**

CARS THAT MAKE SENSE

IDB to give \$ 52 m loan to Indonesia

JAKARTA, Dec 2: The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) has agreed to provide Indonesia with loans worth 52 million US dollars to finance the country's development projects, says Xinhua.

The loans will be used to finance Indonesia's rural power projects, irrigation and Muslim vocational schools, according to a release by the finance ministry received here today.

Indonesia needs at least 40 million US dollars for power projects in eastern region, of which 21 million US dollars will be financed with IDB loans.

The IDB has also agreed to provide 22 million US dollars to construct buildings at 82 Muslim vocational training schools throughout Indonesia.

The bank will also extend loans worth 9 million dollars to a hospital in Surakarta, Central Java, and another one in Malang, East Java, respectively.

The bank's promise came at the end of a two-day IDB annual meeting here which concluded Thursday.

The IDB, set up in 1975, provides interest free loans and technical assistance to its 48 member countries for economic and social programmes.

Rapport's video management seminar held

The third video management seminar on 'Trials and tribulations of training managers' sponsored by Rapport Bangladesh Limited was held recently at Panda Garden in the city, says a press release.

The seminar was attended by senior executives from Siemens Bangladesh Limited, Multimode Group, Rahimafrooz Bangladesh Limited, Singer Bangladesh Limited, Beximco Pharmaceuticals, Agrani Bank, Bengal Carbide Group.

M Mosharrar Hossain, Managing Director, Rapport Bangladesh, conducted the seminar.

Unique example of self-employment

MANIKGANJ, Dec 2: A group of educated unemployed youth have created an example of self-employment by organising a pisciculture project styled 'Rupali Maitshya Khamar' at village Hoglekandi under Harirampur thana for cultivation of fish in derelict ponds on co-operative basis, reports BSS.

Mahfuz Ahmed and Abdus Samad have recently been elected President and General Secretary respectively of the 27-member pisciculture society. Other office-bearers are: Abul Ahsan and Rezaul Karim - Vice-Presidents, Abul Hossain Prodhan - Treasurer, Meer Abu Ashraf - Assistant General Secretary and Meer Mizanur Rahman - Assistant Treasurer.

'Rupali Maitshya Khamar' in a press release said the members of the society did not get any assistance either from the government or loan from any bank, they have taken the initiative on their own and have been taking lease of derelict ponds from different persons for cultivation of fish.

PABNA, Dec 2: The Square

Pharmaceuticals Limited of Pabna, the country's biggest Pharmaceutical Industry, has set up a medium scale import substitution bulk pharmaceutical unit at Pabna as a Chemicals Division within the framework of square Pharmaceuticals Ltd. The authorities of the Company came to such a decision in pursuance of its strategic Diversification Plan after making a thorough study over the current favourable global market situation and also in anticipation of the growth of the future market potentiality. With this objective, the Square have already entered into a turn-key agreement with the TTK Pharma Limited of India.

This was disclosed to The Daily Star in course of an exclusive interview on Sunday by the company's General Manager in Pabna. All their factories are situated in Pabna and they are all equipped with modern machinery.

Giving a brief description of the expansion programmes of the Square Pharmaceuticals Ltd, the General Manager said the Project was set up at the BSCIC Industrial Estate of Pabna with an investment of over Tk 13

IDB to provide Tk 100cr loan for two projects

Islamic Development Bank (IDB) will provide Taka 100 crore soft loan for two projects in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

This was disclosed by the Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman while talking to officials of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) about the outcome of the annual meeting of the Board of Governors of IDB at Zia International Airport last night.

The Finance Minister, who led a five member Bangladesh delegation in the IDB meeting held in the Indonesian capital Jakarta on 29-30 November last, returned home last night.

Out of Taka 100 crore loan Taka 50 crore will be spent for the third phase of the Sylhet feeder road project and Taka 50 crore will be spent for constructing 385 flood shelters cum primary schools at the flood-prone areas of Kurigram, Kishoregonj and Sylhet districts.

The IDB in its last meeting already approved the Sylhet feeder road project and the flood shelter project is also expected to be approved in mid-December next.

IDB meeting also decided to enhance the aggregate financing of the bank by nine per cent, project financing by 17 per cent and trade financ-

ing by 29 per cent.

Since Islamic world is lagging behind in the field of education and technological development, Bangladesh strongly advocated to direct on third of the entire resources of IDB in human resource development, health, technology and other social sectors of Islamic world. Bangladesh also pleaded for further enhancing of the project loan by the bank.

Bangladesh's view was strongly supported by a number of member countries including Malaysia.

Secretary ERD Lutfullah Majid was present at the airport.

