

Deal nears to double public funds for *jusen* plan

Most major Japanese banks likely to go into red

TOKYO, Jan 28: Most of Japan's major banks are expected to go into the red for the financial year ending in March due to their exposure to seven failed housing loan companies, or *jusen*, a report said yesterday, reports AFP.

Jiji press reported that 21 major banks were to write off an initial 3.718.1 billion yen (3.5 billion dollars) in bad debt held by the *jusen* under a government plan to liquidate the virtually bankrupt leaders.

Jiji said that at least five of the 11 commercial banks, called city banks, would report a loss for the fiscal year ended March 31, with all three long-term credit banks and seven trust banks also expected to be in the red due to their *jusen* exposure.

Sakura Bank Ltd is to write off 302.6 billion yen worth of *jusen* bad debt and Sanwa Bank Ltd will take a hit of 278.7 billion yen.

The city banks have agreed to write off a total of 1,156.1 billion yen, the trust banks 1,510.2 billion yen and the long-term credit banks 1,051.8 billion yen.

In all, the *jusen* have reported initial non-recoverable loans of 6.41 billion yen, with the Japanese finance

ministry estimating a further 1.2 billion yen in secondary losses.

The initial write-offs are part of the plan by Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's government to liquidate the *jusen*.

That plan involves the use of an initial 685 billion yen in taxpayers money and a commitment to shoulder half the secondary losses.

According to Wall Street Journal Service Finance Ministry and the country's banks are close to cutting a deal that would double the amount of money that Japanese taxpayers would pay for a bailout of the Japan's housing-loan companies.

Ministry officials and senior banking executives say the government is in the final stages of negotiations with banks over a second stage of a plan to liquidate seven defunct mortgage companies, called *jusen*, at the centre of the banking crisis.

The government, as previously reported, has already been seeking to push through Parliament four bills that would use 685 billion yen (6.4 billion dollars) in taxpayer money to mop up the initial losses expected when Japan dissolves the seven

companies. Much of the public is opposed to the use of public money to mop up the *jusen*, whose lending excesses and property speculation of the last decade are a symbol for much of Japan's current economic troubles.

A senior Finance Ministry official confirmed the bureaucrats are now asking banks to sign off on an additional ministry bailout plan that would use another estimated 600 billion yen in public money to absorb "secondary losses," further losses that are expected to crop up after the *jusen* are dissolved.

Out of a total of 10.7 trillion yen in outstanding *jusen* loans, about 6.4 trillion yen are known to be irrecoverable. The first stage of the plan comes up with the money to write off these bad loans. Banks who financed the *jusen* will absorb most of

the additional public funds, however, wouldn't be needed right away. As a result, the ministry may delay announcing exactly how much the public will have to pay for the plan's second stage, according to ministry officials. By delaying the announcement of specific public injections of money, the ministry might avoid fueling already considerable public opposition to the bailout.

REUTERS

MOSCOW, Jan 28: President Boris Yeltsin said yesterday that Russia's economic crisis was over and that things were improving in industry, finance and the social sector. ITAR-Tass news agency reported, says Reuter. "The period of crisis in the economy is over. Only now have we passed the peak of this crisis," Tass quoted Yeltsin as telling reporters as he visited a Moscow construction project.

"Stabilisation is already underway. Things are picking up in construction, industry, the financial sector and also in the social sphere."

Tass quoted Yeltsin as saying ordinary people's lives were changing and that they now understood that the more they worked, the better they would live.

Yeltsin was visiting the site close to the Kremlin where a huge underground shopping centre is being built.

Yeltsin, who has said he will probably seek a second term in presidential elections in June, has pledged living standards will improve for ordinary Russians this year. Many have been impov-

erished as Russia has moved towards a market economy.

Yeltsin and senior ministers have repeatedly said reform will continue but western officials have been alarmed by recent government changes and signs that tough controls on spending could be relaxed.

Malaysia imposes anti-dumping duty

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 28: Malaysia has imposed anti-dumping duties on exporters and producers of PV floor coverings from Thailand and South Korea for five years from January 17 this year. The Bernama news agency said Saturday, reports Reuter.

It quoted the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) as saying that local industry had been hurt by dumping of floor coverings from Thailand and South Korea.

The dumping had led to a decline of the domestic industry's share of the Malaysian market, Bernama reporters.

REUTERS

Monolina

Victoria

Globe Island

Nickelco

Padma 20/1

Bangla Jatra

Blue Ocean

Ivan Skuridin

(roro/24/21/01)

29/1 -

MMI

Vehi

(Spi cargo)

R. S. Seeds

RSL

Cont

Singapore

GIL(BTU) (P)

28/1 -

General Mojica

Lydra 14/1

Islamabad

28/1 -

MSA

RSL

Cont

Seaglory

GIL(BTU) (P)

28/1 -

Antares

Cielo Di Milano

Sanyang

Wawasan Setia

30/1 -

Banbow

CPO

CDSO

PSL

HSD

MSPL

MSPL

HSD

MSPL