

LETTER FROM AMERICA

Netanyahu, the Spice Boy of Politics, Muzzles President Clinton

Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed writes from Princeton

Recently, a documentary on Israeli television strayed into the truth and showed pictures of the forced expulsion of Palestinians by the Jews during 1948. There was a tremendous uproar in Israel. The director of the documentary was not praised for telling the truth, but assailed for acting as the "agent of the enemy."

he goes behind his back and transforms a "no" to "yes" through services of shameless Jewish and non-Jewish Senators and Congressmen, and gets what he wants.

Everybody knows that the Israeli lobby reigns supreme in Washington. They formulate the US Middle East policy. Hitherto, they had extended the US government the courtesy to articulate their formulation officially, and kept quiet when the US government made minor changes. Not so with Netanyahu. He has qualms about showing up the Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, or in embarrassing President Clinton.

Israel enjoys overwhelming military superiority over the Arabs right now. In the past when they did not, it was the US military and economic aid that sustained them. Israel was in danger of losing the 1973 war against Egypt and Syria. Initially, Egypt and Syria made significant gains. It was the

American satellite photographs showing Israel the Egyptian and Syrian troop positions, and the airlift of American weapons and spare parts that turned the tide of the war in Israel's favour. ("I cannot fight America", an exasperated President Anwar Sadat had said.) Of course, gratitude is not one of Netanyahu's strong traits. A case in point is how he muzzled the US Secretary of State and the President recently.

For a long time the US Administration had floated the idea that if the Israelis and the Palestinians could not agree on how much land Israel should withdraw from in the occupied territories, America would suggest how much withdrawal is reasonable, to break the impasse. Netanyahu shot back, saying that only Israel had the right to decide how much land it needed for its security. This was a direct slap in the face of America, who for fifty years has been the guarantor of Israeli security.

As the administration made arrangements to reveal its plan to break the deadlock anyway (13% Israeli withdrawal), Netanyahu's people went into overdrive. Jewish agencies took out full page ads in prestigious US newspapers such as the New York Times warning the President not to pressure Israel.

The American Israeli Public Affairs committee (AIPAC) (twisted the Congress's arms. Consequently, led by Connecticut Senator Lieberman (who is Jewish) and Florida Senator Connie Mack (who is not) over seventy Senators signed a letter asking the President to back off. Foreign policy is in the President's domain, not the Congress's. Yet, when it comes to the interest of Israel, rules can be made or broken with impunity. Sensing ominous cloud gathering over the Secretary of State Madeleine Albright sheepishly declared in a press conference that the US will not make it's Middle East policy public.

Festivities are in full swing in Israel as it celebrates its fiftieth birthday. Conspicuously absent from the celebration is any discussion on how the country was founded. Israeli children have been taught that Israel was established on a barren, uninhabited sand strip.

Recently, a documentary on Israeli television strayed into the truth and showed pictures of the forced expulsion of Palestinians during the Jewish war of 1948. There was a tremendous uproar in Israel. The director of the documentary was not praised for telling the truth, but assailed for acting as the "agent of the enemy."

Israel is routinely praised for being the only democracy in the area. It is a democracy based on stealing Palestinian land and expelling Palestinians from their ancestral homes. It is a democracy based on Jewish supremacy; Jews from anywhere in the world — Russia,

China, Argentina or anywhere else — can gain instant citizenship of Israel; whereas the Palestinians who have lived there from time immemorial have to continually prove that they belong, and Palestinians who go abroad are in danger of losing their residence permits permanently.

Israel is a democracy based on lies, brute force and intimidation. It is a democracy that is concerned solely with the rights of the Jews. It is a democracy, that like apartheid treats one fifth of its citizens, the Arabs, as second class citizens, officially. According to former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir as quoted in the New York Times, Israel should not give back an inch of the West Bank to the Palestinians; instead should settle at least one million more Jews in the Palestinian lands. Israel is a democracy that works extremely hard to prevent the President of the United States from expressing his view. Isn't the freedom to express one's view the cornerstone of democracy? Israel is a democracy that looks more and more like the dictatorship of the Jews.

