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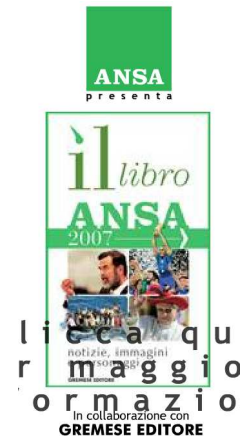
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EGYPT: BREASTFEEDING FATWA PROFESSOR SACKED BY AL-AZHAR UNI (ANSAmEd) - CAIRO, SEPTEMBER 21 - An Egyptian professor who sparked national debate when he issued a fatwa (religious edict) permitting women to breastfeed their male colleagues has been dismissed. The decision was taken by the disciplinary committee at Cairòs Al-Azhar University, the world's centre of Islamic scholarship and education. The edict by Professor Ezzat Attiya was released as a means to segregate men and women in the work place. It stated that if a man and a woman worked together alone in an enclosed work place, the woman must breastfeed him to avoid any sexual relationship between the pair, since the man would become like a son to the woman. The Islamic religion bans a person from being in private in the same room with a person of the opposite sex, unless they are married or have close relations (parents and children, brothers and sisters, and so forth). The fatwa provoked huge controversy among religious scholars, and on the internet. Al-Azhar authorities condemned the religious edict, which sparked huge controversy among religious scholars, and on the internet, saying that it portrayed a negative image of Islam. Others said it would have the "opposite effect", of promoting sexual interaction and sexual harassment in a work place instead of diminishing it. In any case, Attiyàs insistence that his edict was correct was one of the reasons of his dismissal, Al-Azhar authorities told English-language newspaper The Egyptian Gazette. The dismissal decision is harsh and cruel punishment and was too excessive for the act committed, "but it will prevent fatwas from becoming a business not a science as it should be", Sheikh Mahmoud Ashour, former deputy of Al-Azhar and member of the Islamic Research Centre, told The Daily News Egypt, another local English newspaper. (ANSAmEd)



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