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Micro Computer Controlled Automatic Washing Machine ASW-40MT
17,25,000

BKB to disburse Tk 35.13cr agri loans in Sylhet

Sylhet, Sept 25: Bangladesh Krishi Bank will disburse Tk 35.13 crore as loan among the farmers of Sylhet region during the current fiscal year, reports APB.
BKB has also set a target of realising loans worth Tk 39.82 crore and raise its security deposit to Tk 18.77 crore during the period.
The targets were fixed at the recently-held conference of its branch managers and field workers here. BKB Principal Regional Manager Mohammad Ibadat Hossain presided over the conference.
The meeting urged the BKB officials to extend adequate loan to help rehabilitate the flood-stricken farmers.

Seminar on software market today

A seminar on "How to Enter the Software Export Market" jointly organised by the Export Promotion Bureau and Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services will be held at Hotel Sonargaon at 9:30 am today.
The seminar is sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce and co-sponsored by the Ministry of Science and Technology, says a BASIS press release.
Minister for Finance S A M S Kibria will be the chief guest. Minister for Commerce and Industry Tofail Ahmed and State Minister for Planning and Science & Technology Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir will attend the seminar as special guests.

Cathy Lotito, General Counsel, Integrated Software Inc, New York, USA, and Dewang Mehta, Executive Director, NASCOM and Anil Garg, Vice President, APTECH Software, India, the keynote speakers for the seminar have already arrived in Dhaka.
More than two hundred entrepreneurs, government officials and computer professionals have already registered for this day-long seminar.

Barind project will expand to 33 thanas

PABNA, Sept 25: The government has taken a programme to extend the Integrated Barind Tract Development Project to 33 new thanas of five districts, reports APB.
The project authorities have already prepared project-proposal which has been submitted to Agriculture Ministry. However, implementation works will begin following the approval and disbursement of funds.
Sources said, 13 new thanas will be brought under the project in Dinajpur, Seven in Bogra, three in Gaibandha, five in Joypurhat and five thanas in Rangpur.
Development activities under the project include improvement of surface water resources, re-excavation of canals, construction of infrastructures for preservation of water, re-excavation of khas ponds and use of power-pumps, sinking of tubewells and distribution system of irrigation water.

It also covers construction and preservation of metal roads, afforestation, pisciculture in re-excavated ponds and development of hatcheries, crop diversification programmes, water supply programmes and joint credit programmes.
Acting Executive Director of the Barind Tract Development Project Ehsanul Karim told APB that extension of the project would help improve the standard of living of the people in the areas.

ADB mulls over quick loans for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Sept 25: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is considering a quick release of loan, close to 2 billion dollars and spread over two years for cash-strapped Pakistan, a bank official said today, reports Reuters.
Frank Polman, Programmes Manager at the ADB in Manila, told reporters in Islamabad that the loan may be close to 2 billion dollars comprising new projects and programmes that have already been discussed or were being implemented.
"This is an interim strategy for quick disbursing loans for a period of two years to respond to the cash needs of Pakistan," Polman said.
Pakistan is facing an acute foreign exchange crunch after economic sanctions were slapped on Islamabad for its nuclear tests in May in response to similar tests by rival India.
Pakistani officials say the country may have to declare a moratorium on 32 billion dollars external debt if foreign fund flows are not restored.

But the ADB, like other multilateral agencies, is bound by its rules not to initiate new programmes with countries where the International Monetary Fund has suspended its programmes.

Bid to address int'l economic issues France makes 12-point proposal for joint EU approach

PARIS, Sept 25: France yesterday made a 12-point proposal for a joint EU approach to international economic issues, which it hopes will be approved at an EU finance ministers meeting beginning in Vienna today, reports APF.
The proposal calls for a joint approach on issues ranging from EU growth to the need for economic reform in Japan, the

future of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and measures to ensure reform in Russia.
"Up until now, the EU has been mainly concerned with internal aspects of the changeover to the Euro, but it must now shoulder the responsibilities that come with its weight in the world economy, the proposal said.