President Clinton did not attend Israel's fiftieth anniversary celebrations. Vice president Albert Gore went instead. Gore had to go. If he does not commit himself totally to the fictitious doctrine of "Israel's security", even if that means grabbing more Arab and Palestinian lands, and destroying more Arab and Palestinian property and lives, he can kiss his Presidential ambitions good bye.

Netanyahu is full of praise for the United States as long as it sings Israel's praise, doles out billions of dollars and toes its line. If he displays an iota of evenhandedness, Netanyahu has no hesitation in kicking the President of the United States in the groin, and making him sing the blues. Why? Because Netanyahu knows that the Israeli lobby would not only bail him out, but would ensure continued flow of US cash and military hardware into Israel.

Watch out, Spice Girls, you have competition! There is someone else who overplays his cards and gets away with it. That rising star, a Spice Boy no less, roams the Middle East.

50th Anniversary of Israel: Land of Promise or Fractured Nation?

by Barrister Harun ur Rashid

A Palestinian State would not be threat rather a safety valve for Israel.

ISRAEL was carved out of Palestine and proclaimed as a sovereign State on May 14, 1948. Israel celebrates the 50th Anniversary of its Statehood from last Thursday (30 April 1998). More than 300 events are planned to commemorate the birth of the nation. The guest of honour was the US Vice President Al Gore. What might have been a show-case of national unity, the stark reality is that beneath the apparent joy and glory, Israeli society is marked by deep fissures that Israelis are more worried about a future religious-secular war than they are about external threats. A strange statement? Not so. In an anniversary poll, the prestigious Haaretz newspaper in Israel found so.

Internal divisions: It was believed that all Jews coming to Israel would be one people. Reality belies this fact. Ethnic and cultural differences dominate among the Israelis. Of the 4,637,000 Jews living in Israel (1996), 61.6 per cent were born in Israel, 12.5 per cent in Asia and Africa and 25.9 per cent in Europe and America. The Jews who migrated from Europe are known as Ashkenazim, while those who came from Arab countries are called Sephardim. There exists not only physical and cultural differences but also difference in socio-economic status among them. The Sephardim live in the poorest areas and have the lowest-paid jobs. University education is rare among them and they are the disadvantaged community in Israel. The Ashkenazim have continued to dominate the other groups (though approximately half the Jewish population is non-Ashkenazim). In politics the Sephardim are represented in the Cabinet by the Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordecai (who is from Kurdistan).

Furthermore, the arrival of 800,000 well-educated Russian Jews to Israel in the past decade had added a new dimension to the melting pot of Israel. Israel's non-Jewish million Arabs constitute still another distinctive sector and the Jews label them as the "Fifth Column" that dangers the security of Israel. The Jews (15000) from Ethiopia form another group which remain dissatisfied with the treatment meted out to them by other Jews and the authorities.

Added to the problem there is a split between the ultra-orthodox Jews and the rest. Though the ultra orthodox constitute less than 10 per cent, their often militant behaviour is a threat to the unity of the people of Israel and the security of its Arab neighbours.

Impact of internal divisions: Jews from European extraction, Jews from Arab countries, Israeli Arabs, secular Israelis, religious Israelis, right-wing Israelis and left-wing Israelis have different ideas about pride and hope for Israel. Above all Prime Minister Netanyahu (Jew from US) is himself a highly contentious figure, disliked by almost half of the population for his personality as much as his inflexible and hard line policies towards Palestinians. The internal divisions among the Israelis came into sharp focus during the celebration of the anniversary. The feud among them has had an impact on internal and external events. Extremist group was responsible for the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin who was gunned down by a Jewish extremist in November 1995. It was an unprecedented act of killing of a Jewish person by another Jew. This violent act demonstrated the deep chasm among the Israelis.

In the past decade a movement for channelling the orthodox views saw the rise of religious parties and this phenomenon cast a dark shadow on the "Land for Peace" deal with the Palestinians. The policy towards peace settlement of the coalition government of Netanyahu is in doldrums. The national-religious factions opposed any peace deal with the Palestinians and were behind the illegal Jewish settlement in Jebel Abu Ghneim (Israelis call it Har Homa) in East Jerusalem. The secular and religious divide among the Israelis led to opposing demonstrations to each other on 30 April on the issue of the disputed Jewish settlement in Jebel Abu Ghneim. (The secular side do not approve the Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem).

