

## 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" *deshti* 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.

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's 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 multi-cultural.

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 Husbands 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.



## 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 Shechasebak 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 Popy, Selim Reza Khokan, Md Mamun and M A Qasim were among others present.

## WB, WHO officials call on Yusuf

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

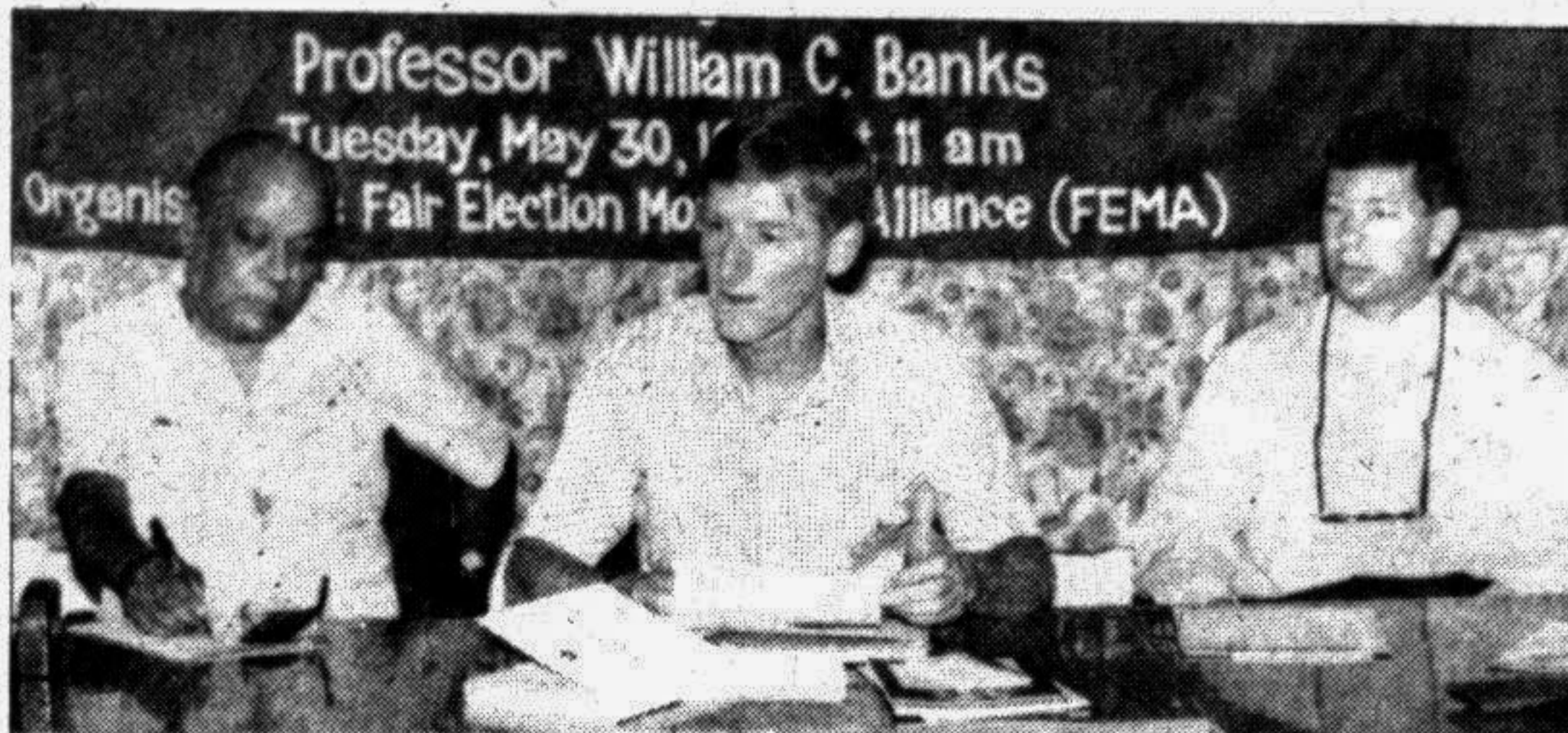
During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to strengthening the role of NGOs responding to the HIV epidemic in Asia and the South Asia region.

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.



Professor 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 Fakhruddin Ahmed, and on his right is the Cultural Affairs officer of the US Embassy, Christ Rochester.

## 'Campaign irregularities should be removed for fair polls'

By Staff Correspondent

A visiting US professor said yesterday that checking irregularities in election campaigns, regulating expenditures of candidates and limiting the terms of office could help ensure free and fair polls.

William C Banks, Professor of Law, Syracuse University, who is also a special counsel of the Committee of Judiciary of the US Senate, was speaking at a lecture-discussion on 'The importance of free and fair elections' at the WVA auditorium in the city.

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

shu Shekhar Halder, Prof Mahabbat 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 said.

The political parties should be performing from bottom to top and media have a strong role to play for holding elections in free and fair manners.

said Prof Banks.

Emphasising the monitoring of candidates' expenditures, he said it is a criminal offence in the US to pay money for votes and intimidate the people to influence elections. Specific laws in this regard is needed to make elections fair, he suggested.