"The European Union must now fully participate in the resolution of the current crisis," it added.
It urged closer collaboration with the United States and Japan to maintain growth and international monetary stability and an EU approach to the US authorities to push for rapid ratification by the US Congress of its 18 billion dollar share of

a 90 billion dollar IMF funding increase.
France called for a "concerted European initiative to express to Japanese authorities how much concern the current situation is causing" and to stress the "urgent need" to carry out promised banking sector restructuring.
Such a move was legitimate and not interference in Japan's domestic affairs, a Finance Ministry source said, because its economic woes "also involve other countries."

The proposal called for reform of the IMF, including transforming the key policy-making interim committee into a body with power to make decisions.
It also said that the four EU members not planning to join the euro single currency at its launch at bank and financial market level in January should join an exchange rate mechanism (ERM) "as soon as they deem it possible," and that countries wanting to join the EU should also join the ERM system.

Officials said France was not expecting the other 14 EU members to adopt the proposals in their entirety at the economy and finance ministers meeting in Vienna on Friday and Saturday.
But the proposals could provide some common positions ahead of the IMF and World Bank annual meetings in Washington beginning in 10 days, and provide a basis for discussion in other areas, finance ministry officials said.

NZ economy slumps into recession

WELLINGTON, Sept 25: New Zealand's economy slumped into recession as a result of drought and the prolonged Asian crisis, according to growth data released Friday by Statistics New Zealand, reports AP.
It said those industries with a strong export orientation to Asian markets had been particularly hard hit over the last two quarters.
Gross domestic product decreased by 0.8 per cent in the June quarter, following a revised contraction of 1.0 per cent in the March quarter, originally reported as minus 0.9 per cent.

A recession is defined as two consecutive quarters of negative growth and Friday's data had been widely expected to confirm that drought and a weaker international economy had tipped the New Zealand economy into recession.
The economy grew by 1.2 per cent in the year to June 1998 compared with the year June 1997. This compared with a revised 2.3 per cent growth in the year to March 1998, originally reported at 2.2 per cent and expectations of 1.4 per cent annual growth.

Government statistician Len Cook said the economy was now growing at its slowest annual rate in five years.
The fallout from the severe east coast drought and the slump in Asian export markets has been a downturn in business investment, he said.
He said businesses had cut back on investment in new plant and equipment and at the same time had run down stock levels.

"As a result internal demand contracted 0.4 per cent in spite of lifts in household and government spending. With the downturn in key export mar-

kets, export volumes fell for a second consecutive quarter, further adding to the contraction in GDP," he said.
In the financial markets the data forced a further weakening in overall monetary conditions, mostly through a decline in interest rates.
Ninety-day bank bills, off which floating home mortgages are priced, fell to 5.48 per cent immediately after the data from 5.59 per cent before it was released.

Jakarta farmers demand agrarian reform

JAKARTA, Sept 25: Irrate farmers demonstrated outside the Parliament in the capital Thursday and called for agrarian reform while others in a nearby city demanded the return of land allegedly seized by former President Suharto two decades ago, reports AP.
About 300 farmers and students assembled outside the gates of the legislatures as about 100 riot police looked on.
Many farmers are among the worst hit by a deep economic crisis now gripping the world's fourth most populous nation.

The protesters said they wanted soaring prices to be controlled and a liberalisation of land ownership.
Thursday was Indonesian National Farmers Day.
Meanwhile in Bogor, 60 kilometers (40 miles) south of Jakarta, about 20 police officers, equipped with tear gas canisters and sticks were on hand, when 200 farmers staged a peaceful protest at a local government office.
"Return the people's land looted by Suharto," read one protest banner.

Business Briefs

Japan's auto output falls by 8.6 pc

TOKYO: Japan's auto production fell 8.6 per cent in August from the same month last year for the 11th straight month of decline, the Japan Automobile Manufacturers' Association said Friday.
The country's automakers made 613,532 cars, trucks and buses in August, the association said.
Truck production was cut the most, falling 16.6 per cent.
The decline in production reflects sluggish consumer spending in Japan, which is suffering from its severest recession in decades.

