



PRESS RELEASE



For immediate release

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EU Diplomats to visit CHT

A high-level delegation comprising representatives of all resident diplomatic missions of the European Union in Dhaka will start a three-day visit to the Chittagong Hill Tracts on 22 March to see first hand the ongoing humanitarian relief effort in Mahalchari, meet with local leaders and government officials and visit development projects.

Those participating in the visit are: Mr Sjef IJzermans, Ambassador of the Netherlands (Local EU Presidency); Dr David Carter, British High Commissioner; Dr Pietro Ballero, Ambassador of Italy; Mr Borje Mattsson, Ambassador of Sweden; Mr Esko Kentrschynskij, Ambassador of the European Commission; Mrs Fabienne Drout, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of France; Mr Tom Hansen, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Denmark; Mr Hermann Nicolai, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Germany; Mrs Anne Marchal, First Secretary, European Commission; and Mr Alan Shaw, Second Secretary, British High Commission.

The visit is facilitated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through the Agency's newly established Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility (CHTDF) office in Rangamati. The UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh, Mr Jorgen Lissner will join the visit, accompanied by UNDP officials.

Initially the high-level EU delegation will visit the Mahalchari villages where communal violence robbed more than 400 families of their homes and livelihoods on 26 August 2003. The European Union has provided most of the funding towards the ongoing humanitarian assistance project in Mahalchari, which is implemented by UNDP together with other UN agencies in order to restore family and community livelihoods in the villages.

Following the visit to Mahalchari, the EU diplomats will attend the first ever Khagrachari Leadership Meeting on the theme of 'Partnership for Development,' in the presence of Hill District Council leaders and the Deputy Commissioner, amongst others. The tour will continue to Rangamati where the EU diplomats will visit some of the 120 communities participating in the UNDP programme for the "Promotion of Development and Confidence Building in the Chittagong Hill Tracts". In addition, the EU diplomats will have meetings with the Rangamati Deputy Commissioner, the Chairman of the Hill District Council and the CHT Regional Council.

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