Indian bond offering \$ 140m to be available to foreign investors

LONDON, Dec 2: The Industrial and Credit Corp of India's chairman said on Friday there had been strong interest in its 5.0-10 billion rupee (143-286 million dollars) bond offering.

Narayanan Vaghul said there was interest in the first Indian corporate offering of rupee denominated debt available, overseas despite rapid slide of the rupee, a plunging stockmarket and political uncertainty ahead of elections in April.

There has been strong domestic demand and when we were in the Middle East there was also strong interest," Vaghul, who was in London to promote one of India's leading providers of finance for industry, told Reuters.

The issue comprises five billion rupees plus a five billion greenshow option of demand is sufficient, and up to 4.8 billion rupees (140 million dollars) will be available to overseas investors.

It carries a coupon of 16 per cent and is rated 'aaa' by Indian credit rating agency crisis, it closes on December 23.

"I would like to get 10

billion away," said Vaghul. "but it is too early to make a forecast."

Fund managers at the presentation said that India's foreign exchange crisis, which has seen the rupee plunge from the 31.37 per dollar rate it had maintained for almost two years to 34.905/915 on Friday, meant that investors would be wary. "There may be some demand from non resident Indians, but I doubt that anyone else here is going to be much interested," said one.

Vaghul believes that the risks associated with the rupee crisis have been exaggerated.

"This was the cumulative process of what was happening over four years, it only attracted attention because it happened so suddenly," he said, adding that he did not expect the rupee to decline further over the next six months.

As a result of the rupee crash, Indian overnight deposit rates surged as high as 150 per cent and are now around 22-23.50 per cent, sucking money out of the stockmarkets.

Qatar's gas sale to Israel may be delayed

TEL AVIV, Dec 2: Qatar's project to sell gas to Israel is still five or six years down the road, after the Middle East peace process is well under way, Qatari Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani said yesterday, reports AFP.

"Five or six years will pass before it materializes," Sheikh Hamad said in an interview with the London based Arab newspaper Al Hayat, which is published in several Arab capitals.

Israel last month signed a letter of intent with Enron to buy Qatari gas, and Doha has struck a similar deal with the same US company.

"Even if everything goes well, this gas will not arrive on the market before the year 2000," said the Emir. "It's only natural that commercial relations be established between all the partners" in the Middle East peace process.

Sheikh Hamad voiced optimism over the prospects of Syria and Lebanon signing peace accords with Israel.

Although Qatar and Israel do not have diplomatic relations, the Jewish state is negotiating to open a commercial office in Doha.

Philippines signs accord to buy 50,000 tonnes of rice from Vietnam

MANILA, Dec 2: The Philippines signed an agreement Friday to buy 50,000 tonnes of rice from Vietnam to ease a national rice shortage, the department of foreign affairs said, reports AFP.

The deal was signed by Philippine Agriculture Under Secretary Joemari Gerochi and Vietnamese Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Vu Trong Hong, part of a delegation led by visiting Vietnamese President Le Duc Anh.

Under the agreement, 10,000 tonnes of rice would be shipped to Vietnam in December and another 40,000 tonnes in January.

The Philippines also has an option to purchase an additional amount of up to 150,000 tonnes before April 15.

The Philippines has already imported 245,000 tonnes of rice from India and Thailand and President Fidel Ramos has authorised the importation of another 500,000 tonnes early next year.

The country has resorted to rice importation to ease a shortage of the national staple which has sparked criticism against the government and raised the inflation rate to 11.3 per cent in September.

Meanwhile, President Anh told a gathering of Philippines businessmen that economic relations between the two Southeast Asian countries were still far from desired levels.

"It is high time for us to enter into practical, concrete and specific actions," he said.

Nizam's belongings auctioned at \$ 729,000 in Perth

PERTH, Australia, Dec 2: More than 400 people crammed into a hot and muggy Perth hall on Friday for the auction of items belonging to the cash-strapped Nizam of Hyderabad, Indian Prince Mukarram Jah, reports Reuter.

The 7-1/2-hour auction grossed close to 985,000 Australian dollar (729,000 US dollar) with the highlight being the sale of a rare royal grade double-barrelled, 600-inch big game rifle made by British firm Holland and Holland for 112,000 Australian dollar (83,000 US dollar).

The 1954 rifle was bought by Holland and Holland Director David Winks, who flew from London to bid on behalf of an anonymous buyer he described as "a very important client."

"I did well here today — there's only about eight guys in the world in the market for this kind of thing," he said.

"I was hoping it would go for 80,000 Australian dollar to 85,000 (59,000 US dollar to 63,000), but I was delighted to get it for 112,000 Australian dollar because I was prepared to go to 140,000 Australian dollar (104,000 US dollar)."

