

Dhaka Day by Day

Where Skin Colour Counts

by Farah Ghuznavi

There are few people who would deny that we live in a society which is extremely colour-conscious. If we actually sat back and counted the number of times a week that we hear other people make comments on this subject, as in "So-and-so has become so dark — he/she looks terrible!" or "I feel sorry for that girl; she is so dark that no-one will ever marry her", it would probably appall many of us. Comments such as these are made about both sexes, but it is probably true to say that they are much more frequently and negatively made about women than men. After all, in a society which prizes beauty in women above all other qualities, if the word for beauty ("shundor") has become interchangeable with the word for fair ("farsha"), that is perhaps not an altogether surprising result!

Yet few people think about how harmful attitudes like this can be. Most darker-skinned individuals have felt the burden of such attitudes at one time or another. In extreme cases, they have even had quite traumatic effects on the people concerned. I have two friends, who also happen to be sisters. One of them is extremely fair, and the other is not particularly so. Yet despite the fact that the latter is very pretty and has lovely skin, she became so sick of constantly hearing herself compared (unfavourably, of course) to her sister, that at one stage she became a virtual recluse. I am happy to say that this phase has finally been relegated to the past, due to the efforts of her friends and family, but for the major part of her teenage years and early adulthood, she suffered badly as a result of comments from stupid and insensitive people, who were rather too free with their opinions.

In another, even more extreme case, a colleague's cousin was frequently teased for looking different from the rest of her lighter-skinned family. When she was younger, some people even suggested, rather cruelly, that she was in fact adopted. Although she has never discussed it with her family, she still carries that fear around with her (at some level, she obviously believed them), and has told her cousin (my colleague) that she only wishes that she had a birth certificate (she was not born in a hospital), so that she could check and make sure that the people who have brought her up really are her parents. This uncertainty still haunts her despite the fact that she is now

twenty-seven years old. The fact that our society can inflict such intense and completely unnecessary pain on some of its members is certainly one of the strongest indictments of these attitudes that I can think of.

The stories about such views and the incidents that they give rise to range from the unpleasant (as above) to the absurd, and on occasion, the downright bizarre. A friend of a friend, Ejaz, recently came across yet another fringe benefit of having markedly fair skin. When he was attempting to park quite illegally in a private parking space in Dhaka city, the guard at the parking lot came running up to him, brandishing a stick and barking out warnings to halt immediately. Without missing a beat, Ejaz said (in his snottiest English accent), "I'm in a tremendous hurry. I'm just trying to park my car. Okay?" To his amusement, the guard (thinking he was a foreigner) not only lowered the arm holding the stick, he saluted smartly, and said, "Yes, sir! And lest you think this incident was a one off, he managed to pull it off again when he parked his car in the driveway of a popular Indian restaurant in Dhaka a few days ago!

And one of the most bizarre incidents of this type that I have come across happened to another friend of ours (who is also very fair), who was flying on an internal flight to Dhaka. On the plane, Rayad was sitting some distance away from his parents. The garrulous individual sitting next to him at first tried talking to him in heavily accented English. After Rayad had repeatedly informed him that he himself was a Bangalee, and suggested that his neighbour continue the conversation in Bangla, the man was quite taken aback and informed him that he did not look at all like a Bangalee. Then he wanted to know if either of Rayad's parents were foreigners. Rayad patiently informed him that this was not the case, and pointed out his parents (neither of whom are as fair as he is). His neighbour then scrutinised them unabashedly for some time, and then scrutinised Rayad quite minutely as well, before pronouncing his view that, "Ogulo apnar parents? Tahole apnader family-tey kono zenetic flaw assey" ("Those are your parents? Then there is some kind of 'genetic' — i.e. genetic — flaw in your family!")

Dr KT Hossain dead

Dr Khandaker Toffazal Hossain (KT Hossain), Professor of Economics, Dhaka University, died of brain haemorrhage here at Suhrawardy Hospital yesterday. He was 65, reports UNB.

He left behind his wife, three sons and two daughters. He was buried at Banani graveyard yesterday evening. Earlier his namaz-e-janaza was held at Dhaka University central mosque after Asr prayers.

Born on March 2, 1931 at Ghatanti village in Bhupur thana of Tangail district, KT Hossain joined Dhaka University as a lecturer in 1954. He was promoted to the post of Associate Professor in 1965 and Professor in 1974.

He retired from Dhaka University on June 30, 1991 but was reappointed as Professor till his death.

Quikhwani of the deceased will be held at House 16, Road 14, Sector No 3, Uttara after Asr prayers on Friday.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof Emajuddin Ahmed has expressed deep sorrow at the death of Prof KT Hossain.

