

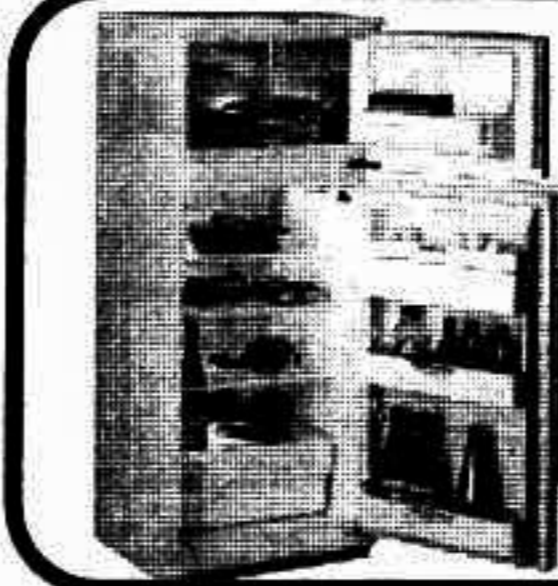


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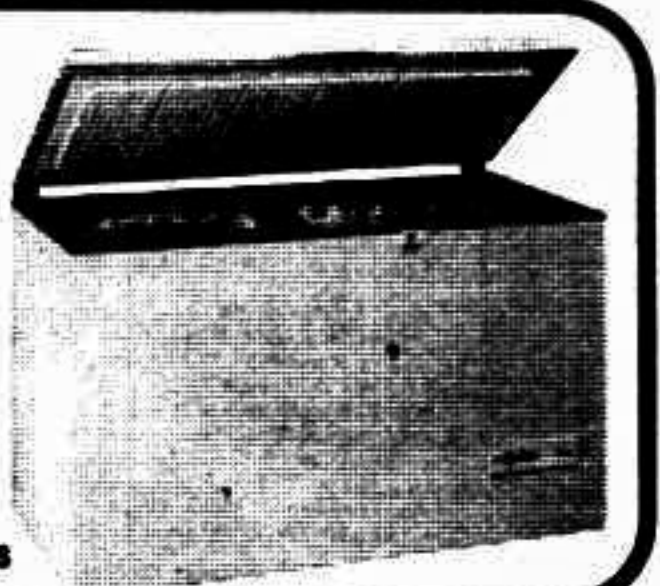
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Azad concerned over Indian fence plan

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad has again regretted the Indian move to erect barbed-wire fence along its border with Bangladesh, reports agencies.

"We have always maintained that such an unilateral decision on the part of India to erect barbed-wire fence along Bangladesh border will have negative impact on the relations between the two countries," said Foreign Minister yesterday.

In a statement at the regular press briefing, he said that no confirmation on the construction of barbed-wire fence had so far been received from the country's mission in New Delhi.

Turning to the forthcoming NAM summit in Dhaka, Azad said that China will provide 24 million US dollar as loan to Bangladesh for the construction of an international standard conference centre in Dhaka.

The conference centre will be needed to hold the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit due to be held here in 2001. The site of the conference centre has not yet been finalised.

Briefing newsmen at the foreign office in the afternoon,

Azad said an agreement on the proposed aid would be signed when he visits Beijing on January 20 at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart.

He said the government would have to arrange additional accommodation of 2,000 people expected to take part in the NAM conference. The existing hotel facilities can provide accommodation for 2,000 people.

About restriction on Umrah visa, Azad said the Saudi authorities have offered to give such visas in group instead of single Umrah visa next year.

He said Sheikh Hasina will pay a two-day visit to the Indian state of West Bengal on January 27-28 to inaugurate a book fair in Calcutta and receive the honorary D Lit from Bishwa Bharati University.

The Prime Minister will also visit the birth place of rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam at Churulia in Burdwan district and the Baker Hostel, where Bangabandhu Mujib used reside as a student of Islamia College.

