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HYUNDAI
CARS THAT MAKE SENSE

Dealers import, market hazardous pesticides, reveals survey

Aggressive and unethical marketing policy of pesticides dealers is making the farmers excessively dependent on pesticides hazardous to environment, human health as well as the crops, reports BSS.

An extensive survey conducted by Institute of Development Policy Analysis and Advocacy (IDPA) at Proshika revealed that the country's pesticide dealers are importing hazardous, non-degradable and sub-standard pesticides in the absence of strict regulations and monitoring to control import, sale and use of toxic chemicals.

The survey quoting Agriculture Extension Directorate sources said nearly 50 dealers from 15 multi-national companies imported about 7,800 metric tons of pesticides in 277 brand names during 1994-95 fiscal which is three-fold higher than the imported figures ten years back. The import of pesticides after 1995 had also increased significantly.

The government although banned some pesticides including one but all of the much-criticised "dirty dozen", it is alleged that some of the banned items are imported by unscrupulous traders under various pseudonyms.

The concerned circles in a

bid to curb such foul play, suggested strict supervision and making it mandatory to supply generic details on the label of their imported items.

The study revealed that pesticides dealers carry out their promotional campaigns and incentive schemes through a strong network of nearly 600 stockists and about 5,000 retailers around the country.

Workshops are arranged for stockists and retailers as part of their promotional campaigns while cars, televisions, video recorders, transistors and lucrative commission extending up to 35 per cent are provided under the incentive schemes of different companies.

The objectives of the programme are to increase the sale of pesticides and expand the business across the country overlooking the environmental degradation.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) launched worldwide by FAO restricts use of pesticides where pests can be managed through ecological farming. But in Bangladesh, the pesticides companies, ignoring the IPM, are persuading farmers through their aggressive marketing policy to use their products. Their slogan — prevention

is better than cure — has stabilised the pesticides business in the country but has gone against the global effect to check environmental degradation.

The experts felt that the government in its recent move banned some highly toxic pesticides in the wake of growing criticism. But because of certain loopholes in checking and controlling process, the indiscriminate use of pesticides is continuing in both the agricultural fields and food products.

Pesticides Advisory Technical Committee (PTAC) officials said that government had banned, among others, the resale of aluminium phosphide whereas it is importing the same kind of pesticides to protect the food stock under the Directorate of Food. Similarly, the decision to restrict the use of synthetic pyrethroid only on the paddy fields can never be implemented without effective monitoring, experts said.

They think as the farmers are habituated in using the pyrethroid pesticides on paddy fields they would continue to do so as it would be easily available in the market. Moreover, a recent study by Fish Research Institute (FRI) revealed that synthetic pyrethroid was very harmful for country's fishery

resources.

It was gathered from the farmers of grassroots level that pests from fields treated with pesticides move to the adjacent fields forcing the owners of these fields also to use chemicals as well. They said the dealers motivate one farmer of a village to use pesticide on his crops and naturally the other farmers have to follow to avoid attack of pest.

Meanwhile, the pesticide manufacturers and indentors pack the pesticides in insoluble containers and most of the time in bottles to attract the farmers who use the bottles and other containers for different domestic purposes without realising the environmental hazards.

Although the Pesticide Rule (PR) 1985 stated that "no person shall import, manufacture, formulate, repack, sale, hold in stock, or in any other manner advertise any brand of pesticides which has not been registered in the manner here in after provided."

But, the experts said, because of the lack of monitoring and proper evaluation facilities this regulation did not work effectively to control the import of hazardous pesticides. Similarly the regulations for issuing licence under PR is equally weak and in the absence of

strong monitoring facilities the regulations became almost meaningless and ineffective.

WHO had FAO sources said countries like Bangladesh did not have necessary resources and infrastructure to adequately regulate the use and availability of pesticides.

The Department of Environment said because of these existing weak laws, deadly and non-degradable pesticides like heptachlor, parquet, aluminium phosphide, phosphamidon, carbofuran, emthamidophos and esajophos which are banned in European countries are being imported and sold in Bangladesh.

The experts, however, said there are pesticides low in toxicity available with the same effectiveness in eradicating pests which can be replaced with the highly toxic ones.

"Integrated pest management, a process under which pests are controlled naturally without disturbing the environment is the answer to the problems in stopping indiscriminate use of toxic chemicals," said S Ramaswamy, a South Asian expert in Integrated Pest Management.

Improper use of highly toxic pesticides should immediately be stopped, he suggested.

Int'l quality convention opens with call to entrepreneurs Raise product standard to meet 21st century challenges

A two-day international quality convention began here yesterday with a call to the entrepreneurs to raise the quality of their products to meet the 21st century challenges of the free market economy, reports BSS.

