man full of humour. Once during election campaigning there were representatives of all parties sitting in a discussion

meeting. Every party was try-

ing to show its strength and

position. Each party was des-

perately trying to show its

foot-hold in the middle.

Suddenly Brandt, who was

representing his party, said

that if all political parties

would try to remain in the

middle, then there will be

hardly enough space in the

middle. He was humourous in-

deed. No party in Germany

wanted to show its attachment

to either the left or the right.

Under the chairmanship of

Willy Brandt there was a publi-

cation entitled 'North-South: A

Programme for Survival.

Brandt tried to break the

deadlock on international

political and economic issues.

He believed in emergency

action in order to stimulate

world food-production and

thus abolish world hunger. He

chalked out a global energy

strategy to accommodate the

needs of security of both

producers and consumers. He

was also deeply worried about

the mounting debts of the

South. It was his suggestion to

provide additional financial

help in order to achieve more

balanced conditions for world-

trade. He believed in mutual

respect between the North

and the South. The North

(industrialized countries) has

machinery and technological

know-how, but the South

(developing countries) has raw

materials. Each is dependent

on the other. For this reason

the North should not dictate

the South. Brandt believed in

reforms which would benefit

both the North and the South.

According to him a new politi-

cal initiative was necessary in

order to break the deadlock

between the North and the

South. Brandt has made us

aware of the new challenge of

this century and the next as

well. He has said rightly that

the North cannot live in peace

or prosper indefinitely if large

sections of the South (the

hungry millions) are shut from

any prospect of progress and

Teacher, Institute of Modern

German

development.

The writer is

So the middle was the target.

Down the Memory Lane

What Brandt was to Me

by Mamun Haq

Willey Brandt has left us forever. Recently his death has been a shoc-

king news for us even far away

in Bangladesh. My memory of

Brandt is something unusual. It

has something to do with my

own life and my process of

enrichment. During those days

1980-81 I was a student at the

University of Heidelberg, I was

totally lost in a strange new

academic world at Heidelberg

in the Federal Republic of

Germany. I could hardly speak

a few words on international

politics. But suddenly a change

came in my life. Way back in

1981 I was struggling hard to

adjust myself to a new envi-

ronment. In my student's hos-

tel German students would

often ask me about problems of

under-development and their

solutions. I had hardly anything

not give in: I joined a working

group on Third-World-

Problems. All of a sudden some

of my German friends asked

me to say something on the

problems of under-develop-

ment in Bangladesh. I was con-

fused, but then some-thing

came to my mind. I decided to

consult my Bangladeshi friend

who was writing a research-

paper on North-South

Dialogue. The title of his thesis

was: North-South Conflict -

Cooperation or Confrontation.

This thesis was based on the

report of the North-South

asked him to help me with

some material, which he read-

ily supplied to me. With his

material I delivered a lecture

on North-South Dialogue. I had

an audience of 30 to 40 stu-

dents of Heidelberg University,

who heard my lecture in

German Language. Later I also

courageously answered their

questions as well. It was actu-

ally my first public speech in

German. And what was the

material of my lecture - The

North-South-Dialogue of Willy

These are some incidents

which are deeply rooted in my

life. In those days I was trying

to get a break-through into the

intellectual world in Germany.

At that time the ideas of

Brandt were highly convincing.

began to realize that

European people also have

time to think about our devel-

oping countries. So gradually

Brandt became a great person-

authors writing in English can

ality for me. Brandt was also a

Thus even mediocre Indian

Brandt and his Commission.

Commission of Willy Brandt.

to say in this matter. But I did

## Bangladesh Learnt Much from CNN Coverage of US Polls; Some Unsolicited Tips for BTV; and Three New Publications

S. M. Ali

E King of the Cable News Network (CNN) repeated the word three times summing up the view of a panel member on the defeat of George Bush in the US presidential election.

This post mortem came last Saturday, after several weeks of the most exhaustive, objective and stimulating TV coverage of the polls in the United States I had seen in my life. At the end of it all, I saluted CNN and wondered about the impact of this coverage on our national leaders, on our average viewers and, indeed, on our own Bangladesh Television (BTV), almost in that

The summing up carried the message, loud and clear, that no matter what Bush did in the past, it was the state of the US economy, with its long lingering recession and unemployment, that sealed his fate. Here, his failure overshadowed the US role in ending the Cold War with Moscow or the Gulf conflict.

