

# Briefing

## Days of Counterfeit Drugs Numbered in Phnom Penh?

A machine that identifies counterfeit medication will be installed in Phnom Penh early next year, according to the president of the Swiss initiative that designed the machine. For the past three years, the College of Engineering and Architecture of Fribourg has collaborated with the University of Geneva's School of Pharmaceutical Sciences as the Pharmep Association, working to create a low-cost ECB—or Electro-phorese Capillaire Budget—machine to analyze substandard medicines circulating in developing countries. They decided to develop a system that separates different substances by the different charges, friction and mass of their molecules. The result costs just \$7,000 to build, as opposed to previously available models on the market, which typically started at \$80,000. Claude Rohrbasser, president of the Pharmep Association, said by e-mail yesterday that the ECB would be installed in the National Health Product Quality Control Center, where its director, Dr Nam Nivanna, is to oversee the project. Representatives from the NHPQCC could not be reached. *(Lucy Jordan)*