He prayed for salvation of the departed soul and expressed sympathy for the members of the bereaved family.

Adviser for Finance and Planning Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud also expressed profound shock at the death of KT Hossain.

In a condolence message the Adviser said the nation has lost a dedicated educationist in the death of KT Hossain.

Tribute to Khapra Ward victims

Glowing tributes were paid yesterday to the memory of "Khapra Ward" victims at a discussion organised by the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) in observance of the "Khapra Ward Shaheed Day," reports BSS.

The speakers at the discussion said that the "Khapra Ward" incident was the first protest against the Pakistani dictatorship when the communist political prisoners through their sacrifices had set up a milestone in the democratic struggle of this country.

They paid tributes to Comrade Bijon Sen, Hanif Sheikh, Kamparam Singh, Delwar Hossain, Anwar Hossain, Sudhin Dhar and Shukun Bhattacharya — who were killed in the indiscriminate firing by the police in the "Khapra Ward" of Rajshahi Jail in 1950.

Presided over by Comrade Shahidullah Chowdhury, the meeting was addressed, among others, CM Mujahidul Islam Selim, Sunil Roy, Ashraf Hossain Ashu, Ruhin Hossain Prince, Shaheen Rahman, Kazi Sajjad Zahir, Anjar Roy, Mostafizur Rahman Masud and Aslamuddin.

Quikhwani

By Staff Correspondent

Quikhwani of Nafis Sadik Kanak will be held after Asr prayers tomorrow at 16/D Chamelbagh in the city.

Kanak, a student of Dhaka College, was shot dead by some miscreants at New Elephant Road on April 21.

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NSU admission test results

The results of the admission test for the summer session of the North South (NSU) University have been announced, says a press release.

A total of 104 students were selected for admission into the undergraduate programmes, says a press release.

Among them, two were selected on the basis of their TOEFL and SAT scores while another two on transfer basis.

Following are the list of the successful candidates:

503, 504, 506, 507, 508, 510,
516, 518, 520, 521, 523, 525,
527, 531, 536, 537, 539, 542,
544, 547, 548, 552, 554, 560,
561, 563, 564, 566, 574, 576,
578, 579, 580, 581, 588, 589,
590, 594, 600, 602, 604, 605,
610, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617,
619, 620, 621, 622, 627, 628,
632, 633, 634, 636, 639, 642,
643, 644, 646, 647, 649, 650,
651, 655, 656, 659, 660, 665,
674, 675, 676, 681, 683, 685,
686, 689, 693, 696, 699, 704,
709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 720,
724, 725, 727, 730, 736, 741,
743, 746, 747, 753, 754, 755,
759, 760.

What's on today....

Condolence meet at DU: The Dhaka University authorities have organised a condolence meeting on former Vice-Chancellor of Prof Fazlul Halim Chowdhury and Md Abdul Mannan, former Associate Professor at Islamic Studies Department of the University. Venue: TSC seminar room. Time: 12 noon.

Seminar on management: Rapport Bangladesh Ltd has organised a video management seminar on managing executives stress. Time: 5:30 pm.

Talk on democracy, bureaucracy: The Society for Rule of Law has organised a discussion meeting on 'Democracy and bureaucracy' marking its 11th founding anniversary. Venue: Jatiya Press Club. Time: 4 pm.

Bangla film show: Dhaka Film Club and Sergei Banderchuk Film Club have organised the screening of Bangla films. 'Debdas' will be screened today. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre auditorium. Time: 6 pm.

BSAF press confce: Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum will hold a press conference to press for inclusion of the issue of child rights in the election manifestos of all political parties. Venue: Jatiya Press Club. Time: 5 pm.

Drama show: The premiere show of the Dhaka Little Theatre production 'Kafin' will be held. Venue: German Cultural Centre. Time: 7 pm.

Baridhara Block 'J' Assoc: An emergency general meeting of the Baridhara Block 'J' Allottees' Association will be held. Venue: Prime Travels, Eastern View, 2nd floor, 50 DIT Exit-Road, Fakirpool. Time: 5 pm.

Satyajit Film Session: Organised by Rainbow Film Society and International Film Critic Association of Bangladesh. Film: Devi (The Goddess). Director: Satyajit Ray. Time: 6:00 pm. Venue: Indian High Commission auditorium.

Weather

Thundershower forecast

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Dhaka, Sylhet divisions and the regions of Rajshahi, Pabna, Bogra, Noakhali, Comilla, Kushtia and Jessore in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office says weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere across the country.

Day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged throughout the country.

Country's highest temperature 36.2 degree Celsius was recorded at Sathkira and the lowest 18.6 degrees at Srimangal yesterday.

The sun sets today at 6:25 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:31 am.

The maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	max	min	humidity in percentage
Dhaka	33.0	21.5	77
Chittagong	33.1	21	78
Rajshahi	34.2	21.8	66
Khulna	34.5	22.2	72
Barisal	33.7	20.4	70

Australia keen to send polls observers

Australian High Commissioner Kenneth William Aspinall called on Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman at his office yesterday, reports BSS.

The High Commissioner conveyed to the Chief Adviser the felicitations of the Australian government on assumption of his office.

During discussion, they expressed satisfaction at the existing bilateral relations between the two countries.

The up coming parliamentary election in Bangladesh also came up for discussion in the meeting. The Australian High Commissioner said his country intends to send observers in the election. The Chief Adviser welcomed the idea.

The Chief Adviser urged the Australian government to import more Bangladeshi goods. He also requested the Australian authority to raise the number of Australian scholarships for Bangladeshi students.

1600 Imams to be imparted training

Imam Training Academy will train 1,600 imams of different mosques of the country during the current financial year to help change the socio-economic conditions of rural masses, reports BSS.

This was informed at a certificate giving ceremony of the imams organised by the academy under Islamic Foundation in the city yesterday.

One hundred and twenty-two imams were given two months training on practical and theoretical aspects.

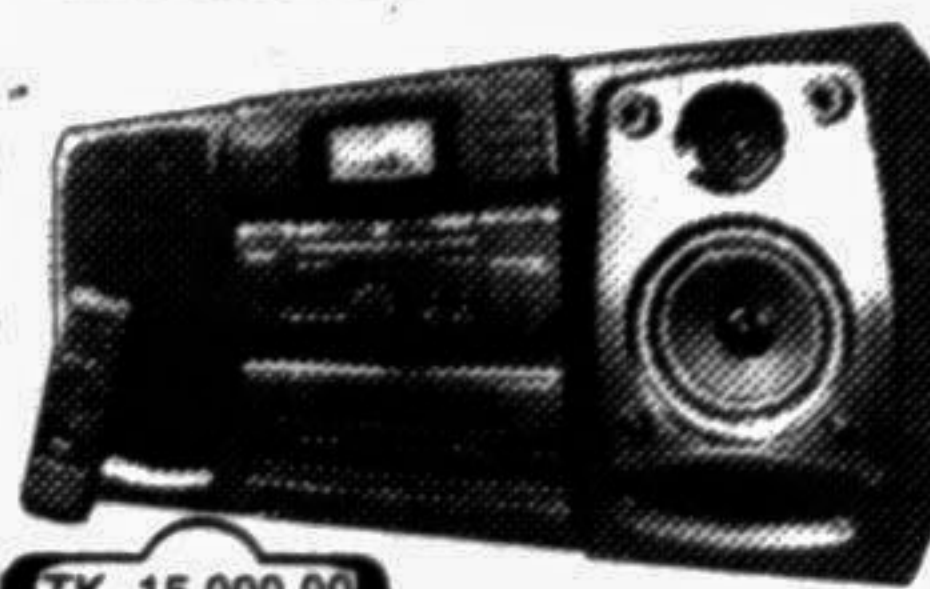
Secretary in charge of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Dr Joardar Abdur Rashid was present as the chief guest while Director, Imam Training Academy Mufazzal Hossain Khan presided over the function.

It was also informed that since the establishment of the Imam Training Academy in 1979, a total of 35,474 imams were given training.

The chief guest in his address urged the imam to apply the knowledge they had acquired from the training so that the people of their locality were benefitted.



