

Free legal aid for Bangladeshis in India

BSS, Dhaka

Two non-government organisations of Bangladesh and India have signed a five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) to provide legal aid for Indian citizens in Bangladesh and Bangladeshi citizens in India free of cost.

Under the agreement, the Bangladeshi NGO will provide legal aid for Indian citizens while the Indian organisation will offer the same to Bangladeshi citizens.

The MOU was signed by Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST) and Legal Aid Services in West Bengal (LASWEB) of India. Vice-president of BLAST

Justice Naimuddin Ahmed and chairman of LASWEB Justice DK Basu signed the MOU, said a press release. The legal aid will also cover, if needed, cheaper travel expenses to the citizens up to crossing the border, subject to necessary government permission.

C'wealth Heads of Govt Meeting begins Dec 5

FM leaves for Nigeria

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan left for Nigeria yesterday to lead the Bangladesh delegation at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in the Nigerian capital of Abuja from December 5 to 8.

Foreign Secretary Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury is on the five-member Bangladesh delegation.

The special theme of this year's CHOGM is 'Development and Democracy: Partnership for Peace and Prosperity'.

Dhaka will highlight the achievements in building democratic institutions and establishing the rule of law, independence of judiciary and human rights in Bangladesh and share experience with the member states.

The Millennium Development Goals and multilateral trade issues will figure high on the agenda, officials said.

Morshed Khan will also take part in pre-CHOGM meetings, including the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) meeting and Ministerial Group on Small States (MGSS) meeting.

The CMAG would discuss, among others, restoration of Commonwealth memberships of several countries, including Pakistan and Zimbabwe.

The Commonwealth summit would deal with the question of reconstruction of the CMAG as well as election of a new secretary general of the forum. The four-year

term of incumbent Secretary General Don McKinnon expires on March 31, 2004.

New Zealand has been campaigning for a second stint for McKinnon. Sri Lanka has recently named its former foreign minister

Lakshman Kadirgamar, advisor to the Lankan president, for the coveted post.

The CHOGM will conclude on December 8 with the adoption of the Final Communiqué.

Robbery at lawyer's house in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Armed robbers looted cash, ornaments and other valuables from the residence of a lawyer in the city's Chandanpura area under Kotwali thana yesterday.

Police said the robbery took place at the residence of Tushar Singha Hazra, a lawyer of the Judge Court, at around 11.30am.

A gang of four robbers entered the house by ringing the calling bell.

They took the inmates hostage at gunpoint as soon as the door was opened and looted cash worth Tk 60,000, some valuables and gold ornaments weighing around 10 tola.

Tushar Hazra filed a case with the Kotwali Police Station in this regard.

