

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Cross-cultural Marriage

by Lamis Hossain

Matrimonial ads are common enough in Bangladesh, but this one was a little different. "Families wanting bright futures for their daughters consider them marrying Muslims in America," the ad announced. "Many Muslims in America desire marriage with ladies of Bangladesh." Interested persons were requested to contact the editor of Husbands and Wives magazine.

Just for the heck of it, I decided to call the magazine editor. Mohammed Abdul Raouf, who was visiting Bangladesh, I had assumed that he was an American Bangladeshi, since so many of them come to Bangladesh to search for "innocent" desi brides instead of the "Westernised" Bengali girls back in the States. But Raouf turned out to be a bearded Black American Muslim.

There was a need in the Muslim community for this (magazine), Raouf explained. The Muslim minority in America is spreading.

We don't have the luxury of the infrastructure that you have as far as marriage is concerned. Here you can just ask your father or your mother for help.

Raouf also wanted to strengthen the Muslim umma so that it became "one family rather than just one nation." Raouf's logic runs thus: if you marry a Muslim of a different nationality than yours, then events in your spouse's country become your direct concern.

Raouf also revealed another reason behind the project. He was approached by Muslim American men to help them find women in the US Muslim community. Their (the black women's) mentality wasn't what it should have been.

Raouf discovered, "These women were too audacious, too domineering and some were of a righteous indignation." The Black American men on the other hand were brought up to take care of the sister, mother and wife. "It's not bad to be independent," the editor clarifies. "But success without someone can be pretty lonely."

The American has also seen enough people trapped in unhappy marriages. "There are so many men who endure an unhappy situation." The matchmaker complained that many women simply don't appreciate their husbands, whereas Allah has given them the dominant role to keep the household together.

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What about unhappy women? "It's a double-edged sword," Raouf admits. "My observation is that if you find a real good woman then the

husband is no good," and vice versa. A pilot issue of Husbands and Wives Magazine has already come out in the US. The monthly magazine will contain descriptions, with or without photos, of prospective spouses (male or female) which the candidates will pay for. The periodical will explain immigration laws in the US, discuss Islamic laws, and carry feature stories on issues such as men and women responsibilities, the benefits and pitfalls of marriage and the condition of Muslims around the world.

But Raouf does not plan to stop at just introducing people. There will be a phone number that can be called everyday, anytime if you have problems. Backgrounds of potential grooms will be checked, immigration status will be verified and everything will proceed strictly according to Islamic law.

The matchmaker does not agree that cross-cultural marriages are problematic. "If they're Muslim, there's no problem." He himself has an Egyptian wife. The Islamic Centre in Washington DC, according to Raouf, publishes a list of weddings in which usually at least 65 per cent of the couples are multicultural.

He cites the example of a young man from LA who has married a young girl from a Bangladeshi village. "It's not a problem when you move up in life, so far as standard of living is concerned," Raouf explains. "Most people have a harder time coming down." The young man from LA came to Bangladesh, and even lived in the village for a while. The Husbands and Wives editor firmly believes

in the benefits of this cultural exchange. So far the response to his initiative in Bangladesh has been favorable. Apparently he has been questioned a lot about Saudi men's negative reputation. Raouf tells those who are afraid that even if they marry a Bangladeshi, there are no guarantees that he will be good. In any case, Raouf tries to encourage prospective male candidates to visit the country of the spouse. The American is mainly targeting Bangladeshi women because the men here seem more interested in going to the US per se rather than getting married.

The Editor of Husband and Wives Magazine has just one more thing to decide. What if people from other religions want to be included in the magazine? Raouf says it's a dilemma he's still deliberating on.

Government of the People's
Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Education
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka
Notice

No. S 13/1-21 (Fullbright)/95/228-Edn

Dated 25-5-95
11-2-1402BS

**Sub : Regarding Invitation of Applications
for 1996 Scholarship Offered by the
US Government**

Applications are invited from Faculty members of Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Jahangirnagar & Islami Universities for Post-Graduate level study on the undermentioned subjects under the US Government's two-year Fullbright Scholarship in 1996.

