

Indian agriculturist calls on Motia

Visiting world famous agriculture scientist and chairman of MS Swaminathan research foundation of India, Dr MS Swaminathan, called on Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury at her Secretariat office yesterday, says a press release.

They discussed the strategies of expansion of use of modern technology and high yielding seeds in the agricultural sector.

The US Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS) predicts that 40 per cent of the Asian region's population will be undernourished in 2008, but adds that most Asian countries may be able to close their food gaps by increasing imports slightly above projected growth rates, according to a USIS press release released yesterday.

The ERS recently released a report entitled "Food Security Assessment: Why Countries Are At Risk" which focuses on countries that either have been food

US predicts food insecurity in 9 Asian countries

aid recipients or have the potential to become recipients in the near future. Among the 66 countries surveyed by the ERS were nine Asian countries: Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Nepal, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

The report notes that while these Asian countries have made significant gains in increasing food availability over the past three decades, "The re-

gion's impressive gains...mask food problems of large segments of the population whose purchasing power is insufficient," the report predicts that by 2008, 516 million people living in these Asian countries will be undernourished.

While these numbers may appear high, the Asian region is expected to do relatively well in comparison with other regions. For example, people in the top

60 per cent of the population of Asia (in terms of wealth) are projected to consume more than the minimum nutritional requirements—compared to only the top 20 per cent of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Even those people who make up the poorer 40 per cent of the Asian population and are projected to fall short of meeting the minimum nutritional requirements will be nutrition-

ally better off than 80 per cent of Sub-Saharan Africans. They will also meet more of the minimum nutritional requirements than those making up equivalent income groups in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAG).

According to the report, Asian countries may have the financial wherewithal to import food rather than relying heavily on their domestic agricultural production to ensure

food security. The report predicts that if food imports were to grow 4.7 per cent in Asia, the nutrition gaps would be eliminated.

The report concluded that although there are vulnerable countries, the overall picture is more promising. In Asia, food security will improve if yields or imports continue to grow as they did during 1980-97. The challenge, however, is to overcome Asia's recent slowdown in yield growth and external financial difficulties that may pose food-security problems in the long term.

Analogue T&T line disrupted in Khulna

Analogue telephone subscribers of T&T under Khulna exchange could not be able to make direct phone calls following a mechanical fault there at 5 pm yesterday, reports UNB.

Officials concerned of the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board have already begun repairing works to make the exchange operative.

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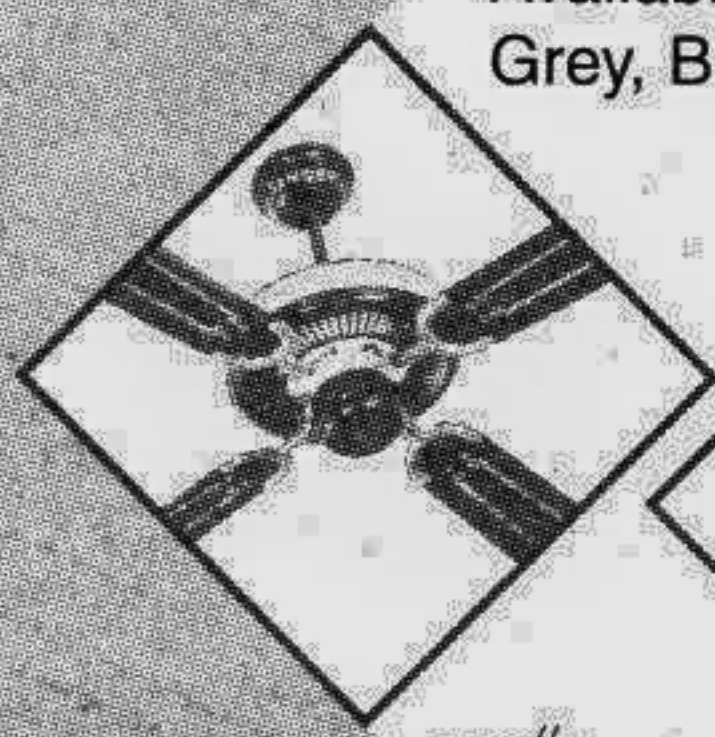


