

## HOME NEWS

## NEWS ROUNDUP

## Yamazaki's first Asian plant

JAPANESE MACHINE tool maker, Yamazaki Mazak, is investing \$36.5 million in a fully automated factory in Jurong, its first Asian plant outside Japan. The 15,000 sq m factory is expected to start operations by July next year and will have an R&D centre which will be linked via satellite to Yamazaki's five other R&D centres around the world.

## A \$12m boost for sports

THE GOVERNMENT has set aside \$12 million to upgrade sports facilities, said John Koh, Singapore Sports Council executive director, in the latest issue of *NTUC News*. Mr Koh was replying to a question during the recent NTUC-SSC seminar on employees' fitness for greater productivity.

## Teaming up for software push

ORACLE Corporation and Digital Equipment Corporation have teamed up to jointly market their financial software packages and systems as an alternative to traditional accounting systems. Digital has begun an education campaign worldwide to train its sales force on the Oracle packages. In turn, Oracle is training its sales people and financial support specialists on Digital's VAX/VMS and RISC/ULTRIX systems on which the Oracle programs can be run.

## Germans on a promotion tour

A WEST GERMAN TEAM will tour Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hongkong and Japan this month to woo tourists and convention delegates to Germany. Representatives from eight cities — Berlin, Bonn, Cologne, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich, Hannover and Stuttgart — and the German Touring and German National Tourist Board will conduct a seminar for the travel trade in Singapore on June 12. The topics will include tourist and economic trends in East Germany and the German re-unification.

## Greek boost for marine sector

SINGAPORE's marine and ocean engineering industry will get a boost when the Association of Singapore Marine Industries (ASMI) takes part in a maritime exhibition in Greece. Called Posidonia'90, the biennial five-day event, which starts today, will be held at the headquarters of the Greek merchant fleet in Piraeus. The ASMI pavilion, sponsored by the Trade Development Board, will comprise Keppel Shipyard, North Shipyard, Sembawang Shipyard, Van der Horst, Hitachi Zosen Singapore, Jurong Shipyard, Pan-United Shipping and Atlantis Engineering & Construction.

# Bodynits shapes up for markets in the West and Japan

Sangeeta Mulchand

HOME-GROWN company Bodynits is setting its sights further afield, having made good in Singapore and neighbouring markets.

From this year, the company which manufactures and markets swimwear and exercise-gear will market its brand of products in Europe and the US. It also plans to go into Japan "in a stronger way".

To accommodate export growth as well as increasing demand from the domestic market, Bodynits is scouting for factory space in Malaysia or Indonesia, marketing director Mrs Lynn Ho-Tan told BT. Mrs Ho founded the company with her four sisters in 1984.

With this additional space, production level can expect to go up from the current 576,000 pieces to 864,000 pieces a year.

Export, mainly to Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, currently forms about 50 per cent of the company's activities, or accounts for 288,000 garments a year.

Bodynits hopes to export an initial 20,000 pieces to Germany and United Kingdom over the 12 months starting September this year, before moving into the other European markets. Once this is accomplished, Bodynits' first port of call in the US



Looking beyond the region: Mrs Lynn Ho-Tan (left) and her four sisters planning their moves

will be California, and then Florida and the other cities in the Sun Belt.

"After that, we will move into Japan in a stronger way because there is still the mentality that Western goods are better than those manufactured in Southeast Asia," Mrs Ho said. "Once we make it in the West, it will be easier to penetrate the Japanese market," she noted.

Locally, the company also had to fight the 'imported product is the better product' mentality at first, Mrs Ho said. "Now we feel we have a corporate image strong enough to stand on our own." Meanwhile, the company is preparing to participate in the Ispo Munich Fair this year where it will show off its ranges for 1991. As in fashion wear, Bodynits pres-

ents ranges for each of the four seasons.

Bodynits was founded at the time of the aerobics craze in the early 80's. Before that, Mrs Ho and her four sisters — daughters of a provision shop owner — retailed undergarments from a shop in Katong Shopping Centre.

"We met a lot of women in this way, and we knew what they wanted," Mrs Ho

said. "At that time, many came to our shop looking for leotards, so we decided to give the (leotard) business a try." In Singapore, Bodynits displays its products over 15 counters at leading departmental stores including Metro, Sogo, Tangs and Isetan. It also has a boutique at Marina Square, and is planning open another at the end of the year.

## Transtech makes maiden payout to investors

By Claire Leow

VENTURE capital firm, Transtech Venture Management Pte Ltd has made a maiden distribution of 10 per cent of capital to its investors.

With further distributions of capital and profits to investors in the near future, the funds are expected to yield a compound annual return of some 20 per cent.

The funds totalling \$78.5 million were built up in September 1986 and were fully invested in 45 companies by the end of 1989. Ten of these have been listed since with another eight to follow within two years. This is expected to increase the portfolio value which stood at 22 per cent above the investment cost as at March 31.

The Transtech funds are backed by the Development Bank of Singapore, NatSteel Ltd, the Economic Development Board and other prominent corporate investors.

With full investment of its funds in 1989, Transtech merged its operations with Techno-Ventures Hongkong Ltd to form Transpac Venture Management Pte Ltd.

Transpac funds are aimed at selected businesses in technology-oriented private enterprises like manufacturing, food, health-care, information, communications, chemicals and environment-related services in Asean, Hongkong, Taiwan, South Korea and North America, said Dr Christopher Leong, president of Transpac and chief executive officer for its Asian operations. Transtech also has an office in California.

In March, a new Transpac fund, Asia Venture Fund, of US\$50 million was launched primarily for foreign investors.

A second fund Transpac Venture I Ltd will be launched for Singapore-based investors under the Perma-

## Glaxo sets up \$50m fund for education of Singaporeans

## ICL venture in software deal with SGH

ICL SINGAPORE and its joint-venture software firm, SW International, have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Singapore General Hospital to develop a computer system and software application for Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

Expected to be developed at a cost of \$1 million over two years, the Singapore General Maternity Adminis-

first of its kind in the world designed to provide care management and comprehensive information from pregnancy to delivery.

Mr Bill Liu, managing director of ICL Singapore, said, "Sigma will be able to run on all hardware that supports the Unix operating system, from a large mainframe to a laptop computer." The prototype will be ready in Septem-

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