Subjects:

A) History of America
B) American Literature
C) English Language (Teaching English as a Foreign language)
D) Economics
E) Political Science/International Relations

2. For English language subject, Faculty Members of University Colleges only can apply.

3. Terms & conditions for selection of candidate:

A) Age not above 40 years as on 10 June, 1995.
B) There should be at least 3 first divisions and no third division in the academic career.
C) Should have at least 60% marks in both Degree (Honours) & Masters examinations.
D) Those who have not studied in USA earlier.
E) Should have command of English.
F) Should possess sound health.

4. Candidates should apply through proper channel in time.

5. Application in English with bio-data as well as two copies recent passport-size attested photographs, attested marksheets & certificate two copies each of all examinations passed etc should contain the following information. Application should be in two sets, each set containing one copy of photograph, bio-data etc. A) Name, B) Father's name, C) Present address, D) Permanent address, E) Date of birth & actual age on 10-6-95, F) Occupation, G) Telephone No. (if any), H) Educational qualification (Name of examination, Roll No. Registration No., Department/year of passing, division/class, basic subject, position by merit (if any), total marks obtained, aggregate marks obtained in examination & percentage should be mentioned) and subject prayed for should be stated in the bio-data.

6. Name of Scholarship (Fullbright Scholarship) & the subject prayed for should be superscribed on the envelope.

7. Application should reach the undersigned by post or submitted in the wooden box No. 2 at Gate No. 5 of Bangladesh Secretariat by 10-6-95.

8. No one can be a candidate for more than one subject.

9. Decision of the authority is final in selecting the candidates. Incomplete application will not be considered.

10. Action as per penal code will be taken against any one intentionally furnishing false statement/information.

11. Candidates selected by the Ministry of Education shall have to take part in viva-voce.

12. One need not apply if already selected for any scholarship by the Ministry of Education.

Md Akram Hossain

Sr. Asst Secretary
(Scholarship)

DPP-13308-28/5

G-843

22 more JS seats demarcated

Demarcation of 22 constituencies in five districts of the country were finalised after hearing at the Election Commission (EC) office in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

The hearing was held after examining documents and reports submitted by the concerned complainants and defendants, said an EC press release.

Earlier, the EC received complaints, proposals and suggestions from the Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Khagrachari, Rangamati and Bandarban districts from the concerned people.

The constituencies are (Number, name and area):

279 — Chittagong — 1: Mirshorai thana of Chittagong district.

280 — Chittagong — 2: Sitakunda thana of Chittagong district.

281 — Chittagong — 3: Sondip thana of Chittagong district.

282 — Chittagong — 4: Faulkhari thana of Chittagong district.

283 — Chittagong — 5: Hatiazhari thana of Chittagong district (including Ward-1 of City Corporation).

284 — Chittagong — 6: Raozan thana of Chittagong district.

285 — Chittagong — 7: Raniganj thana of Chittagong district.

286 — Chittagong — 8: Doublomuring thana, Bandar and Pahartali thana of Chittagong district (Except ward-29, ward-30 of Chittagong City Corporation).

287 — Chittagong — 9: Ward-29 and 30 of city corporation under Doublomuring thana, Kotwala thana, Ward-8 of City Corporation under Panchalish thana.

288 — Cox's Bazar — 1: Chokoria thana of Cox's Bazar district.

295 — Cox's Bazar — 2: Kutubdia and Moheshkhali thana of Cox's Bazar district.

296 — Cox's Bazar — 3: Sadar and Ramu of Cox's Bazar district.

297 — Cox's Bazar — 4: Unkhia and Teknaf thana of Cox's Bazar district.

298 — Khagrachari: Khagrachari hill district.

299 — Rangamati: Rangamati hill district.

300 — Bandarban: Bandarban hill district.

With the finalisation of the 22 constituencies, the EC has so far completed demarcation of 300 constituencies of the Jatiya Sangsad. Wards-6, 17, 18

Weather

Showers likely

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur over the regions of Rangpur and Sylhet during the 24 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

The Met Office says the weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country.