Japan's big three automakers all cut production in August. Toyota Motor Corp., Japan's biggest auto company, made 186,322 vehicles, a 7.7 per cent fall. Nissan Motor Co. cut production 9.2 per cent to 96,041. Honda Motor Co. production fell 10.8 per cent to 77,416.

Mitsubishi Motors Corp., Mazda Motor Corp. and Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd were the only companies among Japan's eleven automakers to boost production.
Production at truck specialists Hino Motors Ltd and Nissan Diesel Motor Co. nosedived, with declines of 53.0 per cent and 44.2 per cent respectively.

Indonesia to open up skies further

JAKARTA: Hoping to boost Indonesia's sagging tourism industry, President B J Habibie has reportedly decided to further open up his country's skies to foreign airlines.
"I, as a president, have decided to allow every foreign airline to carry passengers from its home base and fly to any destination (in Indonesia)," Habibie was quoted by local newspaper saying.
He made the comments in a speech to tourism operators on Thursday, but did not elaborate.

The tourism industry has suffered in the wake of riots and protests last May, which forced Habibie's autocratic predecessor ex-president Suharto to relinquish power after 32 years in office.
Tourism numbers have continued to suffer in some areas due to protests and outbreaks of sporadic violence, much of it generated by the worst economic crisis in 30 years.

Indonesia's airlines are facing massive problems because of the crisis. Passenger numbers have dwindled and the carriers have been squeezed by a dramatic drop in the value of the rupiah, Indonesia's currency.
Most of the airlines' majority is in rupiah, while the majority of costs and debts are denominated in dollars.

Millionaire to fund anti-euro campaign

LONDON: A millionaire businessman said Thursday he will spend 20 million pounds (\$30 million) to help form a group to campaign against Britain's proposed membership of the single European currency.
Paul Sykes said that the organisation, to be called the Democracy Movement, will spell out the dangers of Britain's proposed membership of the euro and aimed to become the largest and most effective anti-European federalist group in Britain.

Sykes said the movement would avoid party politics and appeal directly to Britain's electorate with information about how the euro would damage the country.
"It is going to be a politician-free zone," Sykes said at the London news conference. "This is much, much too important for political parties or individual politicians. It is a people's movement."
Tony Blair's Labour government, still popular with voters, has said that it favors entry into the euro early in the next century, although polls show most Britons are suspicious of the new currency.

