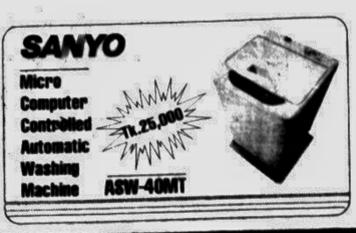
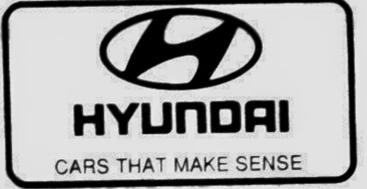


SANYO
Micro Computer Controlled Automatic Washing Machine ASW-40MT
TK 25,000



The Daily Star BUSINESS

DHAKA WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1997



HYUNDAI
CARS THAT MAKE SENSE

Companies want stricter legal framework

New law drafted to fight counterfeiting

By Govinda Shil

Old laws, framed by the British Raj to protect trade marks of products, are being updated to deal with increasing rate of counterfeiting, a major cause of concern now for consumer goods and medicine manufacturers in Bangladesh.

The Institute of Public Health has found counterfeit medicines seized by the criminal investigators extremely hazardous to health and human body, according to police who find the laws too old to have teeth.

Amid growing voice of resentment by the country's top manufacturers, the Law Commission has drafted amendments to the Merchandise Marks Act, 1889 and the Trade Marks Act, 1940, and put all aspects in one single piece of proposed legislation, now awaiting clearance by the government.

But members of Bangladesh Anti-counterfeit Association, a grouping of top manufacturers fighting the corrupt practices, remain far from being convinced.

They want setting up of something styled 'anti-counterfeit wing' at the industries ministry and a separate court, much like the labour court.

"In a district court, it takes at times up to 10 years to get a case disposed," grumbles one official.

None of these issues has been taken care of by the draft of the proposed law, they say.

Preventing use of false trade marks on merchandise was the target when Merchandise Marks Act was enacted more than a century ago, which was in line with the relevant provisions of the Penal Code and the Customs Act, 1878. The law was also designed to prohibit im-



CID HEADQUARTERS: Inspectors Alamgir Kabir (left) and M A Matin were among those police officers who conducted the raids in different parts of the city and recovered these counterfeit products (partial view) bearing big brand names. They arrived as the cream in the pan was being prepared. —Star photo by Amran Hossain

Police cannot do much about it

By M Shamsur Rahman

Just a day, and then you are beyond the reach of law. This is perhaps why counterfeiting has gone to this extent.

A visit to the CID headquarters in Malibagh will give you some idea of the problem. A strong resentment among top manufacturers has produced several raids by the Criminal Investigation Department officials recently, resulting in seizures of look-alikes of such toiletries brands as Square, Aroma, Manola, Meril or Fair and Lovely.

But the most horrifying development is the discovery of counterfeit medicines, some of which, after tests at the Institute of Public Health laboratory, were found to be hazardous to human health.

The pharmaceutical products sent for lab tests by police were: Flixol (250 mg) injection, Jasocain (50 ml), Servitrim DS tablet (500 mg), Insulin, Servitrim tablet (500 mg), CIPRO A (500 mg) tablet, injection which looks like Actra but without any label, and tablets which look like Servitrim but without a label. They were found to be fake and "injurious to human health".

Unfortunately, the law enforcers cannot do much about it. The main reasons are that the laws are ineffective, say CID inspectors Alamgir Kabir and M A Matin.

Police are not also allowed more than a day's remand when they want to interrogate persons arrested during raids. In a recent incident, legal loopholes allowed traders of counterfeit products to run away before police could arrive.

The companies which are worried and angry about it would not however let the police know about it.

"The companies get scared to inform us of the presence of their fake products as they believe that that might have an adverse impact on the reputation of the company," says Kabir. "So they never help us, and we use our personal source to know the existence of the counterfeit products."

However, one recent event has been encouraging for them. "We seized Beximco Pharma's counterfeit products, and the company rewarded us by contributing Tk 100,000 to our welfare fund following the seizure last month in Sabujbagh, Mirpur and Tejgaon," Kabir said.

The latest raid on November 12 conducted in Lalbagh 2/1 Devidas Ghat Lane Lalbagh resulted in seizures of a wide range of counterfeit products. The major products seized were: Square Petroleum Jelly, both 50 ml and 15 ml, Aromatic Talcum Powder, French Two in One Vanishing Cream, Cute Vanishing Cream, Keya Talcum Powder, Fair and Lovely, Meril Skin Print, Meril Talcum etc.