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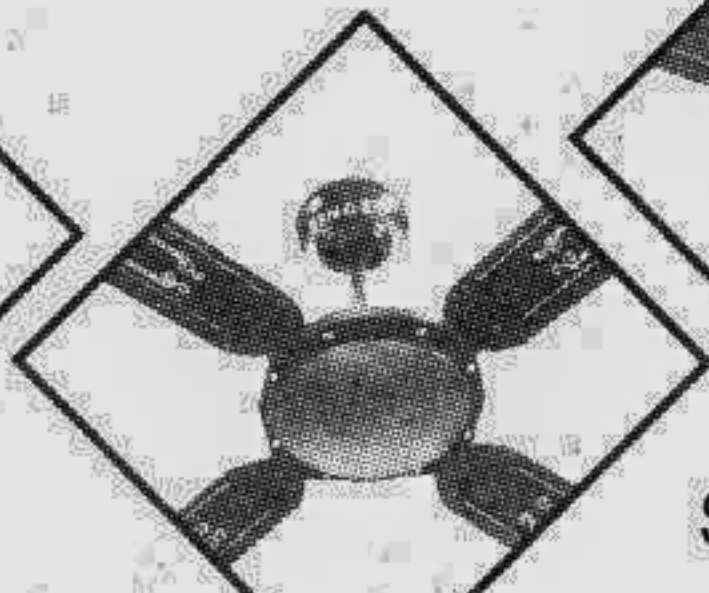
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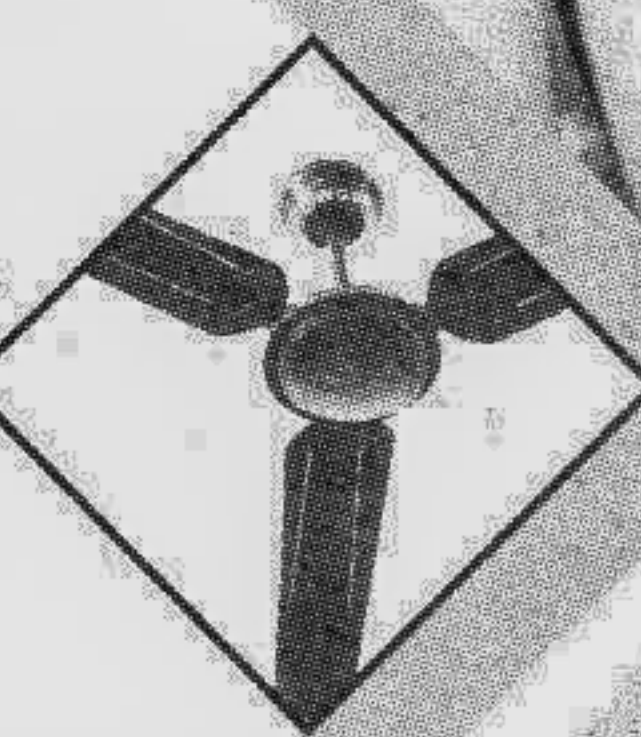