"Until recent times this was the largest calibre made in a big game sporting rifle. We're not sure how many we made, but it wouldn't be more than 12 or 14."



Golam Mustafa, Managing Director, Janata Bank, speaking at Managers' Conference at the bank's Sylhet divisional office on Wednesday. Md. Abdul Hafiz, DGM, and Erfan Uddin Ahmed, AGM of the bank, were also present.

China's gold reserves hit 4,500 tonnes

BEIJING, Dec 2: China's gold reserves have increased by 1,703 tonnes in the past five years to 4,500 tonnes, representing average annual output growth of 8.6 per cent, Xinhua said yesterday, reports AFP.

The increase in reserves during the eighth five year plan (1991-1995) was above the original target of 1,400 tonnes and 21.2 per cent higher than the rise during the 1986-1990 period, the report said.

The industry's pre-tax profits from 1991 to 1995 are expected to jump 40 per cent over the previous five year period, it said.

The report gave no actual figures for China's gold output, long guarded as a state secret, despite a one off announcement in 1993 that production reached 90 tonnes.

In 1994, output rose 14 per cent over the previous year. In the first 10 months of 1995, was up 22.6 per cent over the same period last year, enabling the state to meet its annual target nearly two months ahead of schedule.

Under Chinese law, all gold must be sold to the central bank, but with state

purchase prices lower than international levels, the government has had to take stern measures to prevent large quantities of the precious metal disappearing via the black market into private hands.

China aims to boost production by 50 per cent by 2000.

Office management training course held at BPATC

A two-week long training course on office management has been concluded at Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) yesterday, says a press release.

A Z M Shamsul Alam, Rector, BPATC distributed certificates among the successful participants.

Among others, Nilufar Begum, MDS & Course Adviser and Hasibur Rahman, Course Director were present. The training programme was organised to increase the efficiency of the officers working in the field administration. Eleven officers successfully completed the course.

Global shipping alliance announces new sailing schedules

Oakland, Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo, Rotterdam and Hong Kong — American President Lines (APL), Malaysian International Shipping Corporation (MISC), Mitsui OSK Lines Ltd (MOL), Nedlloyd Lines and Orient Overseas Container Line (OOCL) yesterday announced (as follows) to their joint press release dated October 5, 1995) the upgradation of the service between Asia and North-West Europe VV from January 1996, says a press release.

The upgraded services will cover all the main ports in Asia including Southern China and North-West Europe with a fixed weekday service based on three sailings per week, which will be operated with 24 vessels with capacities ranging from 3,300 TEU to 4,880 TEU.

The carriers are preparing themselves to help their customers a smooth transition from the current sailing schedules to the future situation. OOCL is represented in Bangladesh by its General Agents Omnitrans International Limited.

Russian poll may slam brakes on economic reforms

MOSCOW, Dec 2: Russia has created the conditions for investment and industrial success, but December's parliamentary election could slow the brakes on reform, first Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais said yesterday, reports Reuter.

Chubais told a news briefing that conservatives could slow or halt the completion of a legal framework to underpin reforms if they did well in the December 17 poll. But economic changes were unlikely to be reversed completely.

"The worst outcome of the election is a slowdown or a stop to economic reform, but I cannot imagine a real economic policy which would lead back," he said.

Communists and other conservatives lead the opinion polls for the election, Moscow's second democratic

poll since the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. They promise to subsidise private and reverse the fall in production, but do not say where they will find the money to finance their plans.

But even communists have been talking to business leaders in the run-up to the poll and Chubais said this seemed to show they realised they had to find a compromise on key economic issues. "They have two alternatives. They can forget everything they said and then there is some chance of survival," he said.

"Or they can start implementing the slogans of the election campaign... The result would be an increase in inflation from four or five per cent (a month) to 15 or 25 per cent. It would destroy financial markets, destroy the hard-currency market."

November's 4.5 per cent monthly inflation rate is the lowest since economic reforms began in January 1992. The government has promised average monthly rates of 1.9 per cent next year.

Chubais, formerly responsible for Russia's massive privatisation campaign, now has overall charge of economic reforms. He said lower inflation and a successful privatisation campaign would bring in much-needed investment.

"We now have a privatised economy and financial stability which will bring real investment into the Russian economy," he said. "That will be the engine for industrial policy in Russia."

Russian companies have complained bitterly at the dislocation caused by economic reforms.

Square Pharma making tremendous growth

From Ranesh Maitra

Through the Project was designed to be a multi-purpose one, the square planned to go for producing two varieties of chemicals known as Sulphamethaxole and Trimethoprim at the initial stage. The company decided to acquire more expertise and hands with the experience in the manufacture of bulk pharmaceuticals which is absolutely a new field of production of chemicals in Bangladesh.