The Israelis remain divided even on how best to mark its 50th anniversary. Religious and secular Jews were at loggerheads over the anniversary's centre piece — the variety show, Religious Parliament Members

demanded that the dance company — Batsheva — should not perform dance because of the inappropriate dress of the dancers. Meanwhile, the authorities under pressure from right-wing parties would not show the historic 1993 White House handshake between late Mr. Rabin, the former Prime Minister and Chairman Yasser Arafat and this had annoyed the peace campaigners. Furthermore, there is a tension between the older generation that experienced the birth of Israel and the younger generation who had demonstrated surprising lack of enthusiasm, even disdain for what should be once-in-a-lifetime special occasion.

From Palestinian point of view the anniversary marks the beginning of the period Palestinians call Al-Naqba or the catastrophe. Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip were barred to enter Israel during the celebration and it is an irony of history that many of these Palestinians are in fact now refugees ousted from their land that became Israel 50 years ago.

Conclusion: Where does Israel want to go in the next 50 years? Peace has eluded the Israelis during the last 50 years. They might have won wars but they lost in building lasting peace. Israel should adopt a rational and constructive attitude towards the Palestinians. Despite the internal divisions, Israeli leadership should be courageous to strike a peace deal with Palestinians whose land was carved out for the foundations of a Jewish State.

One would hope that Israel shows maturity in implementing the November 1947 UN Resolution upon which its own existence is founded. The Resolution envisages the establishment of a Palestine State. It would be a fitting mark of the 50th anniversary if Israel recognises that obligation to enable the legitimate aspirations of Palestine people to realise their independent Palestine State. In fact, a former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres said recently in a BBC interview that a Palestinian State would not be threat rather a safety valve for Israel.

The writer is former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN in Geneva.

THE British invasion of America continues. First it was the Beatles in 1964, soon to be followed by the Rolling Stones. Over the last thirty-four years, superstars such as Elton John, Rod Stewart and George Michael have musically conquered America. The only missing ingredient in the British invasion was gender. That is about to change. The Spice Girls are here! Tickets for their upcoming concert in New Jersey sold out instantly.

The Spice Girls compensate for their lack of real musical talent by providing the fans with what they "really really want". They are pretty adept at dishing out liberal dose of eroticism in the name of music. There are Spice Girls (Spice Boys, if you will) in the world of politics, too. Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu comes to mind immediately. He compensates for his moral depravity with a heavy dose of arrogance. He too is not above strutting his stuff in his quest to get what he "really really wants." And what he really really wants is not peace with the Palestinians, but more land from the Palestinians. He wants not advice from America, he wants more money from America. "No" for an answer is not what he wants from the President of the United States;



Metropolitan



Dr Hugh Carpenter (4th L) presenting Lycra fabric to the founder and consultant of the Rehabilitation Centre for Burn, Accident and Acid Victims of BANPOSAC, M Mazharul Islam (5th L), at a ceremony in the city Sunday. DCCI president Rashed Maksud Khan (3rd L), British High Commission's Press and Public Affairs Officer Shaikat Rushdee Haque (R), and Attache Stuart Peters (2nd L) were also present.

British donation

British High Commission has donated some Lycra fabric to Mazharul Islam, founder and consultant of the Rehabilitation Centre for Burn, Accident and Acid Victims, reports UNB.

British High Commission's Regional Medical Officer Dr Hugh Carpenter handed over the donation at a simple ceremony on Sunday.

Lycra fabric, an expensive dressing material, is very effective in reducing scarring from burn and acid injuries which cannot be affordable for most of the patients.

The rehabilitation centre will now be able to provide assistance to over 200 burn and acid injury patients free of cost with the Lycra fabric.

Mourning procession on DU campus

The members of Bangabandhu Abhijatrik Dal, a socio-cultural organisation, yesterday brought out a mourning procession on the Dhaka University Campus in memory of Partha Pratim Acharia, a central committee member of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), who was killed on April 23, reports BSS.