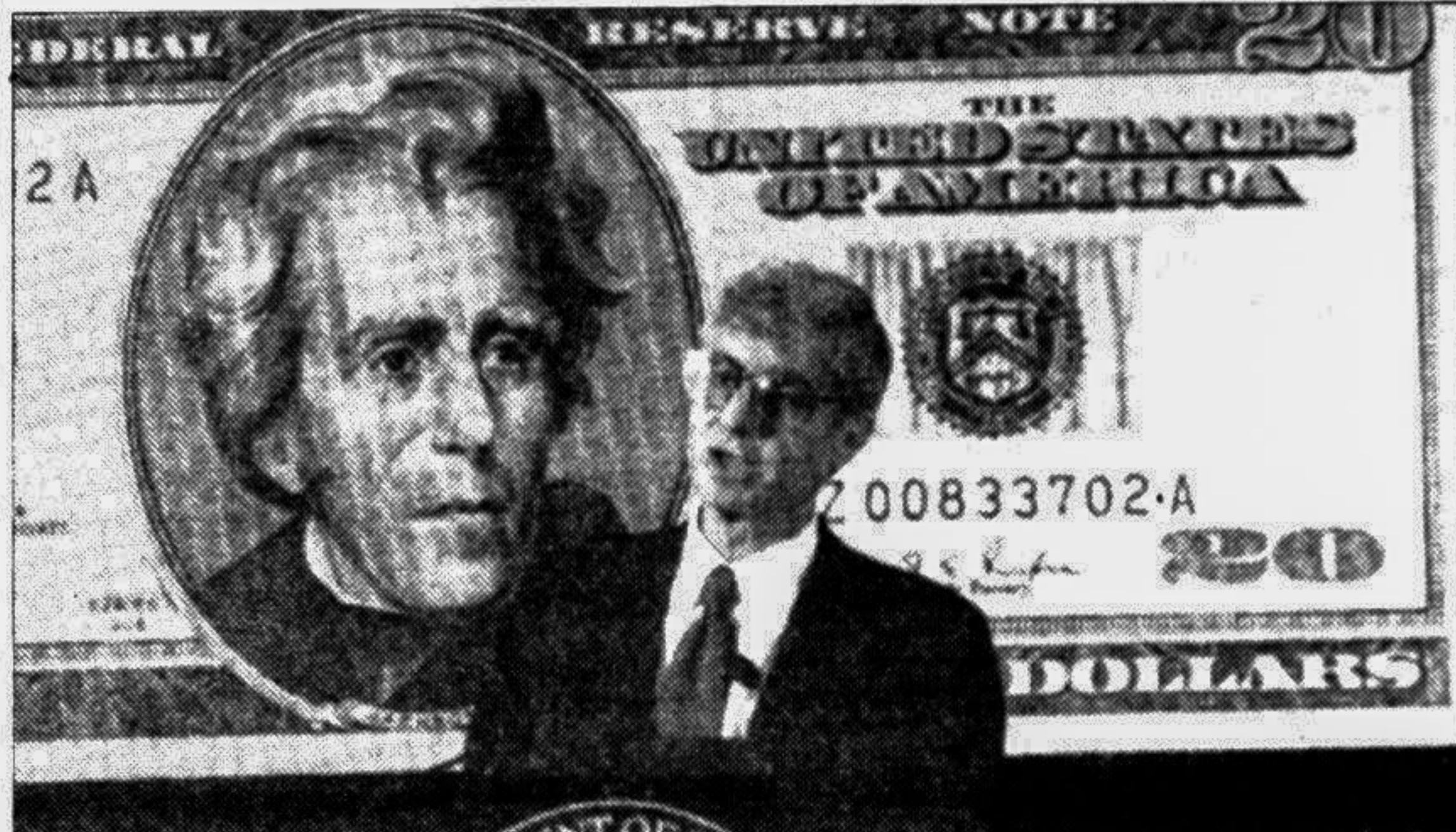
The euro is being launched in 11 European Union countries on Jan 1, 1999. Notes and coins won't go into circulation until 2002.

EVA Air may sue a gossip magazine

TAIPEI: Taiwan's EVA Air on Friday hinted it may sue a gossip magazine that predicted one of its planes would crash on a flight from Kuala Lumpur.
The racy First Hand weekly quoted a fortune teller in an August issue saying that EVA flight BR37 would crash on Sept 23. The report had no apparent impact on ticket sales for the flight, and the plane landed safely Wednesday night, the airline said.

EVA dispatched the head of flight operations and chief steward to join the flight to boost crew morale, but said it didn't take any other special measures in response to the report.
EVA will consider taking legal action against the magazine if it publishes further articles on the subject, the airline said.

— Source: AP



Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin holds a news conference Thursday at the Treasury Department in Washington where he announced the release of the new \$20 bill. The bill will not be available to the general public for several weeks and the Treasury Department says that the new redesigned bill will be harder to counterfeit. — AP/UNB photo

Tough task ahead for HK to restore investor confidence

HONG KONG, Sept 25: Hong Kong officials head to the world monetary talks next week with the tough task of convincing the world the territory remains a free market despite the government's stock buying spree, reports APF.
The annual IMF-World Bank talks in Washington are seen as crucial for Hong Kong to restore investor confidence in its reputation as an open economy, badly dented by August's market intervention.

"I tend to believe the US side will at best be intransigent," said Professor Joseph Cheng of the contemporary China research centre at City University.
"It will be difficult for (financial secretary) Donald (Tsang) and other officials to

convince them in just one meeting," he added.
US Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan criticised the intervention in congressional testimony last week, saying the consequences of the intervention "erode some of the extraordinary credibility that the Hong Kong Monetary Authority has achieved."