The message was also for the government in Bangladesh, for all its national leaders and politicians in other countries which watched the

A few other lessons also seemed relevant for Bangladesh.

Bill Clinton won because he was "about tomorrow" and he concentrated on issues rather than on rhetorical promises, with the electorate presented with detailed plan for health care, education, environment, law and order and the development of inner cities, among others. In this exercise, it was the maverick independent candidate Ross Perot who came out second, not Bush who seemed more concerned about demolishing the personalities of his two challengers than about the issues.

Here, the lesson for Bangladesh is also obvious. Our leaders may indeed be greeted with applause as they talk about achievements of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman. But many in "the audience will be asking themselves, "But what about tomorrow?"

To such an audience, it is more important to know - and see - how the multi-party system is working today than to hear, again and again, that it was Zia who first introduced it to replace the martial law regime. On the other hand, people may be more curious about Awami League's plan for administrative reorganisation when (and if) it comes to power than to learn that Sheikh Muith reated a new administration

- Some say t' one cannot correct. the sophisticals is locate in the Unit of the describing that in a developing country like Bangladesh ! cannot disagree more. When the chips are down, an average voter in the US, Bangladesh, Australia or Great Britain - name any country you like - is most concerned about all the basic things which touch his or her life, the medical facilities, education of children, law and order, police harassment, sanitation and environment.

So, if the CNN coverage helped us - the average viewer and national leaders - to be better informed of the US election process, it also provided us with an understanding of democratic norms in one of the most vital areas, an election.

T HAT was the impact of the CNN coverage, in content and presentation, on the Bangladesh Television (BTV)? Well, don't ask me. Check with the BTV people or with the Ministry of Information. All I can do here is to give you a view from outside.

In the first place, we saw how press freedom really operates when it comes to a TV coverage of an election campaign, freedom combined with objectivity and fairness. A number of leading newspapers had endorsed Bill Clinton - a couple of them had given their support to George Bush - but the CNN coverage seemed free from bias. I had no way of monitoring other US-based

Since the CNN was free from bias and had done its homework on the issues under discussion, its principal interviewer Larry King could be bold, forthright but polite in putting questions to all the three presidential candidates during the TV debates. He seemed to make them feel at ease and extracted as much information and opinion from each one of them as one could get during a TV debate. In this respect, King's 90-minute interview with Bush, punctuated by phone-in questions from within the United States and outside, was an excellent TV performance by both the CNN man and the President. It was excellent because it combined an informal air with a businesslike dialogue. In some ways, even the seating arrangement in this debate - with Bush and King occupying two chairs side by side, without ( if I remember correctly) even a table between them or a notebook in the hand of the CNN man - showed how a one-to-one interview should be conducted, regardless of the occasion or importance of personalities involved.

It is this debate that should offer some new

ideas to the producer of BTV's "Mukho Mukhi".

The recent one of the series, one with Minister

Zahiruddin Khan and AL MP Ataur Rahman

Kaiser, was well-conducted by Shafique Rahman

who handled the questions and the replies from

Khan and AL leader with professional ease. By

our local standard, it was good and informative.

But, by regional yardstick, it fell short of my

formal affair, with every one looking a little stiff,

asking what sounded like well-prepared

questions, with the Minister and AL MP

providing detailed answers, without any

interjections except briefly from one member of

the panel and the moderator. There were no

sharp exchanges, no cutting replies and, oddly

enough, not even a smile on any of the deadly

three journalist members of the panel, the two

politicians and the moderator sitting at a

respectable distance from one another ( so it

looked on the TV screen) that added to the

formal air. I could not help wondering why the

group did not sit around a table, with the

moderator, sitting in the middle, conducting a

free unstructured conversation rather than a

formal interview. That should have made the

of more than one, perhaps two or three faces, at

the same time. In the BTV production we saw,

Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)

in TV panel discussions in countries outside.

It was also the seating arrangement, with

serious last

presented by BTV.

Part of the problem was, it turned out to be a

based on a good model."

Putting his own prescription to use, the producer, quoted above, turned out a number of programmes for the colony's television network in the seventies, two of which earned my

Believe it or not, one was titled "Face to Face" which could be the English version of "Mukho Mukhi", except, in content and presentation, it was completely different from the BTV production.

It was always a one-to-one conversation in which Derek Davies, the then Editor of the Far Eastern Economic Review, was the permanent interviewer. It was, in effect, the Davies show.