A large number of university students and BCL workers took part in the procession which paraded through the main streets in the campus area.

BIUOF begins strike

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Inter University Officers' Federation (BIUOF) began a 12-day strike in all the universities of the country from Sunday to release their four-point charter of demands, says a press release.

The demands include revision of pay scale, ensuring officers' representations in different bodies of the universities, including Senate and Syndicate, stepping deduction of 20 per cent from the officers' pension money and raising their retirement age from 60 to 65.

Tk 45,975 realised for violation of traffic rules

By Staff Correspondent

Police realised Tk 45,975 from the violators of traffic rules on the second day of the ongoing Traffic Consciousness Week-1998 yesterday, says a press release.

A total of 1605 cases have also been lodged against the violators of traffic rules under the Traffic Ordinance of 1983 while thousands of different traffic offences, the press release said.

Meanwhile, different important points of the city have been decorated with banner, placard and posters and measures have been taken to enforce traffic rules.

Several other measures have also been taken to help create traffic consciousness, the press release added.

PCP holds rally

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka unit of Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP) yesterday brought out a procession and held a rally on the Dhaka University (DU) campus demanding release of its leaders and activists who were arrested recently, says a press release.

It was alleged in the press release that seven PCP leaders of Naniarchar and Chilachhari under Rangamati, without any warrant on Sunday.

The arrested leaders and activists were identified as Pritibindu Chakma, Amol Dhan, Romel, Subarna, Khokan Chakma, Progati Chakma and Babul Chakma, the press release said.

Among others, Shantimoni Chakma, Ushing Mong, Jatan Marma, Titan Khisha, Priyotara Chakma and Nairanjana Chakma addressed the rally.

Ershad concerned at rise of rly, air fares

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad has expressed concern over the sudden rise of air and railway fares across the country, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, Ershad said the government has exposed its undemocratic attitude by taking the decision to increase the fares only one month ahead of the budget session of Parliament.

German envoy calls on Hasina

The newly appointed German Ambassador to Bangladesh, Uwe Schramm, called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her Jatiya Sangsad office yesterday, reports UNB.

Schramm told the Prime Minister that he is impressed to see the significant development taking place in Bangladesh. "Bangladesh has potentials for trade and industry," he said.

The German envoy also referred to the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty with India and the CHT peace accord, and said these would contribute a lot to peace and stability of the region.

Schramm hoped that the friendly ties between the two countries would further be strengthened in the years to come.

Rafiq to meet Interpol officials during Paris visit

Home Minister Rafiqul Islam left for Paris Sunday night on an invitation from Interpol, reports BSS.

During his visit to France, the minister will meet high officials of Interpol and exchange views with them about modernizing Bangladesh's police and fire service departments.

