

**Dhaka, IDB sign
3 loan accords
for power sector
tomorrow**

Islamic Development Bank will sign three loan agreements with Bangladesh government for power sector including rural electrification and infrastructure-building, reports UNB.

The agreements will be signed with IDB President Dr. Ahmed Mohammed Ali pays a one-day visit to Bangladesh on Wednesday, officials said yesterday.

IDB has provided Bangladesh with economic assistance totalling 800 million US dollars, equivalent to Tk 3,600 crore.

During the tour, Dr Ali will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to discuss matters of mutual interest and bilateral issues.

He will also call on the Finance Minister and the State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism.

The IDB President is expected to attend the 11th Convocation ceremony of Islamic Institute of Technology (IIT), Gazipur. He will go back the same day.

**JB sanctions
Tk 315 cr for
jute buying**

Star Business Report

Janata Bank has sanctioned Taka 315 crore to buy jute during the current season.

The money will be given to public and private sector jute mills, jute traders and exporters as loan, says a press release.

The bank has already issued directives to all its concerned branches for quick disbursement of the loan.

The bank's Credit Division (jute) has been monitoring the jute loan disbursement constantly.

**SB to disburse
Tk 58 cr for 11
fishery projects**

Sonali Bank has set a disbursement target of Tk 57.50 crore for its 11 ongoing fishery programmes in the current financial year to meet the local demand for protein and make the agro-based economy more production-oriented, says a press release yesterday.

The programmes have been taken up to upgrade the pisciculture as an agro-based industry.

The programmes include Credit Programme for the Poor, Swanirvar Credit Programme, Farming and Off-farming Credit Programme, BRDB and other Credit Programmes, Special Investment Programme, Credit Programme for Pond Fisheries, Credit Programme for Agri-industries, IDA Credit Programme for Shrimp Culture, Programme for traditional Shrimp Culture and Programme for Shrimp/Carp Hatchery.

Under the Special Investment Programme, 1,126 fish farmers were provided with credits amounting to Tk 10.87 crore over the last three years. Most of the loans under this programme were at the marginal level or were small entrepreneurs.

Under the Credit Programme for Agri-industries, 13 fish farms have so far been provided with credits amounting to Tk 2.50 crore approximately. Six semi-intensive shrimp projects have also been provided with credits amounting to Tk 9.25 crore.

Under the Fishery Programme, credits amounting to Tk 10.23 crore were provided for fish cultivation in 5,185 ponds across the country.

Credits amounting to about Tk 83.00 lakh were provided for 63 pond fishery projects under the Farming and Off-farming programme. In the coastal areas credits amounting to Tk 24.82 crore were distributed among 491 shrimp cultivators.

**Banking sector
suffering from
anaemia: Saifur**

SYLHET, Sept 15: The banking sector is suffering from 'anaemia' and the country's economy facing serious threat, said former finance minister Saifur Rahman, reports UNB.

He was addressing a meeting of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) at Court Point here Thursday with its district president M A Haq in the chair.

Saifur Rahman observed government's wrong policies caused a colossal loss to the national economy.

He said export business shattered, equally affecting import trade as it depends on the income from exports. And foreign investors lost interest in putting their money here".

Outlining the successes of the BNP government, Saifur said the AL government devalued currency for ten times in last ten months, which has never happened in the history of the country.

**IMF says reforms key to attracting external aid
'Resist pressure for pay hike'**

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

should be taken care of urgently.

And much will depend on reforms if Bangladesh wants to woo external assistance, according to the global monetary watchdog.

The IMF in its annual report says the government has to make "timely cuts" in spending on low-priority plans, even if they are funded with local resources.

In view of the country's low ratio of revenue to GDP ... the authorities should vigorously pursue tax administration reform, a broadening of the tax base, and elimination of tax evasion.