On the screen, viewers only saw the two-third profile of the Review editor, with the other person facing the camera. Since there was hardly much domestic politics in the British colony, the guest in the programme generally belonged to such fields as the literary world, social work or trade and commerce. The network often went after visitors to the colony, including government leaders from other countries passing through Hong Kong, and brought them in as

'guest" of Davies. Some guests probably never

As one could see from the 60-minute show,

Davies would have done enormous homework on

his guest before getting started on the

programme. So, he could ask questions which

were incisive, astute and even a little aggressive,

but never, as far as I recall, rude or too personal.

There were even smiles and gentle laughs that

was the weekly "Press Conference" in which

professional journalists served as questioners,

with some one from the Hong Kong adminis-

tration, a leading industrialist or a visiting

dignitary submitting himself to not-too-gentle

conventional pattern. But it was always

informative enough to provide a news report for

few ideas from CNN, especially in news

presentation and production of panel discussion,

remains to be seen. Maybe they should try,

fumble and stumble, but still try. And let them

also produce interviews and panel discussions in

English for the benefit of the ever-expanding

foreign community which only watches the 10

any of the dailies the following morning.

The programme followed a somewhat

Whether our friends in BTV have picked up a

The other programme that I saw regularly

forgot the experiencel

inquisition.

brightened up the conversation.

are saying in this country. Watching "News at Ten" for finding out what's really going on in this country?

T EW books and journals keep landing on the Star's weekend magazine, written about in this column and finally read - in that order. No, no, that's not true. New books do get read, from cover to cover, before they get

through during the last unexpectedly long weekend are all on most innovative subjects and

First, "A Thousand Year Old Bengali Mystic

The second publication is "The Yellow Lady" by Alison Broinowski, which deals with Australian impressions of Asia. The publication which comes to me with the compliments of the Australian High Commission in Dhaka discusses different aspects of the relationship between the "Country Down Under" and Asia, from the perspective of a former Australian diplomat who has served in a number of countries in this

The third is the latest issue of "The Journal of Development Communication", a Kuala Lumpurbased quarterly journal - a most worthwhile publication for experts in this field. It is the mouthpiece of the Asian Institute for Development Communication (AIDCOM) whose work I have followed with keen interest - and admiration - for past ten years. What's more, the journal is edited by Khairul Bashar, a Bangladeshi expert on communication, a former

All three publications will be reviewed in our magazine, exhaustively, objectively and extensively. Meanwhile, let me get more publications even if some get misplaced before reaching our reviewers. In such cases, my embarrassment matches the impatience of kind

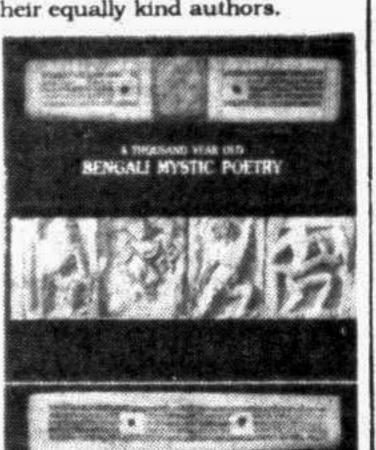
Well, we will be back. Stay tuned!