Total Quality Management (TQM) system has no substitute to survive in the tough competitive world market now and the days ahead," local and foreign experts told the quality convention held in the LGED auditorium here.

The industrial quality control experts said as the global scenario is changing very fast, improvement in TQM system in the countries of this region, particularly Bangladesh, would help raise the standard of products for their survival in the free market economy.

Bangladesh Society for Total Quality Control Management (BSTQM) organised the convention in joint collaboration with Bangladesh Aots Alumni Society (BAAS) which is being participated by 180 delegates from 70 organisations in both private and public sectors.

Prof. Iqbal Mahmud, Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), attended the inaugural ceremony as the chief guest while it was ad-

ressed by BSTQM President Mofiuul Doula. BAAS President ARS Anwarul Haq, a TQM expert and convener of the organising committee AMMK Basher and BSTQM General Secretary Mokarram Uddin Ahmed.

The theme of this year's convention is "TQM is time befitting to meet the challenges of the free market economy."

TQM Consultant of India, R. Mukundan, Executive Director, Quality Circle of India K. Ganapathy, TQM Consultant of Nepal Ramesh Man Singh and TQM Society President of Sri Lanka MSG Wijesinha presented their country papers in the business sessions yesterday elaborating their experiences in the field.

M. Bashir Chughtai of Pakistan is expected to present his country paper today.

Prof. Iqbal Mahmud said in the present day world the very concept of TQM has been accepted as a revolution with a view to fulfilling the satisfaction of the customers. This concept, he said has already yielded excellent results in many countries.

He said though we import latest technology from the developed countries, the quality of our products is yet up to the international standard to face the challenges of the open mar-

ket competition.

In this context, the Vice-Chancellor suggested that TQM must be followed in Bangladesh in a large scale for its usefulness in contributing to the improvement of quality of products.

He also suggested spread of the concept of TQM among the country's chambers, universities and even in the cultural arena.

Prof Mahmud hoped that the participants would be benefited from the deliberations of the local and foreign experts and they would practically apply their acquired knowledge on TQM to their respective organisations.

Mofiuul Doula said BSTQM has been endeavouring for the improvement of quality of products and stressed the need for involvement of more people in the TQM system in industrial and other enterprises.

Anwarul Haq said the country's sick industries can be made profitable through proper application of TQM. BAAS, he said, has been engaged in human resources development in the country since 1959 through inviting experts and scholars, especially from Japan. Besides, his organisation is also running one computer centre and a Japanese language school.

Pakistan to levy tax on retail sales

KARACHI, Dec 19: Pakistan, facing a revenue shortfall, will impose a general retail sales tax of three per cent from February, officials said yesterday, reports AFP.

The tax will be introduced on six consumer items including electronics goods, automobiles, autoparts, tyres, sanitaryware and watches.

A general sales tax (GST) is already in place in Pakistan on more than 300 consumer items at the manufacturing level at rates of 15 to 18 per cent.

Items such as unprocessed foodstuff, fertilisers, sugar, vegetable oil, medicines, pesticides, petroleum products are exempted.

Pakistan has agreed with the International Monetary Fund to broaden the tax base and improve revenue collections to reduce its budget deficit to five per cent of its gross domestic product.

Revenues during the July-December, first half of the current fiscal year, will be lower by 53.879 billion rupees (1.2 billion dollars) than the target fixed, official sources said.

REB to get \$ 9m Norwegian fund for Bhola project

The Rural Electrification Board (REB) will receive over nine million US dollars from Norway for electrification of 636 villages in Bhola district under its Area Coverage Electrification (ACRE) Phase-V Programme, reports BSS.

Official sources said the Norwegian government would provide 37.42 per cent of the Taka 109 crore project aiming to bring 1.2 million villagers under electricity network.

REB has already signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Norway to receive the foreign fund to connect 31,000 subscribers to the electricity network.

The fund will be spent for setting up a Palli Biddut Samity

(PBS), building of 1700 kilometres of new distribution lines and rehabilitation of 300 kilometres of existing distribution lines in Bhola.

The sources said the Norwegian fund would mainly be spent on procurement and installation of equipment in three substations which are planned to be set up under Bhola PBS.

More donors are expected to join in funding the project. Meanwhile the government has decided to provide 62.4 per cent of the Taka 109 crore as loan to REB for twentyfive years period with a grace period of eight years at two per cent interest per annum.

The REB sources said at a

cost of Taka 109 crore, 25,000 connections would be given to domestic households, 4,000 to commercial establishments, 1,200 for creating irrigational facilities and 600 to industrial units.