The General Manager went on to say that this high tech modern project was supposed not only to meet the entire domestic demand but also to provide a lot of surplus for exporting abroad. The project was also desired to create job opportunities of around 150 people at the initial stage.

From the very beginning, Square was also very much aware and cautious of the environmental impact of the project and spent 1,00,000 US dollars towards the installation of the Effluent Treatment Plant.

The General Manager further added that before hand-

ling over the project, following installation of the machinery in the project site after the necessary construction of the buildings was completed, the TTK Pharma started its trial production. During this stage, he said, there appeared some mechanical failure in the aeration tank and as such, the company faced some problems with the Effluent Treatment Plant which caused some obnoxious odour creating annoyance in the neighbourhood. But, he stated, it was found after conducting all scientific tests and examinations to be totally harmless and non-toxic.

In view of the above, the square changed its original plans slightly and as per suggestions given by the foreign experts, the company invested almost Taka one crore to modify the Effluent Treatment Plant, to create a green belt around the factory as was suggested by the Department of Environment of Bangladesh and also to change the product-mix.

The General Manager

continued that all the above modifications have mostly been completed and the creation of the proposed green belt around the factory is underway. Now the square is hoping to start production of five new items by the end of this year or by early next year. Again, he continued, manufacturing of these items, most of which are life-saving drugs, would not only help Bangladesh attain self-sufficiency in these products but way of import substitution but also create potentials for export and earn a lot of foreign exchange.

The Square Group is engaged not only in the production of pharmaceuticals but also engaged in textiles, cosmetics, toiletries, health and hygiene products, plastics, printing and packaging, real Estate Development and also in the construction, export, import and trading activities. The group has primarily developed its core business around pharmaceutical products and the flagship company of the group,

Square Pharmaceuticals Ltd, a listed company both in the Dhaka and Chittagong Stock Exchanges, has already successfully established itself as the largest pharmaceutical manufacturer in the country.

It may be mentioned that like most indigenous concerns, Square Pharmaceuticals also made its debut in a very humble way in 1958 as a partnership firm. The company was later converted into a Private Limited Company in 1964 with an authorised capital of Taka 500,00 and a paid up capital of Taka 4,00,000. The Square continued to engage itself in both the manufacturing of official preparations and a range of proprietary items. The company had been on the look out and a continuous search for acquiring most modern know-how and expertise from abroad for manufacturing and marketing of more and more sophisticated products.

The turning point in the life of the company came in the year 1995 when the company entered into a

technical collaboration agreement with Janssen Pharmaceutica of Belgium, a subsidiary of Johnson and Johnson International, USA. Though, during that time, square was much small company in this tiny town of Pabna, the representatives of Janssen Pharmaceutica, after visiting many larger enterprises in Dhaka and Chittagong, selected square Pharmaceuticals of Pabna as its partner as they were convinced with the commitments of the square regarding the quality of its products and its adherence to GMP.

With the implementation of this agreement, the image of the company regarding its technical capability changed radically not only in marketing its new products under licence but also in modernising its entire manufacturing process. A similar technical collaboration with F Hoffmann La Roche & Co. Ltd of Switzerland was also signed authorising square Pharmaceuticals to manufacture and also to market Roche specialities under its licence. But because of the

Drug Control Ordinance of 1982, this could not be materialised.

Through its tortuous journey, square became the first national company of Bangladesh to market Metronidazole, Ampicillin and Cotrimoxazole soon after the expiry of their patents. The company took all necessary steps towards adoption of a strategic plan to expand manufacturing facilities for a wider range of essential items with the parameter of the WHO recommendations. This enabled the company to market a wide range of its products to fill the gap created in the country because of the adoption of the new Drug Policy. A new factory, with all modern facilities and machinery imported predominantly from Europe was completed by 1987.

This ensured the square to achieve tremendous pace of growth and became the biggest Pharmaceutical Company among the national and multi-national companies operating in Bangladesh. Square also became the first phar-

maceutical company to export its medicines to various countries in Asia and Europe. Since then, Square is holding a unique position in the field.

Further, to keep pace with the phenomenal growth, square also decided to go into public and adopted another strategic plan for diversification.

Under this plan, the square have already set up a new company, named Square Toiletries Limited with its factory at Pabna and also converted the company into a Public Limited one. It is gathered from the authorities of the company that due to the absence of necessary infrastructure like adequate supply of electricity, railway, river and air communication link with the capital city of Dhaka and specially the port city of Chittagong, they have to face various hazards involving additional costs.

Proper arrangements for such basic infrastructures should receive top most priority from the government not only in the interest of the square Pharmaceuticals Ltd of Pabna but also in the interest of quick industrialisation of Pabna and other northern districts to face the challenge of the coming 21st century.