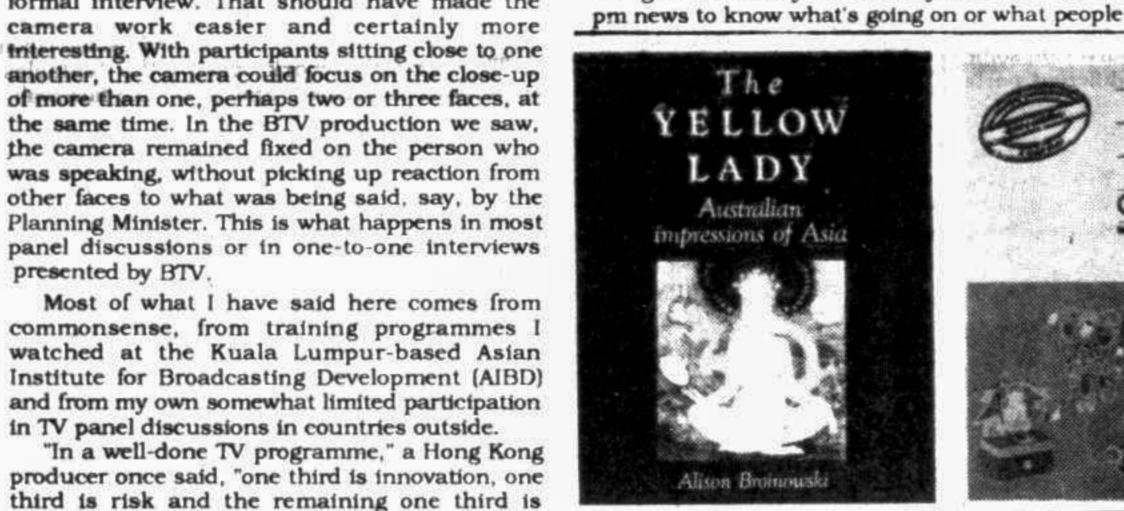
my desk, which should be reviewed in reviewed, sometimes quite extensively, as we did with "Sailing Against The Wind", a superb publication on boats of Bangladesh, brought out by the University Press Ltd. Three new publications that I glanced well-printed on glossy paper, with extremely well-designed covers.

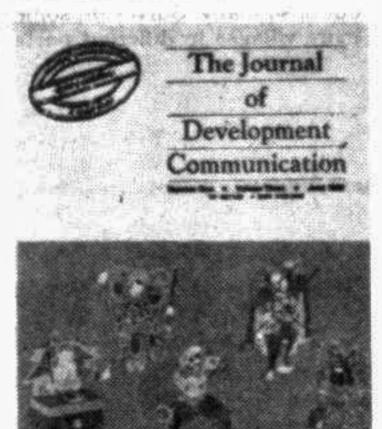
Poetry" by Hasna Jasimuddin Moudud, just another superb publication by the University Press Ltd. In terms of quality of printing by BRAC Printers, the layout and reproduction of photographs, it matches the standard set by any international publishing house, reflecting the progress the country has made in this field in recent years. So, congratulations should go in full measure to Hasna J Moudud, the University Press Ltd and the BRAC Printers - I trust, we got them in the right order this time - for this scholarly book which was published in May on the occasion of Buddha Purnima, a wonderful gesture on the part of one of our relatively unknown authors (that's because of politics casting its shadow over her life) showing her respect of a great religious leader of the world.

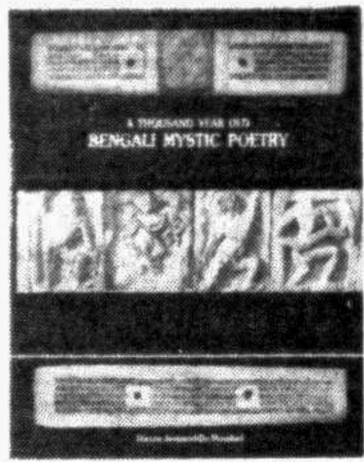
civil servant and journalist.

publishers and their equally kind authors.









## Is there a Third World Literature?

N choosing the Caribbean poet Derek Walcott for the 1992 Nobel Prize for Literature, the Swedish Academy has recognised a major poetic talent in the Third World. In the 90-year history of Nobel Prize he is only the tenth writer from the developing world to have won the world's highest literary

honour. Walcott, English language professor at Boston University in the United States, is best known for his verse epic Omeros. It is a rewriting of Homeric stories - Achilles,

Hector, and Helen - set in Walcott's native St. Lucia.

The Swedish Academy cited him as the authentic "voice of the West Indies". However, to some West Indian writers his poetry does not have strictly indigenous characteristics. It is not written in patois, nor is it based on reggae rhythms. Instead his work is very much in the European literary tradi-

But then how many of poets and writers from the non-European world have been known internationally? And what has been the record of by Daya Kishan Thussu

2789 1

the Nobel Committee in spotting literary talents outside Europe and the US?

China, where the arts of writing and printing were invented, and an ancient and sophisticated culture survives, has not yet been discovered by the Swedish Academy. For instance, Lu Xun, a major influence on modern Chinese literature, was ignored. Nor has the Academy recognised a Persian or Turkish writer, while many obscure European and American writers have

been awarded the prize.

The Nobel statistics are revealing. Out of a total of 89. award winners, 79 have been European or American writers. Apart from Rabindranath Tagore, who composed poetry in Bengali and Naguib Mahfouz of Egypt who writes in Arabic, all the other award winners from the developing world wrote in a European language.