The REB sources said under its ACRE Phase-V (A) eight new PBSS would be formed to extend electric services to a total of 7,27,700 households in 8,862 villages.

With completion of the Phase-IV, a total of 85,195 kilometres of distribution lines has so far been energised in the country, they said.

The length of energised lines under rural electrification will exceed 105 thousand kilometres across the country by the year 2000.

Russia wants to triple trade with India

NEW DELHI, Dec 19: Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais said Thursday trade between traditional allies Moscow and New Delhi had dipped considerably and needed to be tripled in two years, reports AFP.

Chubais told a business forum here that bilateral trade, currently estimated at 1.5 billion dollars a year, was "three to four times less than it was five years ago."

"India and Russia enjoy excellent political and cultural relations but I don't think we will be able to say the same thing about economic relations," he said.

"It must be increased to at least five billion dollars by 2000, Chubais said, adding that India's export basket, dominated by tea and heavy metals, needed to be widened.

Economic self-sufficiency must by 2005: BCI

The president of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries, Sharif M Afzal Hossain, has said economic self-sufficiency is needed for the country by the year 2005.

He was presiding over the 11th annual general meeting of the chamber in the city on Thursday, says a press release.

Hossain said unemployment has to be solved to face the economic challenges of the ensuing century.

The chamber chief said we should come forward to create employment opportunities to alleviate poverty of the rural women through setting up of rural based cottage industries.

He said all development would be hampered without economic emancipation. Economic emancipation is essential for all round development of the general mass.

He said export oriented economy is needed to face the challenges of the 21st century in the global economy. For this reason efforts should be made to set up gradually export oriented industries, intermediate industries for manufacturing raw materials, labour-intensive industries, local raw materials based industries, high tech & heavy industries.

He added, private sector should come forward with full cooperation and the govt should

play a direct role to build up private sector institutions.

He termed the economic trend of the country as positive and said that the policies adopted by the govt should be implemented at the grassroots level in order to maintain the continuity of the trend.

He said that understanding among the political parties on major economic issues like unemployment and poverty alleviation is a must and the political activities hampering economic activities should be given up.

After detailed discussions the meeting unanimously confirmed the minutes of the 10th AGM and adopted the annual report for the year 1996.

ADB okay \$4b loan to ROK, \$300m to Thailand

MANILA, Dec 19: The Asian Development Bank approved on Friday a four billion dollars loan, its largest ever, to help South Korea reform its ailing financial sector, reports AP.

The ADB loan is part of a promised 57 billion dollars bailout package coordinated by the International Monetary Fund, the largest rescue deal ever arranged by the IMF.

The ADB said the four billion dollars is a rapid response to an "exceptional and urgent crisis" in South Korea's economy.

ADB President Mitsuo Sato said the loans will help South Korea reform its finance sector by making it more reliant on market forces, and by creating independent regulatory agencies.

He said recent IMF-organized bailout packages for South Korea and two other countries hit by Asia's currency crisis — Thailand and Indonesia — will provide them with enough money to restore the confidence of international investors. However, it may take them two to three years to recover, he said.

"I am basically optimistic about the prospects for the economic future of these countries," he said.

The ADB will release the South Korean loans in four tranches over a 30-month period. The first two billion dollars will be released as soon as the loan is approved by South Korea's National Assembly.

Another one billion dollars will be released in early 1998. The Bank approved on Friday a 300 million dollars loan for Thailand which will help support the country's financial markets reform programme.

The loan, part of the ADB's contribution to a 17.2 billion dollars rescue package coordinated by the International Monetary Fund, will be released before the end of the year, the Manila-based bank said.

The ADB said the loan will support policy reforms for Thailand's domestic financial markets that will lay the foundation for sound future economic growth.

ADB President Mitsuo Sato said the Thai government's efforts so far in restructuring the financial sector "deserve high marks and strong international support."

Sato endorsed the Thai government's stabilization and structural adjustment measures. In particular, Sato commended the Thai government for deciding to permanently close 56 of 58 suspended finance companies.

Crisis in ROK IMF releases 2nd installment of rescue package

WASHINGTON, Dec 19: The IMF on Thursday expressed satisfaction with reform measures taken to date by South Korea and released the second installment worth 3.5 billion dollars of a rescue package aimed at shoring up Seoul's fragile markets, reports AP.

Michel Camdessus, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, also congratulated South Korea's President-elect Kim Dae-jung and said the Fund "looked forward to working with his administration."

Camdessus told journalists that Kim had requested a "face-to-face meeting" and added: "I hope soon to have that privilege."