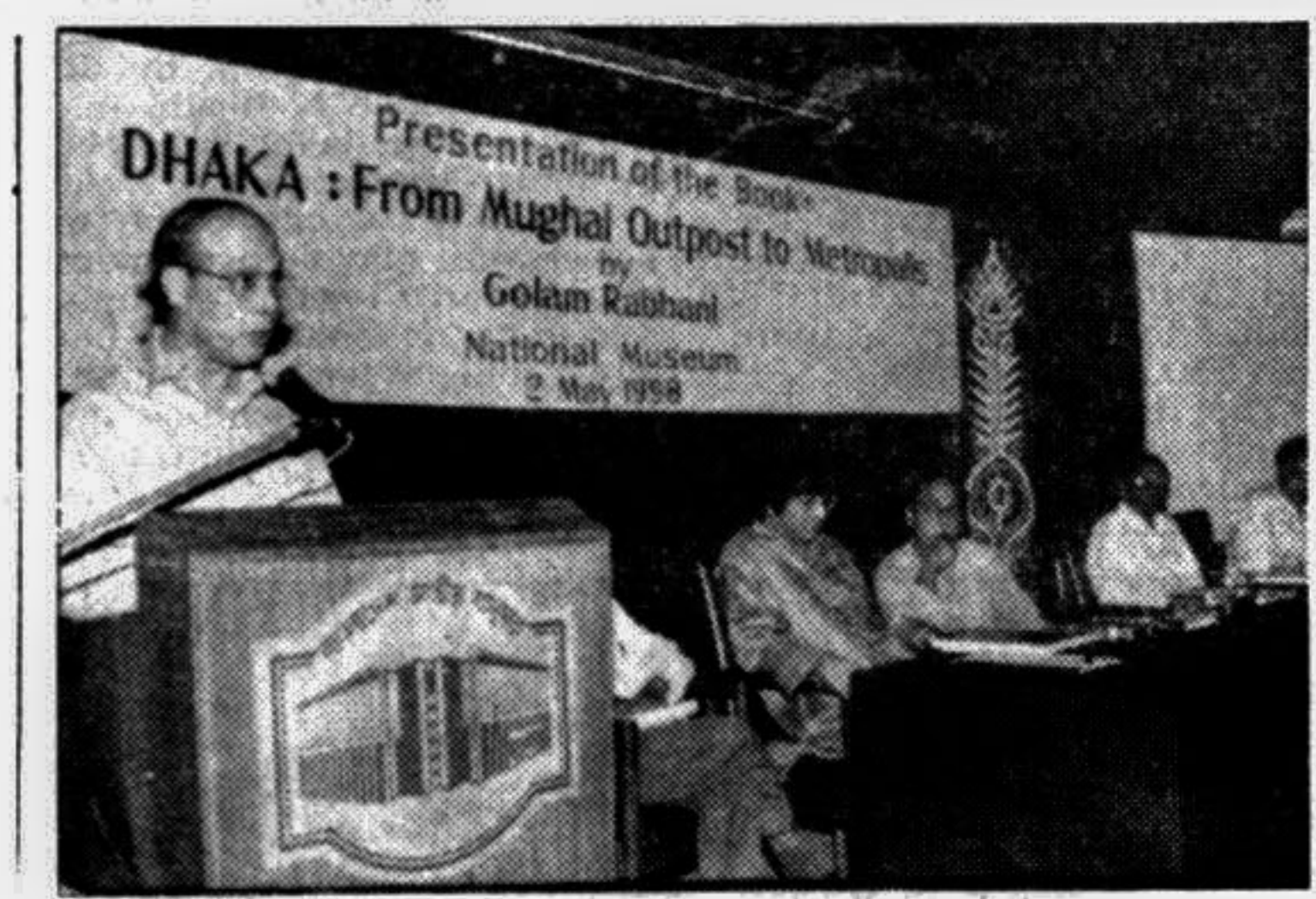
The minister will leave France for Britain on May 8, where he will meet his British counterpart. He will return home on May 14.

President's grant for encyclopedia project

The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (ASB) has received a grant of Taka five lakh from President Shahabuddin Ahmed for its 'Encyclopedia of Bangladesh' project, says a press release.

The encyclopedia is due to be published in ten volumes in Bangla and English and also on CD-ROM.

The Tk 9.6 crore project has been sponsored by the ASB.



Prof A K Azad Chowdhury, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University, speaking at the launching ceremony of a new book, 'Dhaka: From Mughal Outpost to Metropolis' by Dr Golam Rabbani, in the city recently.

New book on Dhaka city launched

A new pictorial book, titled 'Dhaka: From Mughal Outpost to Metropolis', written by Dr Golam Rabbani, a medical scientist at the ICDDR,B, and published by the University Press Ltd, was launched at a ceremony in the city recently, says a press release.

The chief guest Prof A K Azad Chowdhury, Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University, said that in this book, Dr Rabbani has captured many different aspects of this historic city.

The book was reviewed by Prof Muntazir Mamoon of DU, and Prof Sharifuddin Ahmed, Director, National Library and Archives. Shamsuzzaman Khan, DG, National Museum was also present.

The book contains more than 260 photographs in 208 pages. Its marked price is Tk 1600.

New governor of Lions Dist 315 A1

M A Hadi was elected district governor for 1998-99 of Lions District 315 A1, Bangladesh, at the annual convention of the District, held recently at a city hotel.