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State Minister for Labour and Manpower M A Mannan said the government would support all realistic approaches in manpower development and poverty alleviation by all quarters in the private and public sectors and the NGOs, reports BSS.

He expressed the hope that the efforts of ILO for community-based training approach and methodology would be helpful in reaching the training facilities at the door-steps of the rural people.

He assured that the government would consider the recommendations of the work-

A total of 30 senior government officials representing dif-

erent ministries and representatives from NGOs are taking part in the workshop.

Mannan said the present government is determined to establish the unemployed people in society specially at village level.

Director General of BMET Quazi Abdul Bayes said about 90 per cent industrial workers in Bangladesh had no formal training.

He said only two to three per cent workers were trained by different government facilities while the rest were trained by NGOs and private organisations.

market-based exchange regime".

"This would help to prevent a further decline in reserves and help the conduct of monetary policy while avoiding recourse to administrative control on imports."

According to IMF, it is important that Bangladesh put a ban on domestic credit growth by limiting the expansion of bank borrowing by the government and curbing central bank lending to commercial banks and to specialised institutions", calling for "a more independent and effective role of the central bank".

It has also spoken of a "more

lacklustre performance over the past few years ... top priority should be given to the early reform of the closely related problems in the financial sector and public enterprises."

The IMF finds satisfactory the improvements in bank supervision, but says the process of restructuring the banking system needs to be geared up.

"The authorities have to proceed quickly to develop a comprehensive programme of reform and privatisation."

"Establishing a strong record of fundamental and sustained reforms would help Bangladesh to mobilise needed external assistance," it says.

Also, to control illegal cross-border trade, the government is taking step to revive the joint checkpoints of various law-enforcing agencies which were folded up in 1995.

The government has taken several other steps to strengthen the anti-smuggling drive, including raising new 15 BOPs, constitution of a committee to amend the anti-smuggling laws, setting up central information cell in Dhaka.

The measures are being taken to embolden the tenuous position of Bangladesh Rifles, the officials said giving comparative data on the strength of BDR and their Indian counterpart, BSF.

They said the number of BSF (Border Security Force) camps in Indian border areas is about three times the BOPs (Border Out Posts) in Bangladesh with 35 to 45 personnel manning each camp.

"It is difficult to police the 4227-kilometre border with 496 BOPs manned by about 14 personnel each to cover 8 to 10km between two posts," said a BDR high official.

Anti-smuggling mission could attain its goal by mobilising people's cooperation, increasing BDR forces, amending anti-smuggling laws in the country, he viewed.

The average BDR-BSF ratio of personnel is 1:6, with which Bangladesh maintain border security.

People living in the border areas are involved in the smuggling profession due to unemployment problem, but, on the other hand, people in those areas also help provide information about smuggling.