The position is a sharp turnaround for Hong Kong — host to last year's Annual International Monetary Fund-World Bank Conference.
At that time the territory won high praise for its open markets, sound economic fundamentals and prudent fiscal policy.
IMF officials then admitted privately that the turmoil already ravaging Thailand's

economy and markets was likely to spread to a couple of other Asian economies.
But no one predicted Hong Kong would be so hard hit, or that it would embark on a war against speculators culminating in the decision to spend at least eight billion US dollars buying blue-chip stocks.

Some brokers estimate the final bill for the buying spree will amount to a whopping 15 billion dollars.
"I imagine it will be a cause for concern for the delegates at the IMF," said Vickers Ballas Research Director Andrew Fernow.
"The view held by many is that the government acted hastily and would be ill advised to continue," he added.

SIA reinstates discounted fare for maids

SINGAPORE, Sept 25: Singapore's flagship airline has reinstated a popular discounted fare for Filipino maids working in the island republic one day after scrapping it, according to a statement from the carrier on Friday, reports AP.
After Philippines Airlines ceased operations on Wednesday, handling Singapore Airlines (SIA) a monopoly on the busy route, the carrier effectively doubled all its fares to Manila by eliminating existing discounts and said the special deals for the maids would also go.

But the Friday statement reverse the unpopular decision, which would have burdened the estimated 100,000 Filipino maids in Singapore and their employers with airfare three times the price of the special deal.
BEIJING, Sept 25: China, which is facing a modest economic slowdown in the face of serious flooding and the Asian financial crisis, on Wednesday started heralding its economic achievements over the last 20 years, reports APF.
Both the official Xinhua news agency and the China Daily launched a series of articles praising Beijing's 20 years of economic reforms, even though the anniversary does not fall until December of this year.
"The iron hand of a centralised economy is giving way to the invisible hand of the market, and as a result China's gross domestic product (GDP) has surged from 43.6 billion dollars in 1979 to 7.5 trillion dollars in

China heralding 20 years' gains Private ownership proves stimulus to economy

1997," The China Daily said.
"Private ownership has proved a stimulus to the Chinese economy, which was on the brink of bankruptcy in 1978," it added.
China's late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping pushed through an economic reform programme at an extraordinary meeting of the central committee of the ruling Communist Party from December 18-22, 1978.

The decision came after the ravages of the Great Leap Forward (1966-1976) and policies of isolation had brought the nation's economy to its knees.
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Corruption threatens humanitarian aid flow to Indonesia: WB

JAKARTA, Sept 25: Corruption is threatening billions of dollars worth of international humanitarian aid meant for Indonesia's dramatically growing number of poor, a visiting World Bank official has warned, says AP.
"It is crucial to ensure that fund leakage in social safety net programmes is not tolerated," said visiting senior World Bank official Katherine Marshall.

The government needs to treat this matter with the utmost seriousness," newspapers Monday quoted her as saying.
Indonesia is enduring its worst economic crisis in 30 years.
It estimates that about 40 per cent of its 202 million people have slipped below the poverty line. Many of them face dire food shortages as the price of rice and other food soars.
The World Bank has helped marshal about 14 billion dollars in international aid, including food and medicine, to

help alleviate the suffering.
Marshall, who completed an anti-corruption fact-finding mission to Indonesia over the weekend, said the bank wanted tough measures to protect the aid from corrupt local officials.
After talking with government officials and non-government organization she said the World Bank is "persuaded that corruption is an obstacle to helping those hurt most by the economic crisis."
The World Bank has offered to assist Indonesia fight graft after the bank was stung by allegations in an internal bank memorandum that between 20 and 30 per cent of its aid loans to the sprawling Southeast Asian nation has been siphoned off by local officials.