Foreign Secretary M Mustafizur Rahman was present at the weekly briefing.

Manju keeps mum as JP celebrates

By Special Correspondent
 Jatiya Party celebrates its 16th founding anniversary today amid growing signs of friction in the wake of the firing of Anwar Hossain Manju.

Party chief HM Ershad will spell out next course of action at a meeting today.

Manju, however, is yet to decide his next move. Sources said Manju, the lone JP man in AL cabinet, was having talks with JP MPs close to him.

Asked about forming his faction of JP, he said he had no such plan at the moment.

He does not plan to hold any function to mark JP's birth anniversary either. He was one of the founding members of the party when it was floated on January 1, 1986.

Manju, holding the communications portfolio since June, 1996, claimed his removal the party does not affect his status as an MP.

He mentioned that party MPs were coming to see him at his residence. Four of them Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Dr Rustam Ali Farazi and Shahadat Hossain were at his house at about 9 last night, he said.

Some sources said at least a dozen party MPs were now supporting him.

Meanwhile, Ershad told BBC Radio yesterday evening that he had to move against Manju following his 'objectionable and anti-party remarks'.

Kazi Zafar Ahmed, who led a faction of JP that returned to the party fold last week, said that he was in touch with 'former partners' in the Seven Party Alliance led by BNP. But Ershad is yet to decide whether to join the alliance, he added.

The discussion meeting will be held at Sobhanbagh Community Centre at 3 p.m. today.

SSC exams from March 4

The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examinations will begin on March 4, an official handout said in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

"There is no possibility to defer the schedule," the handout added.

Leading citizens join DU anti-abuse protest

Joined by eminent citizens in their campaign against sexual assault on campus, Dhaka University students have announced a new set of programmes to press for a six-point demand.

The announcement from "Students -- Protesting Sexual Harassment" (SPSH) came yesterday at a press conference at Madhu's canteen on the DU campus of the Dhaka University.

The programme includes an open discussion on "Movement against Sexual Abuses in Dhaka University and Our Six-point Demand" at Teachers and Students Centre (TSC) of the university on January 3 at 3pm. Eminent citizens, teachers, students and political leaders will participate in the meeting.

On January 5, the SPSH will bring out a procession on the campus and demonstrate and stage a 'sit-in' in front of the

By DU Correspondent
 Vice Chancellor's office on January 6.

The university authorities formed a four-member fact-finding committee on December 1, which is scheduled to submit its report on January 6.

Meanwhile, as many as 66 eminent citizens in a joint statement Wednesday protested the alleged sexual abuses by teachers of Dhaka University and demanded trial and exemplary punishment to those involved.

"We are aghast and perplexed at the sexual repression of a female student by teacher of International Relations at DU Prof Shahiduzzaman. We protest mere suspension of the teacher and demand his punishment according to the existing law of the land including the Nari O Shishu Nirjatan Protoroh Ain," the statement said.

"This kind of incidents is not rare and not singular in

number. This kind of sexual repression is taking place in many educational institutions and work places," the statement added. "We demand legal action in all such cases," it said.

The signatories included Sufia Kamal, Ayesha Khanam, Faujia Moslem, Maleka Begum, Shaheen Anam, Gita Chakraborty, Abu Zafar Siddique, Rasheda K Chowdhury, Ranjan Karmaker, Bipradas Barua and Sukumar Barua.

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new year greetings

Make a better place
 We could fly so high
 Let our spirits never die

In our hearts,
 We feel we are all brothers,
 Create a world with no fear,
 Together we cry happy tears,
 See the nations turn their swords
 Into plowshares,
 We could really get there,
 If you cared enough for the living—
 Make a little space,
 Make it a better place.

Heal the World
 Make it a better place,
 For you and for me,
 And the entire human race,
 There are people dying,
 If you care enough for the living,
 Make a little space.

lyrics: heal the world, michael jackson

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