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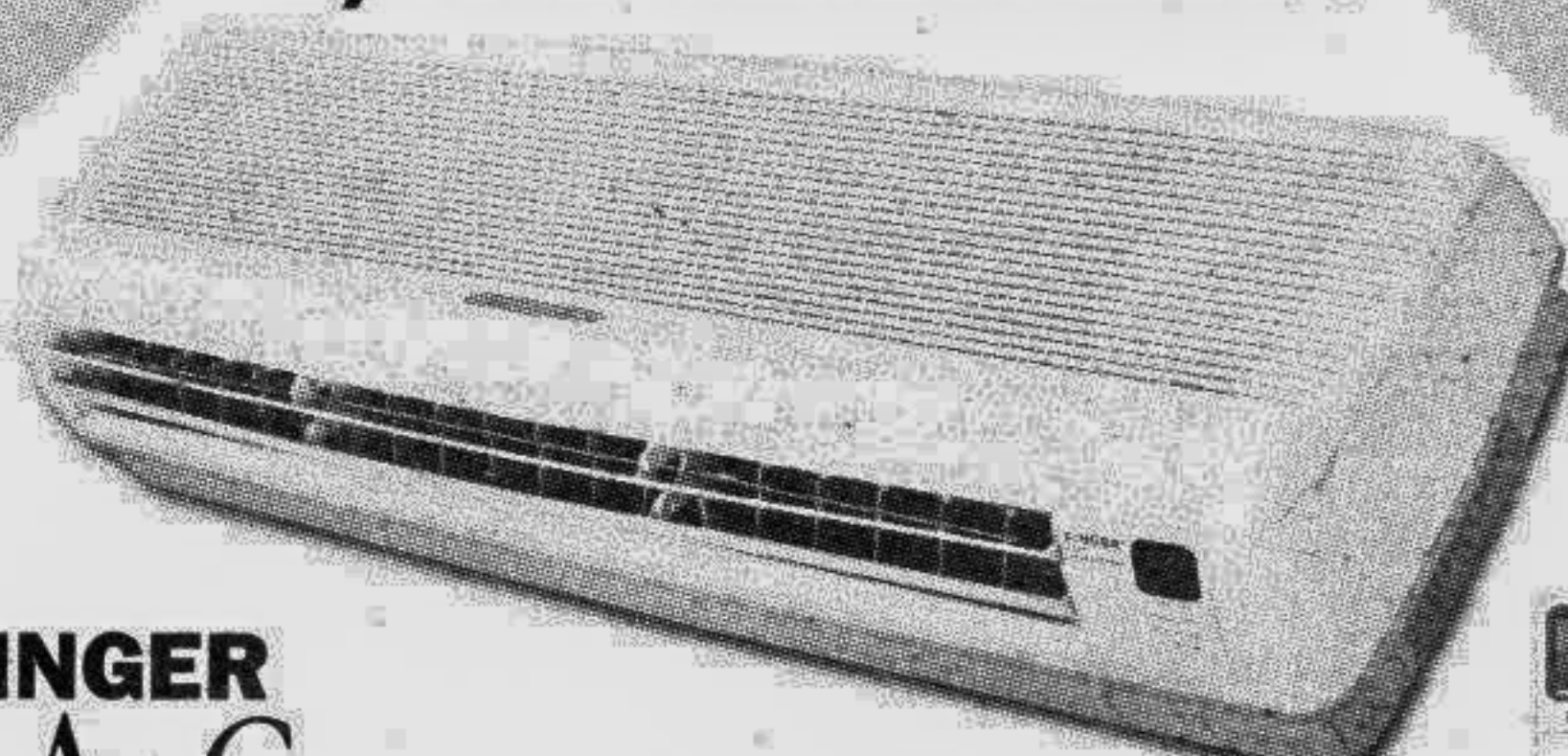
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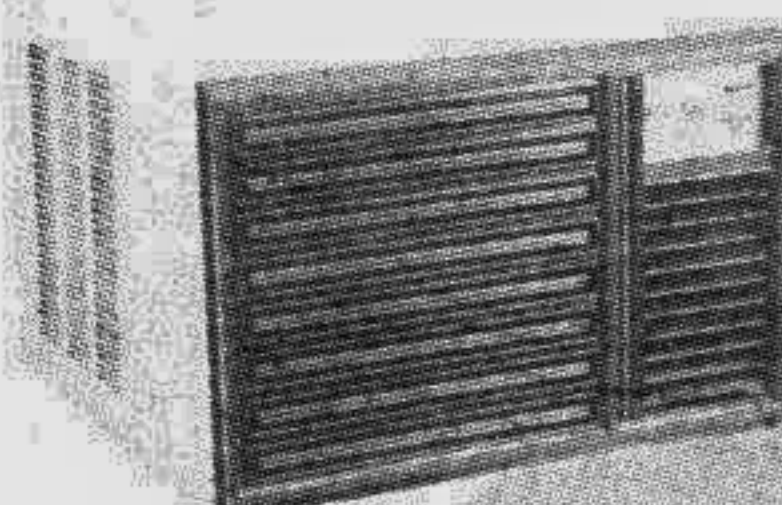
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