Day temperatures may remain nearly unchanged.

In its outlook for today and tomorrow, the weathermen forecast that rainfall is likely to increase. Giving extended outlook for another five days the Met Office's forecast was that the south-west monsoon likely to advance upto the north of the Bay.

The country's highest temperature yesterday was 38.2 degrees Celsius recorded at Rajshahi and the lowest was 23.3 degrees at Rangpur.

Well-organised youth an asset, says Biswas

President Abdur Rahman Biswas said the youth force of the country should work in a systematic way to ensure welfare of the people, reports UNB.

He said, a well-organised youth force is an asset.

The President was talking to a 55-member delegation of Narayanganj district Jatiyatabadi Shechabak Dal, who called on him at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Terming the youth force as the most vital for the development of the country, the President advised the members to work hard for achieving the success fixing up a definite goal of the organisation.

"Aimless and unsystematic work will yield no fruitful result," he added.

Stressing much on technical education, the President said the unemployed youths should direct their energies to self-employment projects and help build a happy and prosperous nation.

Led by its president Abul Hossain, the delegation included Razia Sultana Poppy, Selim Reza Khokon, Md Mamun and M A Qasem were among others present.

Dr Michael Porter, Senior Public Health Specialist of World Bank, called on Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf at his office yesterday.

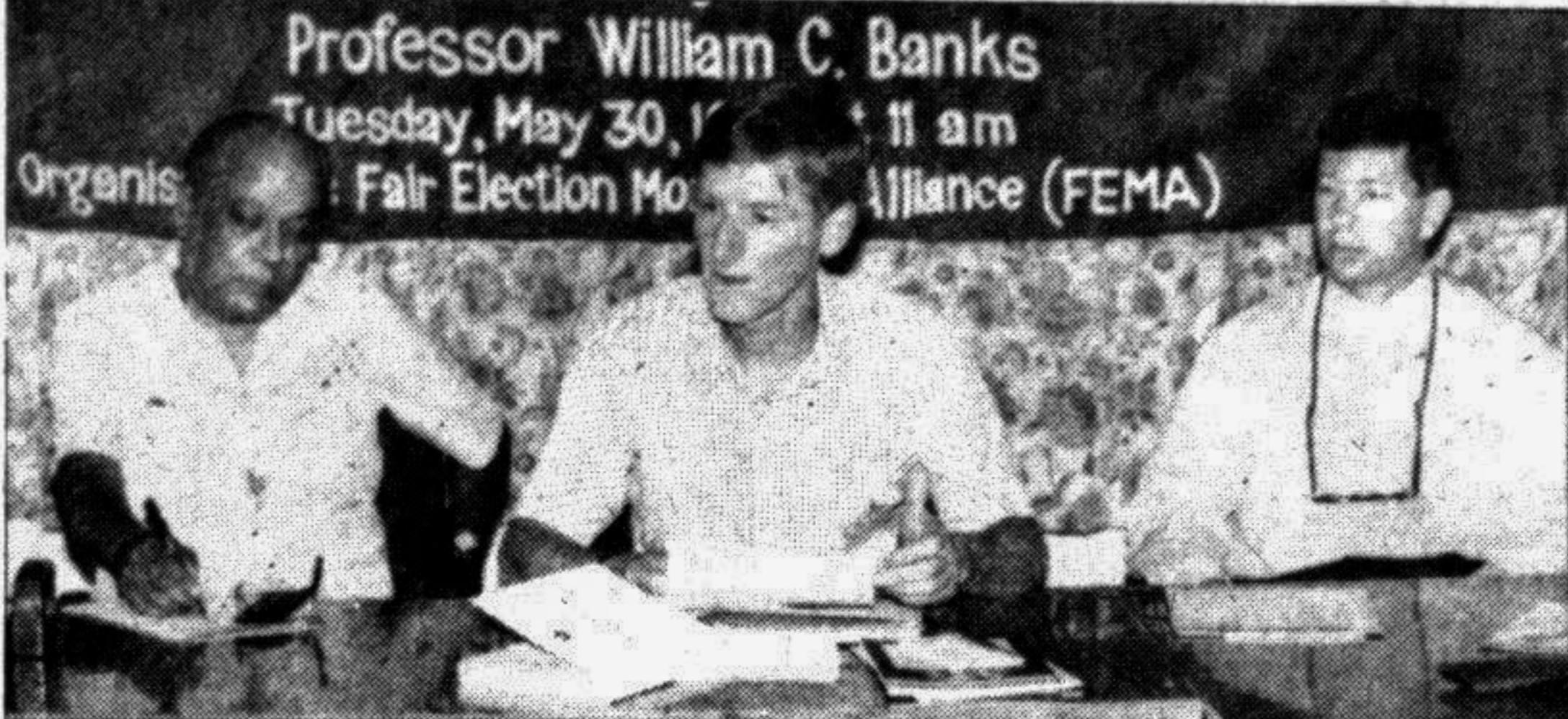
During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to strengthening the role of NGOs responding to the HIV epidemic in Asia and the South Asia region.