In Seoul, Kim pledged support for a multi-billion dollar IMF-arranged rescue package that comes attached with strict reform requirements.

"I will fully support the market economy and abide by the agreement with the IMF," Kim declared in a statement shortly after declaring victory in South Korea's presidential election.

Seminar on fluid mechanics ends at BUET

The second international seminar on "Fluid Mechanics and Heat Transfer" concluded at the council building of Bangladesh Engineering University on Thursday, reports UNB.

Organised by the Department of Mechanical Engineering of the university, the two-day seminar was opened by BUET Vice-Chancellor Prof Iqbal Mahmud on Wednesday, said a press release yesterday.

VC of Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology Prof MH Khan, Prof MA Sharif from University of Alabama, USA, Prof AM Aziz-ul-Huq from BUET, Prof MA Hussain from Islamic Institute of Technology, Gazipur, Prof M Yaghubi from Shiraz University, Iran, Prof DK Das from BUET and Prof MS Chong from University of Melbourne were the chairmen of seven technical sessions.

A total of 100 renowned mechanical engineers, experts and academicians from USA, UK, Australia, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Singapore and host Bangladesh took part at the seminar.



LAUNCHING CEREMONY CENTER AND BM BUS



Prof M All Ashraf (left) and Rangas Managing Director, A Rouf Chowdhury (right), seen releasing balloons on the occasion.

Mitsubishi BM bus and Canter truck were formally launched in the country by Rangas Ltd at its newly built service centre for Mitsubishi cars at Tejgaon in the city on Thursday. General Manager of Mitsubishi Motor Corporation, Hiroo Ito (Left), and Rangas Managing Director, A Rouf Chowdhury (Right), seen releasing balloons on the occasion. — Star photo

OIC science body seeks financial support

ISLAMABAD, Dec 19: A ministerial committee of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) concluded a three-day meeting here yesterday night with an appeal to member states to donate funds for scientific research, reports AFP.

The 8th general assembly of the OIC standing committee on scientific and technological co-operation expressed "deep concern" over lack of necessary funding.

A resolution passed by the meeting said the committee had received only a fraction of its approved budget of 4.7 million dollars for the 1996-97 period.

The meeting was attended by 150 delegates from 34 countries, including many ministers and deputy ministers, officials said.

ICC welcomes global financial services deal

Star Business Report

International Chamber of Commerce has welcomed the global financial services agreement reached at the weekend as an achievement that should help to restore investor confidence in east Asian financial markets and boost world economic growth.

The ICC in a statement issued from Paris recently said opening up restricted financial markets to foreign competition under the agreement negotiated at the World Trade Organization in Geneva would significantly improve the potential for raising productivity and living standards throughout the world.

BKB disburses Tk 4cr loan in Rajbari

RAJBARI, Dec 19: Bangladesh Krishi Bank has set a target to disburse a Tk 12 crore agri-loan among the farmers in the current fiscal, reports UNB.

The bank already disbursed Tk 3.62 crore among 3,600 farmers in four thanas of the district in five months till November.

Meanwhile, BKB realised Tk four crore outstanding loan from 3,755 farmers during the period, bank sources said.

\$30m Kuwaiti fund for Pak power project

ISLAMABAD, Dec 19: Kuwait has signed an agreement to provide 30 million dollars for a power transmission project in Pakistan, the official news agency APP reported yesterday, according to AFP.

The fund will be provided by the Kuwait Fund, whose senior officials signed the agreement with the Pakistan government, it said.

The loan will be used to construct an electricity transmission line between Lahore and Rewat in Punjab province.

JS body on finance meets

The first meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Finance was held here at the Sangsad Bhaban with its President Prof M All Ashraf in the chair, reports BSS.

The meeting discussed the activities of the Finance Division, Economic Relations Division, Internal Resources Division and Banking Division under the ministry and reviewed progress of various development projects.

Country's economic policy, matters relating to foreign assistance, tax administration, reforms programmes of banking sector, default loan situation and foreign exchange rate also figured prominently in the discussion.

Committee members Syed Abu Hossain, SM Akram, Chitra Bhattacharya, Syed Masud Reza, AHM Mustafa Kamal and Karim Uddin Bharsa attended the meeting.

Founder of Sony dies

TOKYO, Dec 19: Sony Corp founder Masaru Ibuka, who turned a radio repair shop into a world's electronics powerhouse, died of acute heart failure Friday, the company said. He was 89, reports AP.

Under the tenure of Ibuka, Sony became one of Japan's most successful corporations as the country surged to postwar economic preeminence in the decades following its defeat in World War II.



A milad mahfil was held to mark the inauguration of Samarita Hospital at Panthapath in the city yesterday. — Star photo