The bank's representative in Indonesia, Dennis de Tray, has disputed the figure, but admits that corruption has been a major problem.
"Now we need concrete ac-

tion to demonstrate that the government is delivering on its commitment to combat the cancer of corruption," de Tray said in a statement.
"Indonesia's fight against corruption is crucial to the country's recovery from the crisis," he said.
But he also said the fight to end corruption would be a marathon effort that could take generations.
The push to clean up how Indonesia is governed follows last May's resignation of President Suharto who gave up 32 authoritarian years in power after riots and protests.
His successor President BJ Habibie has ordered an investigation into corruption during the Suharto era.
Officials are to meet with Suharto soon over allegations that he illegally amassed a fortune and stashed millions of dollars away in foreign bank accounts before he quit.



Currency dealers work beneath a dollar-yen quotation board flashing 135.45 yen at the Tokyo Foreign Exchange as the dollar fell against yen Friday morning. The dollar cost 135.03 yen as of late Friday morning; down 1.77 yen from late Thursday in Tokyo. — AP/UNB photo

European shares dance to irregular Wall Street tune

LONDON, Sept 25: European stocks danced to the irregular tune of Wall Street yesterday, in a display of the stark volatility that has marked equities in recent months, ending lower after renewed weakness across the Atlantic, reports APF.
European markets had surged in early trade, as dealers seized on comments by Federal Reserve Board chief Alan Greenspan as signalling an imminent cut in US rates. But early losses on the US market plunged Europe back into the red, as sellers locked in profits after the initial surge.

In London, the FT-SE 100 index of leading shares closed 0.90 per cent, or 47.1 points, lower at 5,167.6 points after an opening burst that had taken the market 2.04 per cent higher

than Wednesday's closing price.
German stocks fell by 1.13 per cent to 4,646.25 points, having lost opening gains of 2.16 per cent.
In Paris, the CAC 40 index closed 1.25 per cent down at 3,381.13 points, having reversed opening gains of 2.83 per cent.
The Dutch Stock Exchange closed 0.12 per cent down, after posting initial gains of 2.43 per cent, and the Madrid market gave up 1.54 per cent.

European markets took initial delight at Greenspan's testimony to a US Senate committee and the ensuing surge on Wall Street and the Asian markets overnight.
Europe warmed to the fifth-biggest rise ever seen on Wall

Street during a single session as the Dow Jones surged by 3.26 per cent Wednesday after Greenspan's speech.
But shares fell back on profit-taking and fresh losses in the United States, where the Dow Jones was down almost 60 points in late European trade.
Dealers across Europe had rubbed their hands in glee at the possible lifeline of cheaper money in the United States.
Analysts at Paribas trading house, Nick Parsons, said: "The implications for Fed policy could not be more obvious: A rate cut of at least 25 basis points is coming at the September 29 Federal open market committee (meeting)."
A cut in interest rates equities as

the benefits of holding cash decline.
"Those hints about lower interest rates are going to push US higher and the market thinks it will happen soon," one Paris dealer said.
Greenspan told the Senate committee: "Deteriorating foreign economies and their spillover to domestic markets have increased the possibility that the slowdown in the growth of the American economy will be more than sufficient to hold inflation in check."
He identified damaging "clouds from Asia" that threatened to unleash a downpour on the US economy. A fall in exports to traditional markets in Asia prompted a sharp fall in

US growth from 5.5 per cent in the first quarter to 1.6 per cent in the second.
Before the rain starts to pour, Greenspan said, the Fed was determined to bring the existing instabilities to a level of stability reasonably shortly to prevent the contagion from spreading and creating some very significant further difficulties for all of us."

The Fed needs to set the cost of borrowing in the United States next Tuesday, cheaper money would, in theory, help lift disappointing US corporate earnings and sluggish consumer spending there.
Invigorated US spending may also help Asian economies trying desperately to export their way out of recession.

Analysts have been on the alert for lower rates for weeks now, they interpreted a pledge made last Monday by finance ministers and central bank governors from the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations to maintain growth and avoid the risk of a recession as the prelude to lower rates.
But Bundesbank President Hans Tietmeyer countered that "it would be wrong to see ... a signal of a general monetary easing."
He insisted that "the situation in the United States is different from that in continental Europe" and that for the moment there was "no reason for an easing of monetary conditions in continental Europe" in view of a resurgent European economy.