Director General of Health Services Prof Dr Samsuddin Siddique and high officials of the Health Ministry were present on the occasion, said a PID handout.

Meanwhile, Dr Zakir Hussain, Director (Programmes and Management) of World Health Organisation (WHO) of South Asia Office also called on the Health Minister.

Malaria and diarrhoeal diseases, which broke out in the frontier areas of Sylhet, Netrokona, Sunamganj, Mymensingh and the hill districts of the country were discussed during their meeting.

They also discussed the issue of Disaster Preparedness Centre to be set up in Dhaka.



William C Banks, Professor of Law, Syracuse University, New York, addressing a lecture-discussion on the importance of free and fair elections at the WVA auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left is Free and Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) president Fazluruddin Ahmed, and on his right is the Cultural Affairs officer of the US Embassy, Christ Rochester.

— Star photo

Campaign irregularities should be removed for fair polls'

By Staff Correspondent

shu Shekhar Halder, Prof Mabbat Khan of Dhaka University and president of North South University Mosleuddin Ahmed participated in the discussion.

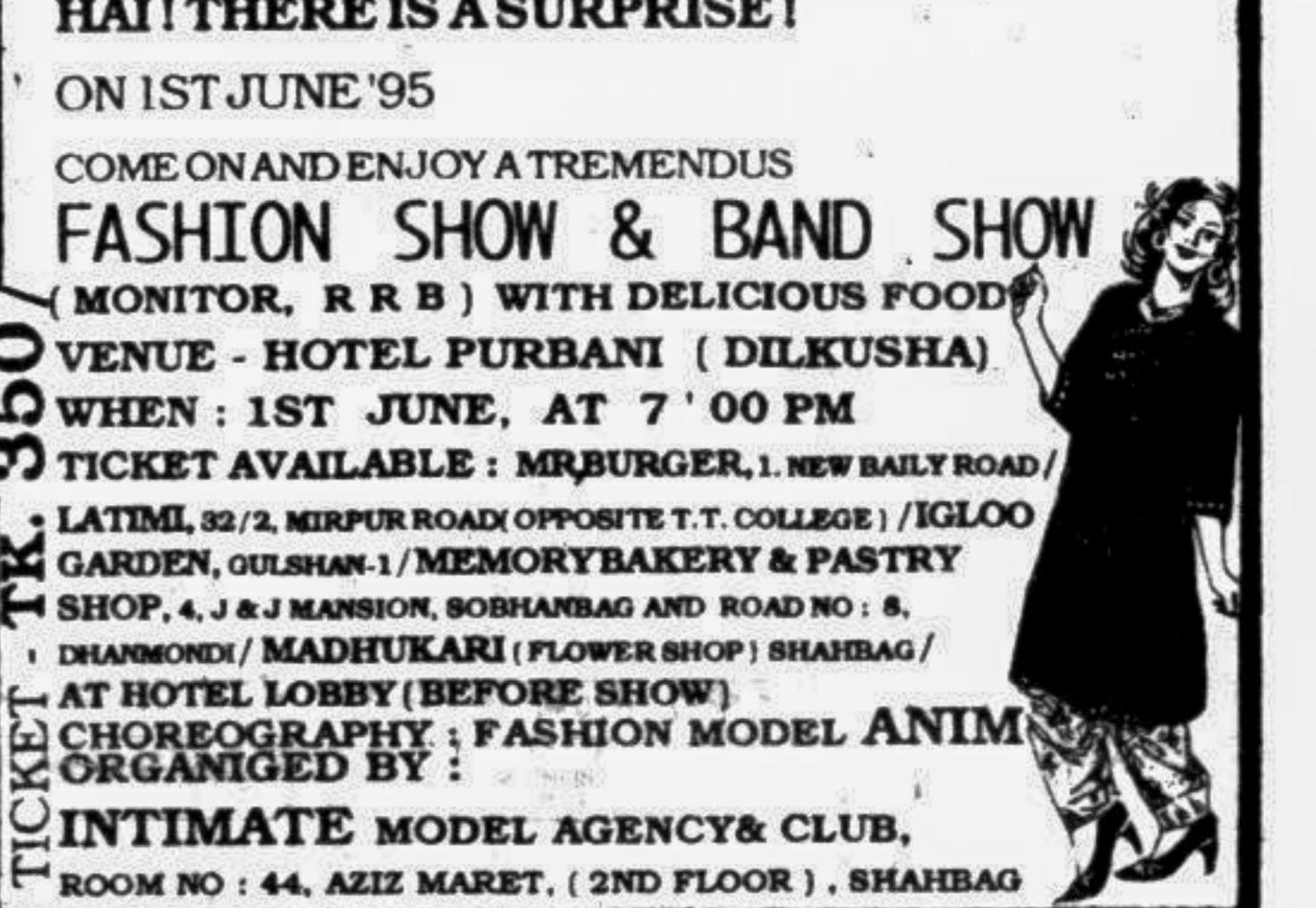