**Argentinian
economist
becomes new
UNIDO chief**

By R. Senthilnathan

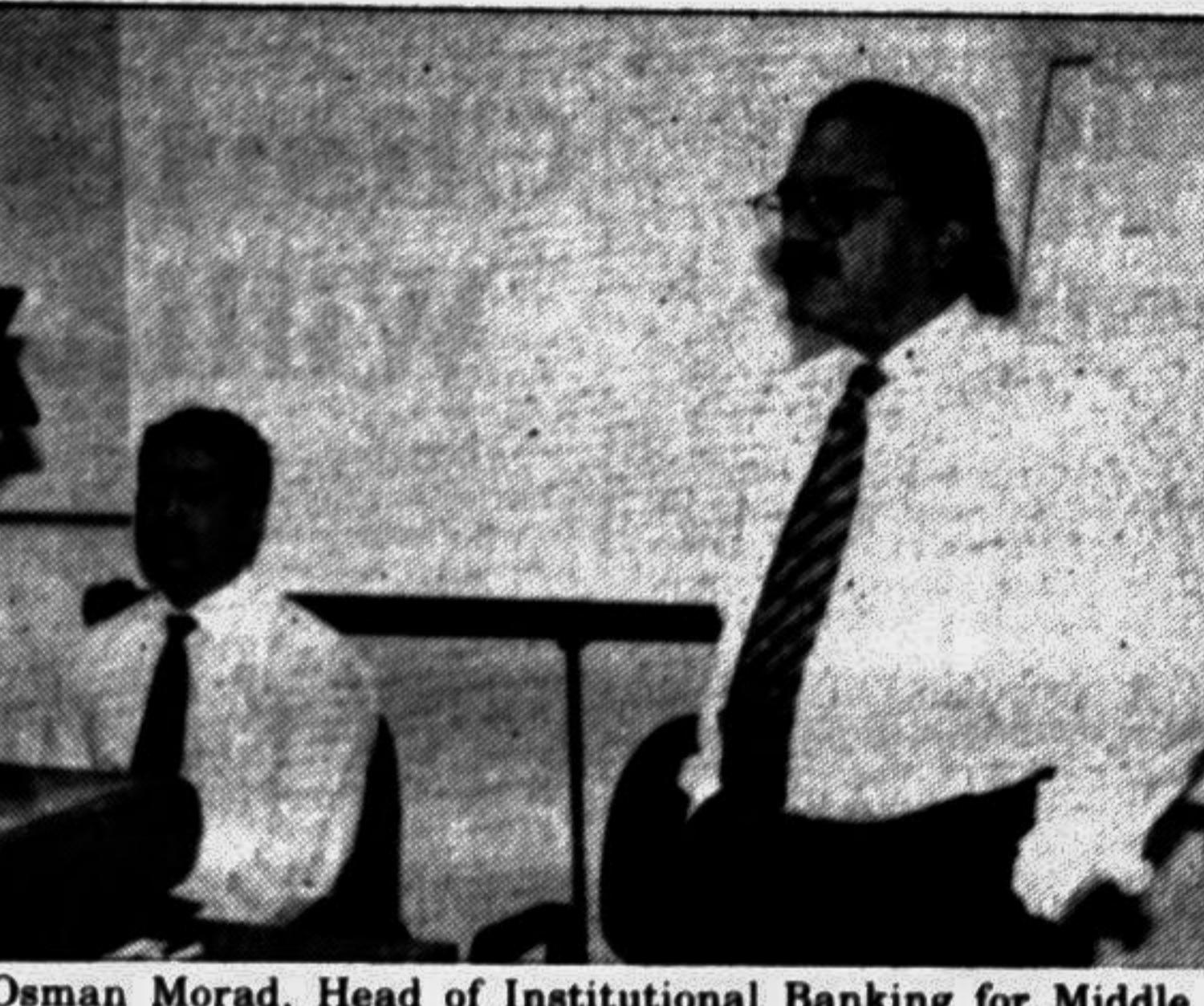
VIENNA, Sept 15: A United stand by developing countries ensured the election of a 35-year-old economist-turned-politician from Argentina as the next head of the crisis-stricken United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

At the special Industrial Development Board (IDB), the governing body of the UNIDO, Carlos Alfredo Magarinos, received 33 votes as against 15 received by his main competitor, Polish Foreign Minister, Dariusz Rosati, the Vienna-based organisation said.

The IDB has 53 members and 48 of them, including India and Pakistan, were present at the voting.

Source: India Abroad News Service

**Manpower development, poverty alleviation
Govt to support realistic approach by any quarter**



Osman Morad, Head of Institutional Banking for Middle East and South Asia, speaks in a workshop on "Banking for banks" organised by Standard Chartered Bank, Bangladesh for local commercial banks.

Bangladesh gets access to global environment facility

Bangladesh, for the first time, has got access to the global environment facility (GEF) fund through the project on coastal and wetland biodiversity management which was signed here yesterday at a simple ceremony by representatives of the government and UNDP, says BSS.