Hadi is the managing director of M/S Adwin Ltd and Dreamland Fashion Ltd. He hails from Chagalnaga, Feni.

Training workshop at NSU concludes

A three-day training workshop on Valuation of Environmental Impacts concluded at North South University yesterday. As many as 31 environmentalists, economists and policy planners participated in the workshop, says a press release.

The workshop was inaugurated by Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury, Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University. He said that this training workshop will be helpful to formulate right policy for identification of environment friendly projects.

Al Mahmud granted bail

Editor of Chittagong-based Dainik Karnaphuli Al Mahmud has been granted ad-interim bail in a case regarding the publishing of leaked out question papers of the SSC examinations, reports UNB.

A High Court Division bench of the Supreme Court, comprising Justice Muhammad Mozammel Haq and Justice ABM Khairul Haq, granted the bail yesterday when the renowned poet prayed for it.

Ashek-e-Rasul confce May 7

Ashek-e-Rasul (SM) conference will be held at Dewanbag Darbar Sharif under Bandar thana of Narayanganj on Thursday to mark the holy Thura and 13th founding anniversary of Dewanbag Darbar Sharif, says a press release.

The conference will begin at 10 am with recitation from the holy Quran. Many Islamic thinkers, scholars and ulemas will discuss on various themes of Islam, Hazrat Mahabub-e-Khoda Dewanbag (Madda-e-Khoda) Dewarbag (Madda-e-Khoda) will deliver his valuable speech and conduct the akherat munajat after Zohr prayers.

জাহাঙ্গীরনগর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
সাতার, ঢাকা
বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ১৯৯৭-৯৮ শিক্ষাবর্ষে ১ম বর্ষ স্নাতক (সম্মান) শ্রেণীতে বিভিন্ন ইউনিটের অন্তর্ভুক্ত বিভাগসমূহে ভর্তির জন্য প্রয়োজিত ব্যাংক থেকে আবেদনপত্র সংগ্রহ ও জমাদানের তারিখ ১৪-৫-৯৮ পর্যন্ত বর্ধিত করা হয়েছে। তবে ১৪-৫-৯৮ তারিখ সর্বশেষ বেলা ২ টার মধ্যে আবেদনপত্র সংশ্লিষ্ট ইউনিটে অবশ্যই জমা দিতে হবে।

মুহাম্মাদ আবদুল গফুর
জিডি-৩১৯
উপ-রেজিস্ট্রার (শিক্ষা)

Amendment of opening date of Tender Enquiry No RUR-3.1468/97-98 dated 11-02-1998 for 8 MW STG for Chhatak Cement Co. Ltd.

It is notified for information of all concerned that the opening date of Tender Enquiry No. PUR-3.1468/97-98 dated 11-02-1998 for 8 MW STG for Chhatak Cement Co. Ltd., Sunamganj shall be 20-5-98 at 11.00 AM instead of 06-05-1998.

All other terms and conditions of the Tender Enquiry No. PUR-3.1468/97-98 dated 11-02-98 shall remain unchanged.

Miran Fazlur Rahman
BCIC 343-4/5/98 Add Chief Manager (Purchase) GD-321 for Sr. General Manager (Purchase)

BJMC Advertisement International Tender Notice

General Manager, Hafiz Jute Mills Ltd, Bara Aulia, Chittagong invites sealed quotations for import of (1) Sewing Machine & Spares (2) Ball & Roller Bearing under 20th JDRG 1st Tranch on FOB/C&F Chittagong by Air/Sea.

Tender documents may be dropped in the tender box kept in the BJMC Planning Division, Adamjee Court, Motiheel C/A, Dhaka, BJMC, CZ, Sattar Chamber, 99, Agrabad, Chittagong & Mills Office at 11-30 AM on 27.5.98 and the same will be opened at 12.00 Noon on the same day in presence of tenderers, if any. Tender documents in details of our requirement will be available (excepting opening date) from the General Manager (Finance), BJMC, Dhaka, Dy. General Manager (A&F), BJMC, CZ, Chittagong and the Manager (A&F) of mills on payment of Tk 70/- per set. BJMC: 237 dt. 23.4.98 DFP-9416-29/4 G-931