Feroz M Hassan, member-secretary of FEMA conducted the discussion.

William Banks stressed on the need for consensus among the people for constitutional legitimacy of the government. Political parties' mechanism, outside the government's efforts is also important to keep elections free from any influence, he suggested.

The Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) arranged the function, while the organisation's chairperson Fazluruddin Ahmed, former secretary general of SAARC Abul Ahsan, Awami League leader Sudhang

Works Minister Rafiqul Islam formally opening the new building of the Bangladesh Photojournalists' Association in the city yesterday.

— Star photo



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YOU CAN STILL ENJOY THE WONDERFUL
WORLD OF SONY.**

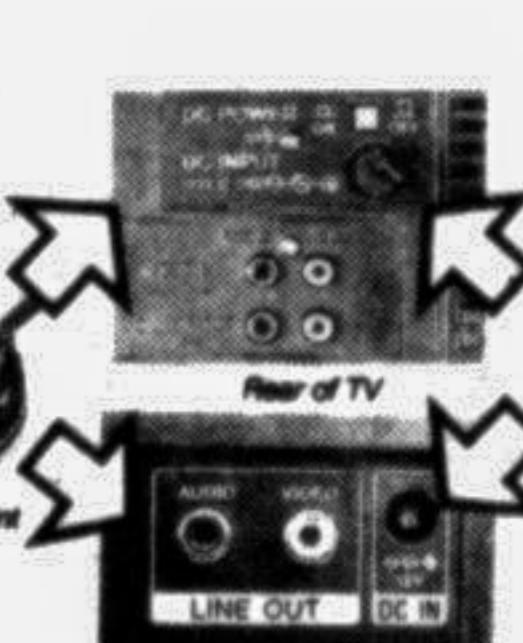
With the new Sony Trinitron Colour TV KV-1487MD and Viewtopia

SLV-X120DPS, now even a power

failure can't stop you from enjoying

your favourite shows. Because they

now both come with AC/DC capability,



all you have to do is hook them up to the battery pack and you can catch true-to-life brilliant colour pictures with the latest technology from Sony. One thing you can be sure of. You can always count on Sony.