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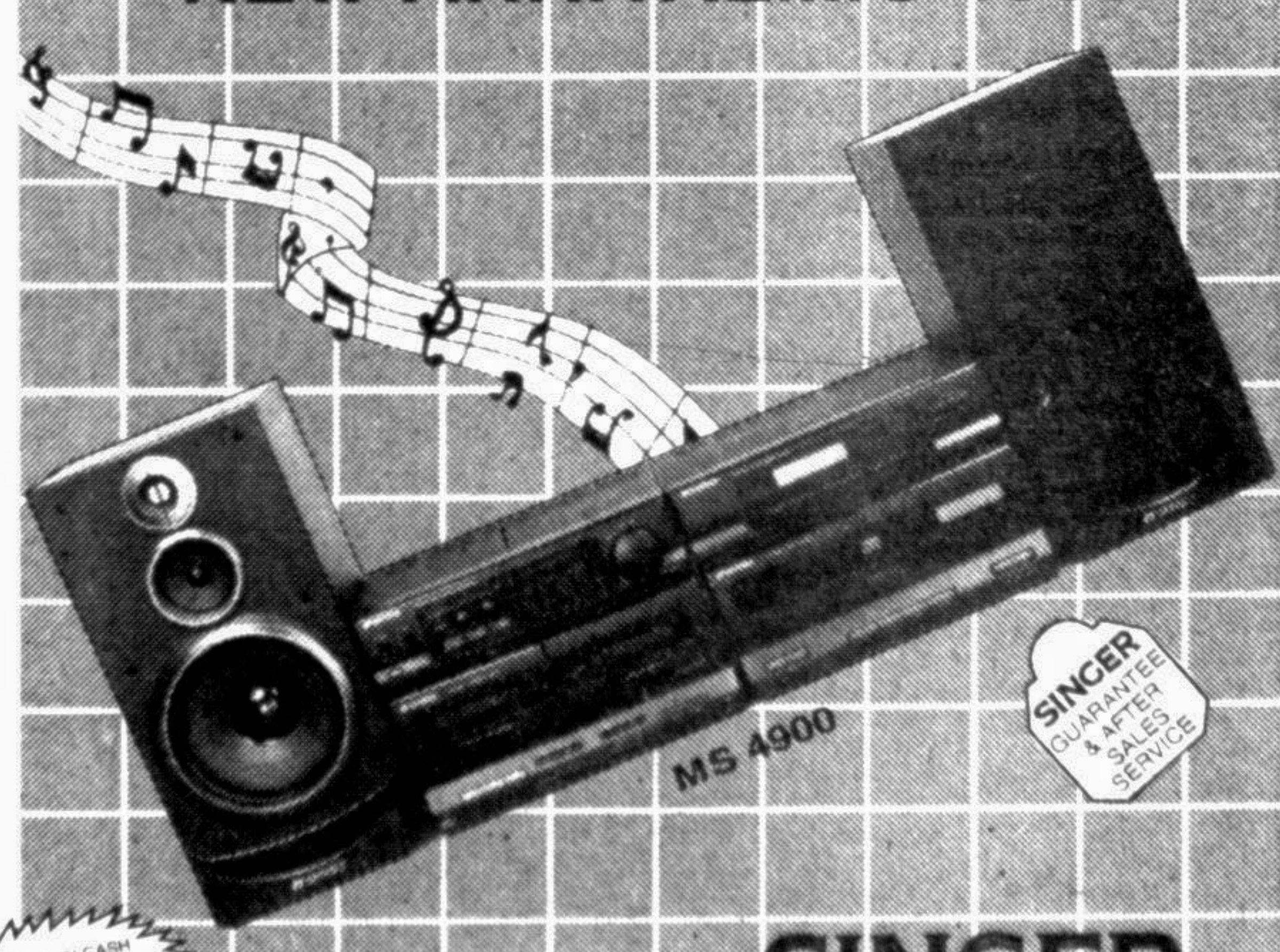
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১৯৮৭ সাল থেকে বাংলাদেশের সর্ব বৃহত্তম ডেস্টফ্রস্ট আজ পর্যন্ত ১০০% অভিব্যক্তি দৃঢ় ভিত্তি। '৮৭ সাল থেকে যিনি ডেস্টফ্রস্ট এর পবিত্র মালিক হয়েছেন '৯৬ সালেও তিনি বলেন "আমার ফ্রিজট এখনও নতুন।" কারণ ডেস্টফ্রস্ট সম্পূর্ণ ট্রিপিকাল হওয়াতে মরিচা ধরে না এবং ভবিষ্যতেও ধরে না। আর সে জন্যে ডেস্টফ্রস্ট এর সুখই নয় বরং জন্ম কিছু বার্ষিকী মহল উদ্দেশ্য প্রণোদিত হয়ে মিথ্যা অপপ্রচার চালাচ্ছেন।

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পরিবেশক : ভিক্টর ইলেকট্রনিকস্

ঢাকা: ট্রেডিং মার্কেট ৫৩/১, ফোন: ৯৫৫৮৫১১ ১০১, ফোন: ৯৫৫৮৫৮৮ ১৩৮, ফোন: ৯৫৫০৭৬২, ৯৫৫৮০২৩ ৪৯, হোসেন ইলেকট্রনিকস্ ফোন: ৯৫৬৩৬৫৬	চট্টগ্রাম: ভিক্টর ইলেকট্রনিকস্ ৪০০ বিপনী বিতান ফোন: ২২৪৫৪৯, ২২২৪৩২ ১০৪, চট্টগ্রাম শপিং কমপ্লেক্স	সামিরা ইলেকট্রনিকস্ ৪০১, বিপনী বিতান, চট্টগ্রাম ফোন: ২২৪৫৪৯, ২২২৪৩২ ফোন: ২২৬৪২১১
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