Police also recovered materials for creating vanishing cream.

"We are for detection and investigation, but not prevention. It seems now we have to do it as well," says Kabir, clearly frustrated.

GM plans to cut 42000 jobs

WASHINGTON, Nov 18: General Motors plans to slash its payroll by 42,000 jobs over the next five years as it streamlines certain plants and sheds others, USA Today reported yesterday, says AFP.

FedEx ISO standard re-certified

Federal Express Corp (NYSE: FDX) has achieved the most rigorous international standard for quality management and assurance by earning re-certification of ISO 9001 registration for its global operations from Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance (LRQA), says a press release.

Not only is FedEx the only express transportation company to receive worldwide certification of its system, it passed the re-certification assessment during the recent 16-day UPS strike when FedEx employees handled more than 9.5 million additional packages.

This re-certification of the FedEx ISO 9001 registration, the most comprehensive certification in the series of quality standards, is for its worldwide operations.

India won't put ceiling on imports

NEW DELHI, Nov 18: The Indian government will not put ceilings on imports, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported yesterday, says AFP.

PTI said Finance Minister Palanippan Chidambaram, an ardent supporter of the country's free-market reforms, made the offer in an address to a business forum on Sunday in the southern city of Madras.

Chidambaram said his decision not to place a bar on imports stemmed from India's comfortable foreign exchange reserve.

The reserve has touched 30 billion dollars and was in a strong position to import anything it needed without any limit, PTI said, quoting a statement issued Monday by the forum on Chidambaram's address.

"The reserve has buoyed over the years to give the country enough strength today to bridge its sudden shortages, if any, through imports."

Chidambaram also said both exports and imports showed robust growth in the past few months, adding he expected the trend to further strengthen in the third and fourth quarters of the current fiscal year to March 1998.

"Other economic indicators are strong as well," he said.

The annualised rate of inflation has come down to 3.23 per cent while interest rates have shrunk in the last 18 months by at least four per cent, Chidambaram claimed.

The finance minister rejected worries of a crunch in the supply of money to the market as an 'unwarranted notion'.

China keen to set up joint venture cement factory in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Nov 18: China has expressed keen interests to set up a big joint venture cement factory in Chittagong, says BSS.

A senior official of Economic Relations Division (ERD) told BSS Monday that the actual disbursement of aid also showed 2 per cent increase during the same period.

Both commitment and disbursement increased because of the government special efforts to complete some of the targeted projects like Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge (JMB), financial sector credit and AB gas pipeline during the schedule," he said.

According to the official the 800 million US dollars JMB project, 90 per cent construction work of which is already complete, spent a major portion of the disbursement of foreign aid of 1475.5 million US dollars in the fiscal 1996-97.

The actual commitment of foreign aid stood at 1661.2 million US dollars in the fiscal 97 against 1280.8 million US dollars in the fiscal 96, said the official.

Of the commitment of 1661.2 million US dollars, food aid was 137.9 million US dollars and the commodity and project aid were 170.6 million US dollars and 1352.7 million US dollars respectively.

While in the case of disbursement of 1475.5 million US dollars aid, the food aid was 100.9 million US dollars and the commodity and project aid were 263.2 million US dollars and 1111.4 million US dollars respectively.

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Foreign aid commitment rises by 29 pc in '96-97

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Shipping Intelligence

Chittagong port						
Berth position and performance of vessels as on 18.11.97						
Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving
J/1	Hill Harmony	C.Chkn	Dall	USTC	8/11	23/11
J/4	Roro Sarawak (roro24)	vehi	Sing	Jf	15/11	18/11
J/5	Pericles	Cl	Sing	Prog	7/11	22/11
J/7	Alba Sierra	Cl	Fr	Dall	1/11	22/11
J/8	Song Lin	R Seed	Fr	AASS	7/11	25/11
J/9	Sea Voyager	R Seed	Fr	AASS	7/11	25/11
J/10	Swordboard	G(Copral)	Sing	Seacom	6/11	19/11
J/11	Jordan-II	Urea(I)	Long	RSA	24/10	22/11
J/12	Saigon-4	Fret(G)	Rawa	CPTL	25/10	22/11
J/13	Kota Berjaya	Cont	Sing	PH(BD)	10/11	20/11
CCT/1	Vanessa	Cont	Sing	RSL	11/11	20/11
CCT/2	Qc Teal	Cont	Sing	QCSL	13/11	20/11
CCT/3	Da Pu	Cont	Sing	Ap(B)	13/11	20/11
RM/14	Ivan Pererevez	G(P.Mat)	Hust	Total	13/11	21/11
CGJ	Rattana Narce	C. Clink	Sing	RML	3/11	20/11
RM/3	Bunga Melwis Satu	Cpo/RBD	Sing	TSL	17/11	18/11
RM/4	Sheng Yuan	Cement	Peng	RML	R/A	20/11
RM/6	Nickolas	Cement	Sing	RML	R/A	20/11
DOJ	Banglar Jyoti	C.Oil	Idle	BSC	R/A	30/11
DDJ/1	Tanary Star	Repair	Idle	PSAL	30/11	30/11
DDJ/2	RV Sonae	R.Vessel	Coch	Ancient	16/11	20/11
RM/9	Banglar Asha	Repair	Idle	BSC	R/A	20/11
SM/10	Tug Et Ocean-8	P.Mat	Sing	Total	6/11	-
CULFJ	Ya Feng	Cement	Sing	Lans Delmure	R/A(12/8)	25/11
Kafco(U)	Tug Ocean Echo	P.Mat	Sing	MBL	30/9	-