The project will initially start with a preparatory assistance of 235,000 US dollars (over Taka one crore) leading to development of a project proposal estimated at 3 million US dollars (Taka 12.5 crore).

The preparatory assistance document was signed by Abul Kalam Azad, Joint Secretary (UN), Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance and David E Lockwood, Resident Representative of UNDP.

After the signing, the UNDP Resident Representative told newsmen that the global environment facility (GEF) was created in late 1990 by the industry and developing countries to provide incremental resources to recipient countries for projects and activities that aim to protect the global environment.

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SCB workshop on 'Banking for banks' held

Star Business Report

A workshop on 'Banking for banks' for local commercial banks was held in the city yesterday.

It was organised by Standard Chartered Bank.

Manum Rashid, head of Treasury and Institutional Banking, inaugurated the workshop. Osman Morad, Regional Executive for Middle East and South Asia, was the guest of honour. says a press release.

Speaking on the occasion, Rashid focused on the bank's upgraded service capability and commitment to excellence.

Morad dwelt on the SCB's commitment to become a bank of choice for local banks. He emphasised better pricing, credit lines, service quality and above all relationship while considering the strength of a correspondent bank. He also called for timely settlement of overseas payments for overall image of the country.

CIRDAP workshop on poverty alleviation today

A day-long national workshop on "Government-NGO cooperation for poverty alleviation: capability building to alleviate rural poverty under economic adjustments," will be held in CIRDAP, Dhaka, today to discuss and suggest collaborative areas and broadening scopes of the government-NGO cooperation poverty alleviation efforts in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The workshop is a part of a research project initiated by the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) in collaboration with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

John A Ward III, Chairman & CEO of American Express Bank and President of the Travelers Cheque Group arrived in the city on a three day visit to Bangladesh. John A Smetanka, Senior Director & General Manager, receiving him at the airport.

Many projects abandoned in N-region

Govt spends huge money on exploring natural resources, but red-tape remains a barrier to extraction

NATORE, Sept 15: Many projects for exploration of mineral resources worth thousands of crore taka in the northern region of the country remained abandoned due to red-tapism and lack of initiative, reports UNB.

Many natural resources like gas, petroleum, coal, silica and china-clay were discovered in the region and the governments spent huge money in exploring the valued resources. But the works on the projects were abandoned on the way at the dismay of local people.

In Rajshahi, a survey during the 1970s showed that there are huge deposits of heavy metals like zircon, magnetite, granite and monazite in the river bed of Padma near Godagari thana.

The survey also found a high fluctuation of the "geiger counter meter", plutonium and uranium in the same area. But steps were yet to be taken to tap the valued resources.

In Shingra thana of the district. Accordingly, 77.62 acres of land was acquired in 1979 to 1980 for its exploration.

The infrastructure works like construction of houses for officers and employees, roads and administration buildings were built and a gas-well was sunk under the project. But later the exploration works were abandoned.

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A huge deposit of murcury had also been found in Gobartali in Chapainawabganj district. In 1982, Tk 5.00 crore was sanctioned for preliminary exploration of the murcury. But later, the fund was withdrawn.

The Joypurhat Cement and Lime stone project remained abandoned for about 20 years although about Tk 100 crore had already been spent on the project. Most of the machines brought for the project are still lying under the open sky.

The staff quarters, offices and other establishments remained unoccupied for after the closure of the project. It was abandoned on the plot that the extraction of lime-stone may not be commercially viable.

According to the foreign experts, the vast reserve of lime-

**Seminar told
Effective laws needed to protect creative work**

Star Business Report

Bangladesh needs to develop stronger intellectual property rights (IPR) laws in order to protect interests of local entrepreneurs. This will give them incentives to invest more, which will bring in foreign exchange for Bangladesh, according to participants of a seminar here yesterday.

Bangladesh needs it to attract investment," said President of the Copyright Society of the United States Judith M Saffer, here to attend the seminar jointly organised by the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) and the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).