Not since poet-philosopher Tagore - the first non-European to win a Nobel Prize way back in 1913 - has any writer from the Indian sub-continent been considered worthy of the award. Hindi short story writer Premchand, Urdu poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz of Pakistan and Bengali novelist Sarat Chandra Chaterjee are just three of many other major omissions.

Internationally, other obvious gaps include such outstanding writers as Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy, Norway's poet-dramatist Henrik Ibsen, British novelist Joseph Conrad, US novelist Henry James, James Joyce of Ireland and, more recently and most controversially, British novelist Graham Greene.

In the field of literature, as in politics and economics, it is much more difficult for a Third World writer to gain international recognition than for a European, mainly because of language. Works in a non-European language are unlikely to be noticed outside their

own regions. In many Third World countries, the domination of European languages reflects the continuing influence of the former colonial powers, especially in the fields of culture and education. For example, in Algeria, cultural production is dominated by a French-speaking elite. And Portuguese continues to be the language of the in Angola and

Mozambique.

In a country like India the English language, the instrument of colonialism, still wields considerable influence. Most of the powerful national media and publishing are in English. After the US, it is the biggest publisher of English language titles in the world. The irony is that only three per cent of the population speak English.

Unless a writer acquires sufficient fluency in English, his or her chances of being recognised nationally are limited. Translation facilities, where they exist, are often not up to standard. Once the national press discovers the writer, he/she can be noticed by the international media and publishing industries which continue to be dominated by the West.

Languages, Dhaka University. nning of what came to be known as a "Third World consciousness". Later it evolved

get much greater exposure than those who write in India's 14 other constitutionallyrecognised languages, many of which have rich literatures. If India, with literary traditions which go back 3,000

years, finds it hard to resist the influence of European languages, for Third World countries without a strong indigenous literary culture, it is virtually impossible. One result of this is that many ordinary talents that do not accurately represent or articulate the aspirations of these countries are taken to speak for the Third World, while some highly talented writers die in anonymity.

But is there a Third World literature? The invention of the term "Third World" is claimed by the French writer Alfred Sauvy in 1952, modelled on the conception of the French Third Estate.

It refers to those countries after decolonisation that belonged neither to the capitalist First nor communist Second World. The Bandung Conference of 1955 was the begiinto the Non-aligned Move-

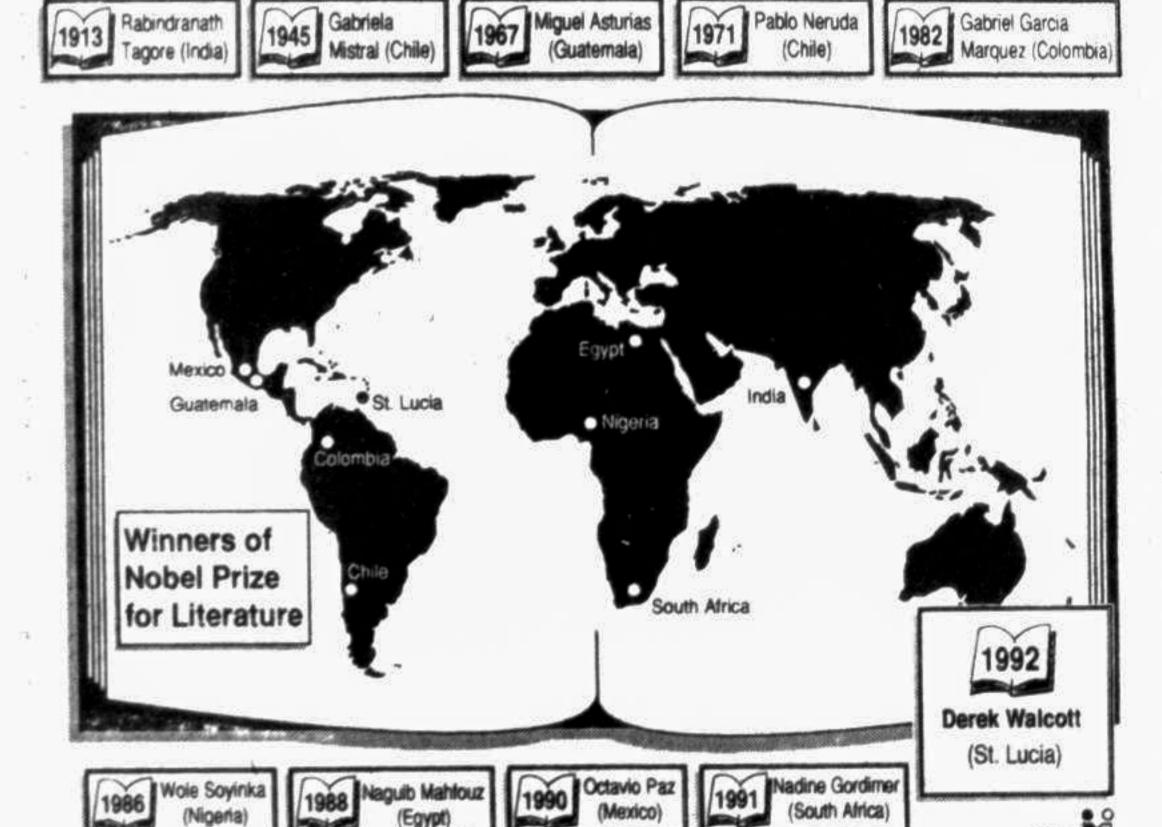
The term was then a European coinage and owed its currency to the European media. The concept, too, was a European one and with the ending of the Cold War and disappearance of the Second World, its relevance has been questioned by many.