Officials talking creation of 'Asian Fund' SEA states must cooperate to restore financial stability

MANILA, Nov 18: Southeast Asian nations must cooperate more closely to restore financial stability to the region following its currency crisis, the Philippines' finance secretary says, reports AP.

In a speech prepared for delivery Tuesday to senior Asian and Western finance officials, Finance Secretary Roberto De Ocampo said the region should also coordinate with the International Monetary Fund and other international agencies to achieve this stability.

The finance officials are meeting in Manila for two days to discuss creation of an "Asian Fund" that would help countries experiencing currency or financial difficulties.

Japan originally had proposed creation of an independent fund, but many countries in the region reportedly have decided that a separate fund would limit the IMF's ability to require economic reforms as a condition for economic bail-out packages.

As a result, the officials are expected to discuss proposals for a facility that would supplement IMF resources in terms of funding and monitoring for countries that get into trouble.

De Ocampo, the host of the meeting, asked the IMF to prepare a detailed analysis of the region's financial crisis, which he said has affected even countries with sound economic fundamentals, such as Hong Kong.

He said financial markets need to be examined to determine whether they have been operating appropriately over the last four months, during which some Southeast Asian currencies have plunged by as much as 40 per cent.

It is difficult to imagine that the movement of currencies over the past months was occasioned by the decisions of countless small market players in a classic market-driven situation," he said.

De Ocampo made clear, however, that the meeting's main agenda is to reach a consensus on a framework for regional cooperation that would include a monitoring group to complement the IMF's monitoring efforts and a financing mechanism to augment IMF resources.

He said a supplementary financing mechanism would assure countries of the availability of financing as they pursue needed reforms and adjustment measures in conjunction with the IMF.

"By definition, it would merely augment and not substitute IMF resources," De Ocampo said.

He said regional monitoring would provide markets with more comprehensive information to reinforce efforts to strengthen economic and financial stability.

Weakness of yen, won to prolong monetary crisis in Asia

HONG KONG, Nov 18: The weakness of the Japanese yen and South Korean won will prolong Asia's monetary crisis, Merrill Lynch's chief economist Bruce Steinberg said here yesterday, reports AFP.

He predicted that the yen could fall as low as 140 to the dollar by the end of the year, from 125 now, and the won could slump to 1,200 to the dollar from 1,008 on Monday.

"Japan is the weakest link in the world economy now," said Steinberg. "Japan made its own problems more severe by not addressing them."

The chief economist for the highest US merchant bank added: "It is such a big lesson for everybody else."

He said Asia's currency crisis had become "a global equity event with the equity markets crashes all over the world."

Steinberg warned that "global growth will be slowing down in almost every region, but mostly in Asia, the centre of the storm."

He predicted the US economy would maintain "respectable" growth of around 2.5 per cent this year, but added that "mainly as a result of the events here in Asia, there might be an easing of monetary policy in 1998 in the US."

Europe would suffer more with growth cut by between 0.25 and 0.5 of a percentage point in most countries, he said.

Sri Lanka's Vanik ties up with local investors

Star Business Report

A Bangladesh-Sri Lanka joint venture non-bank financial institution will begin business soon, the company announced yesterday.

Vanik Bangladesh Limited (VBL) -- the result of a tie-up between Vanik Incorporation Limited of Sri Lanka and a group of Bangladesh investors -- has received a license for operating as a non-banking financial institution from Bangladesh Bank and a letter of intent from the Securities and Exchange Commission to operate as a merchant bank.