Fakhruddin Ahmed said free elections depended on the roles of electorates, political parties and organisations responsible for conducting elections.

The political parties should educate the electorates for having a democratic culture in the country, he said and also called for a consensus among the political parties to ensure free and fair polls.



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

## Nirmul condemns CU move

Ghatik Dal Nirmul Committee yesterday strongly condemned the Chittagong University authorities for taking the move to introduce a cricket tournament in the name of Fazlul Kader Chowdhury, reports UNB.

The committee, in its executive council meeting, said that the authorities had taken the initiative to "honour" Fazlul Kader Chowdhury, a collaborator of the Pakistani occupation forces.

The committee leaders hoped that the players who have respect for the 1971 Liberation War, would refrain from taking part in the tournament, said a press release.

Presided by Acting Convener of the Committee, Sharif Kabir, the meeting was attended by Shamim Akhtar, Kazi Mukul, Julfikar Ali Manik, Umme Habiba Sumi, Fazlur Rahman, Mozammel Huq and Imron Sikdar and others.

The committee also hailed the Sammilita Sangskritik Jote for taking the decision to hold an anti-communal convention in the city on July 14.

## BCL (S-P) urges EC to be neutral

By DU Correspondent

The Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-P) yesterday urged the Election Commission (EC) to be neutral and fair in preparing the new voters' list. Leaders of the BCL expressed their determination to reject any unfairly registered voters' list, at a meeting held during the EC siege programme yesterday.

They also alleged that the EC had appointed BNP activists as enumerators, who deliberately failed to register AL activists and supporters.

## HAI! THERE IS A SURPRISE!

ON 1ST JUNE '95

COME ON AND ENJOY A TREMENDOUS

FASHION SHOW &amp; BAND SHOW

(MONITOR, R R B) WITH DELICIOUS FOOD

VENUE - HOTEL PURBANI (DILKUSHA)

WHEN: 1ST JUNE, AT 7'00 PM

TICKET AVAILABLE: MR BURGER, 1 NEW BALLY ROAD

LATIM, 32/2 MURPUR ROAD OPPOSITE T.T. COLLEGE / IGLLOO

GARDEN, GULSHAN-1 / MEMORY BAKERY &amp; PASTRY

SHOP, 4, J &amp; J MANSION, SOHANABAG AND ROAD NO: 8,

DIARMOND / MADHUKARI (FLOWER SHOP) SHAHABAG /

AT HOTEL LOBBY (BEFORE SHOW)

CHOREOGRAPHY: FASHION MODEL ANIM

ORGANISED BY:

INTIMATE MODEL AGENCY &amp; CLUB,

ROOM NO: 44, AZIZ MARET, (2ND FLOOR), SHAHABAG

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

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

Date: 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:

- History of America
  - American Literature
  - English Language (Teaching English as a Foreign language)
  - Economics
  - Political Science/International Relations
2. For English language subject, Faculty Members of University Colleges only can apply.
3. Terms & conditions for selection of candidate:
- Age not above 40 years as on 10 June, 1995.
  - There should be at least 3 first divisions and no third division in the academic career.
  - Should have at least 60% marks in both Degree (Honours) & Masters examinations.
  - Those who have not studied in USA earlier.
  - Should have command of English.
  - Should possess sound health.

- Candidates should apply through proper channel in time.
- 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.
- Name of Scholarship (Fullbright Scholarship) & the subject prayed for should be superscribed on the envelope.
- 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.
- No one can be a candidate for more than one subject.
- Decision of the authority is final in selecting the candidates. Incomplete application will not be considered.
- Action as per penal code will be taken against any one intentionally furnishing false statement/information.
- Candidates selected by the Ministry of Education shall have to take part in viva-voce.
- One need not apply if already selected for any scholarship by the Ministry of Education.

Md Akram Hossain

Sr. Asstt Secretary

(Scholarship)

DFF-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, Khagrachhari, 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: Fatikchhari thana of Chittagong district.

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

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

285 - Chittagong - 7: Rangunia thana of Chittagong district.

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

287 - Chittagong - 9: Ward-29 and 30 of city corporation under Doublmouring thana, Kotwali thana, Ward-8 of City Corporation under Panch-lash thana, Wards-6, 17, 18

and 19 of City Corporation under Chandgaon.

288 - Chittagong - 10: Panchlash thana (except Ward No-8 of City Corporation), Chandgaon (except Ward-6: 17, 18 and 19) and Boalkhali thana.

289 - Chittagong - 11: Potia thana (except Char Pathorghata, Charlakha, Zuldha, Boro Uthan and Shikalbaha unions).

290 - Chittagong - 12: Char Pathorghata, Charlakha, Zuldha, Boro Uthan and Shikalbaha unions in Potiya thana and Anowara thana.

291 - Chittagong - 13: Chandanaish thana and Keochiya, Kaliyash, Bazalia, Dharmapur and Purangar unions of Satkania thana.

292 - Chittagong - 14: Satkania thana (excepting Keochiya, Kaliyash, Bazalia, Dharmapur and Purangar unions) and Lohagora thana.

293 - Chittagong - 15: Banashkhali thana of Chittagong district.

294 - 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 - Khagrachhari: Khagrachhari 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.

## 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.

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