In a recent book, In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures, Indian academic Aijaz Ahmad (published by Verso, London and New York) challenges the current Western fashion for "Third World" literature, which lumps together a rich diversity of literatures from many countries and cultures. He likens the Western trend to accumulate cultural products from around the world to the rise of the supermarket, importing exotic items for consumers hungry for novelty.

Ahmad, a Professorial Fellow at New Delhi's Centre of Contemporary Studies, argues that thinking in generalised terms of "Third World Culture"

Continued on page 11

## How the South has scored



## WRITE TO MITA

I really appreciate that you bring issues such as wife beating to the attention of the general public through your column. This is a big problem in our society but no one wants to talk about it. I have noticed that whenever anybody writes about this it is for somebody else, either a sister or a neighbour. I suspect women ask advise for them selves but are ashamed to admit it. Why do you think women are reluctant

to talk about it? It is after all not their fault. Shamima, Gulshan, Dhaka

Dear Shamima,

thoughts on this issue.

You have asked a very complicated question and the answer to which is not easy. The main reason women are not willing to talk about it is because they somehow feel responsible for what has happened, and that it is their fault. Traditionally women are perceived to be the ones who should look after the well being of the family and are blamed for any problem, no matter whose fault it may be. Unfortunately, women blame themselves even if no one else does and feel they have not lived up to the expectations of the husband or family members.

More and more women should speak up against wife abuse and bring it out in the open. There should also be an effort to tell victims of abuse that it is not their fault.

Dear Mita, After I gave birth to my third daughter, my in-laws were so upset and expressed it by feeling sorry for me which upset me even more. I have two older daughters who are beautiful, brilliant and loving. Both me and my husband are thrilled to have the third one and nobody can make us feel sorry for not having a son. We are proud of our daughters and want to prove to the world that they can match boys anytime. What are your

NNishat, Purana Paltan, Dhaka

I was thrilled to read your letter, my heartiest congratulations to you and your husband. Your daughters are very lucky to have such parents. Don't be too harsh on people who prefer boys to girls, it is as much society's fault as it is theirs. Hopefully, such prejudices will go away with education and enlightenment and it is people like you who will contribute to build a society where women will be treated equally with

Dear Mita,

Last week you answered a woman who complained that her husband does not talk to her. Your answer was good, but still does not answer her questions completely. Suppose she tries everything and he does not respond what is she supposed to do? I know a person who is very pleasant and talkative outside but as soon as he comes home he becomes serious and unfriendly. What do you suggest?

NNRehana, Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Dear Rehana,

I have said before that I do not have any readymade solutions to people's problems. All I do is suggest alternatives which might work. If a person seems happy and pleasant outside and unfriendly at home, then there is something going within the family which needs to be looked at. People don't usually start behaving in strange ways out of the blue. One of the problems in our family lives is people do not confront problems but rather ignore them as if they will go away if not dealt with. This is a mistake because problems then keep on multiplying and reach an irreversible situation, perhaps like the one you are referring to.