Vanik Bangladesh president and Chief Executive Officer D Justin M Meegoda told a press conference that Finance Minister S AMS Kibria was likely to be present as chief guest at its launching ceremony on November 22.

Justin Meegoda said his company is a reputed financial institution in Sri Lanka and wants to provide the business community of Bangladesh with a variety of innovative financial products and services.

Its services include structuring and financing of infrastructure projects, corporate finance, corporate restructuring, corporate and investment advisory services, issue management, underwriting, share trading, share brokerage, portfolio and asset management, Meegoda said.

Stock broking activities will be carried out by its subsidiary "Vanik Bangladesh Securities Limited" which is a member of the Chittagong Stock Exchange. This company will be officially launched on November 24.

Responding to a question, Meegoda said that he was not worried about the recent bearish trend in Bangladesh's capital market. He said it was normal that the market would go through ups and downs and that there was nothing to be panicky about it.

He said that about 17 thousand investors had been enlisted with the company for shares business. Vanik Bangladesh Chairman M A Moyeen hoped that the company would get corporate membership of Dhaka Stock Exchange as soon as the DSE starts giving new membership.

PRE-LAUNCH SALES CONFERENCE
15 November 1997
Quantum Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

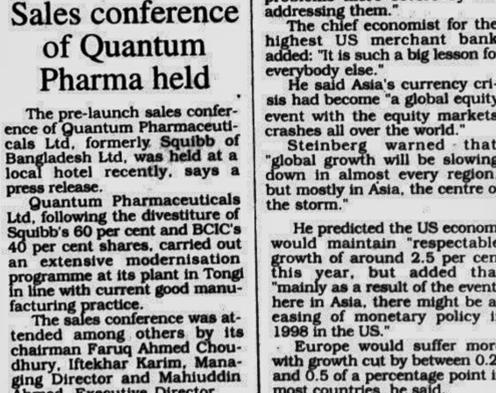


The pre-launch sales conference of Quantum Pharmaceuticals Ltd, formerly Squibb of Bangladesh Ltd, was held at a local hotel recently, says a press release.

Quantum Pharmaceuticals Ltd, following the divestiture of Squibb's 60 per cent and BCIC's 40 per cent shares, carried out an extensive modernisation programme at its plant in Tongi in line with current good manufacturing practice.

The sales conference was attended among others by its chairman Faruq Ahmed Choudhury, Iftekhar Karim, Managing Director and Mahiuddin Ahmed, Executive Director.

Sales conference of Quantum Pharma held



Chairman of Quantum Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Faruq Ahmed Choudhury, addressing a sales conference of the company held at a local hotel recently.

BANGLADESH LIMITED



Chairman of Vanik Bangladesh Limited, MA Moyeen, speaking at a press conference at a city hotel yesterday. Sitting on his left is Vanik President and Chief Executive Officer D Justin M Meegoda.

Vessels due at outer anchorage						
Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L port call	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port	
Diligence Cont 9/11	18/11	Sing	QCSL	Cont	Cement	
xing yang	18/11	Long	USTC	Cont	Urea	
Marina Cathya	18/11	Sing	ANCL	Cont	Survey	
Kuda Nil	18/11	-	B.Bay	Purpose	Purpose	
Sea Bulk Giant	19/11	-	B.Bay	Survey	Purpose	
Ultima 3/11	19/11	Mong	Baridhi	Cont	Col	
Sea World	19/11	Damm	CCNL	Urea		
Marlin	19/11	Yant	Yant	Jaycee	Cement	
M. Regina 9/11	19/11	Sing	PH(BD)	Cont	Sing	
Banglar Moni 9/11	20/11	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing	
Brittol-18	20/11	-	B.Bay	Cont		
Sincere Star	20/11	-	Prog	Cl		
Ocean-1/48/12/11	21/11	Vize	Cross	G(St. Cont)		
Kota bintang 12/11	21/11	Sing	PH(BD)	Cont	Sing	
Eastern Hope	21/11	-	Everett	Cl		
Kekal Satu	21/11	-	Rainbow	G(St. Cont)		
Arktis Venture	21/11	Sing	Seacom	G(Copral)		
Sin Hal 6/11	25/11	Sing	QCSL	Cont	Sing	
Delta Freedom	22/11	Tunt	SSST	Gtsp(Fert)		
Vassil Levski	23/11	Cl	TSL	G(St. Cont)		
Banglar Robi 9/11	23/11	Sing	BSC	Cont	Sing	
Hafez (E/L) 28/10	24/11	Mong	SSL	E/1	B.Abbas	
Xpress Resolve 16/11	24/11	Sing	RSL	Cont	Sing	