

Five-star hotel planned at Faletti's site

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had flourished to the extent of enabling some of its partners to make a bid close to one a quarter million rupees, he laughed and said that the a consortium of banks is backing the bid. AAG has stake in 4BM that is a newly established company. Faletti's is to be its first venture.

He did not deny that AAG had done well but emphasized that it had succeeded by filling a vacuum and by giving consumers, in this case the farmers, a fair and equitable deal. For instance, some of the pesticides marketed by other companies at Rs5,600 per litre had been sold by AAG at Rs1,000 for the same quantity and its cost was being further reduced to Rs700 per litre.

Qureshi was confident of nego-

Lahore
tations with one of the companies finalizing in the next 10 to 15 days; the joint venture partner would replace the consortium then, he said. He said that the profile of 4B Marketing had received positive response from all the organizations it was sent to and interpreted their attitude as trust in Pakistan and stability of the country's economic and political system in the international market.

He said that even otherwise, conditions for investment in Pakistan had become extremely favourable with the mark up scuttled from 18 per cent to 24 per cent to about four per cent and transparency established in handling all kinds of projects. Qureshi also pointed out that Pakistan's currency had remained stable and cited the

strength it had gained against dollars in the last few years, the exchange rate sliding from Rs68 to a US dollar to around Rs58.

He was also of the view that the government's policies and its stand on various international issues had boosted the confidence of foreign investors in Pakistan being 'great opportunity' for investment. This, according to him, was one of the reasons why the queries of 4B Marketing had been well received by multi-national organizations in the hotel industry.

Pressed to further explain the high bid he said that the time available for response at such auction was extremely limited. 'Our company expected a maximum bid of an amount between Rs80 to 90 million. Raising that significantly meant consulta-

tions between the representative of bidders and partners. As the difference was significant, other bidders came under pressure and this factor proved vital in our favour because the runners up withdrew after our offer," he said.

Asked if the price of Rs1.21 billion wasn't on the higher side, Qureshi said that there wasn't a single chunk of land of this size anywhere in the main parts of Lahore which made the property invaluable.

Qureshi said that the 4B's interest in Faletti's developed after the cricket match between Pakistan and India. "It was an eye-opener in the context of Lahore's potential for tourist activities in the wake of better relations between the two countries," he said.