

# RISING STARS

## Just Another Ramzaan Day

It is only during the month of Ramzaan that I wake up early enough to see the heart-breaking beauty of dawn, which cannot fail to stir the most dormant poetic instincts in me. The trouble is, of course, waking up in the first place. I wake up with great difficulty, provided that:

(a) My alarm was set previously

(b) My mother woke up before me.

If the truth was known, you would probably find me sleeping through the alarm and my mother shaking me awake. Even so, there's always the danger that I'll drift off to ... (YAWN) ... sleep ... again ...

Unfortunately, someone chooses the exact moment when I return to my happy world of dreams to make an announcement from the neighbourhood mosque. Now that I am awake I had to do the second toughest thing of waking up so early — do my morning ablutions. The water seems almost icy as I splash it on my face, hands and feet, and the last of my drowsiness vanishes.

Mechanically, I eat whatever there is to eat. No matter how delicious the food, it doesn't taste quite the same at four — something in the morning. And I always seem to run out of time before sehri is over and a cacophony of morning prayers break out. I am so thoroughly awake now that it is impossible to go back to bed after saying my prayers, as inviting as the thought had been a more twenty / thirty minutes ago. Usually, I read myself to sleep again, dozing off at about six-thirty or seven and since I don't have school anymore, I could sleep in late.

So I thought.

My mother had different ideas.

"Why don't we go shopping tomorrow? It's Friday and if we start out early, we will find the shops empty. What do you think about it?"

As if it mattered. But just how early were we talking about?

"Nine".

How could a person go to sleep at seven and wake up at nine and function like a normal person? I guess I'd find out, because I had to admit, it sounded like a good idea. I have had BAD experiences in the past years doing Eid shopping. I remembered bowing through masses of sweaty, smelly humanity, bickering bitterly with not-headed shopkeepers and generally thinking very un-Islamic thoughts by the time I returned home.

We started out promptly at nine-thirty (what's an half hour anyway?), feeling smug and confident that this year we would beat the crowds. Traffic was light and the shops comparatively uncrowded and we began to systematically go down the list of what we had to buy. At least, it was uncrowded till around eleven when suddenly it became difficult to breathe. At any rate, we had finished almost sixty per cent of our shopping in only one and a half hours! This was a commendable fact. I recall the time when we had to return three consecutive days under the harsh rays of the glaring afternoon sun to finish all the shopping bit by tiny bit. If we progressed at this steady rate, maybe we could even finish by today! I was full of optimism.

I was feeling rather less enthusiastic by the time we had

by Sumaiya Andaleeb

## Eid Is Coming

by Nazneen Anwar

**Hurray! Hurray! Eid is coming.**  
**Eid is coming with its pockets full of happiness.**  
**Eid is coming with its heart full of love.**  
**Everyone wants to wear new dresses.**  
**And everyone wants to eat delicious food.**

**Everyone wants to be happy.**  
**But some people could not be so**  
**Because they are very poor.**  
**To buy anything new.**

**But we can make them happy**  
**Just like all of us.**  
**We can help them a little**  
**And then Share our joy and love.**

**Eid is coming after the month of Ramadan**  
**After a month of fasting for Allah's pleasure.**  
**Allah our creator is very merciful**  
**To give us such a wonderful pleasure.**

warily into the shower, trying to cool off and wash away the "bazaar" smell, and the smoke and dust that clings to one's clothes.

I was just beginning to relax, deciding to catch up on last night's sleep, telling my-

self that absolutely nothing would make me get up before five: when my mother walked into my room. I'm not going anywhere else today, no way. One more step and my back will break. I'll collapse, I'll faint, I'll ... I started pleading, blocking my ears before she could persuade me into anything.

She looked surprised at my outburst.

"Oh, well I thought it would be nice if we could go shopping for you, but if you're too tired ... She turned to go but not before I had jumped up from bed. This changed everything.

"Yeah, well maybe I'm not so tired after all," I said, slipping my sandals on before she charged her mind. Mothers are an unpredictable lot. "Comon, let's go."

So we ventured forth once more into the dangerous streets of our city. This time I ignored the traffic and the mindless police who were supposed to keep it organized. I was too busy running the contents of my wardrobe through my head. I already had too many whites, and quite a few blues, so these colours were eliminated. Maybe something lemon would be nice, definitely a pastel shade — something floral? Not embroidered. Block printed perhaps? The choices we have to make these days!

It was unbelievable that we were already outside my favourite boutique. Where had the time gone? The owner greeted us with a smile and proceeded to show her display. As I gazed at one beautiful gauzy kameez after another, I carried on the mental debate and began to panic. And constantly reminded myself of my budget. Why is it that everything I like is always way over it?

Finally, after much deliberation and two trials, I made my choice (with the approval of my mother, of course) and we managed to make it back home a good half hour before iflaar, the main event of the day. There was no more time for rest as we got caught in the rush of preparing iflaar. I had the honour of making the lemonade, that cool, refreshing drink with which we always broke our fast. Other aromas of cooking and frying peculiar to this month waited around our kitchen. Why do we never eat

the buttery tasting banter-covered beguine at any other time of the year? or the crisp ptyaji and aluni? Why is there a sudden increase in the sale of sticky, hot jelaip? And to top it all off, there is either halim or chaupati or dahibara and the constant presence of bhuna chola and muri, not to forget the sliced cucumbers and dried dates. I can't imagine having iflaar without these items. They have become an integral part of Ramzaan, just as halwas have become synonymous with Shab-e-Berat, and painted eggs with Easter.

It is almost time and my family gathers around the table. We hear the azaan floating in the dusk air and with a silent prayer open our fast. I always manage to average at iflaar, unable to resist the food spread out before me. Finally I lean back, satiated, as a wave of lethargy sweeps over me and I finally let go the tensions of the day.

Another day of Ramzaan with its lesson a self-control and abstinence has passed, with all the usual hustle and bustle as people prepare for the day of rejoicing after a month of what is supposed to be sobriety. We forget all too often the reason why we go without food and water from dawn to dusk. There is always a hint of impatience over the under-lying aura of peace in this month as we hurry to welcome Eid. Let us remind ourselves this Eid how fortunate we are the rest of the year to be able to eat three square meals a day, to be properly dressed and appreciable our daily comforts. Only then will be truly learn the lesson of Ramzaan and find the true spirit to celebrate Eid.

## Sorry Mr. J Alamgir

by Tasin Ahmed

THOUGH I am fond of your articles and read all of them, but I will have to protest against your recently published article "Are girls dangerous?" for several reasons.

You directed that girls are some how dangerous. But to my knowledge I think it is known to all that they are naturally soft and harmless. They have a very soft heart and they also have a very strong conscious about creating any dangerous situation. It is simply impossible for them to do such things. They have feelings for everyone, everywhere. So questioning about their nature is simply idiotic.

You said that controlling the girls in any debate championship is second next to impossible. But for your kind information I would like to say that this is not right. Whenever

and wherever any debates were held, they were civilized and controlled. I would also like to add that talking about their indisciplined manner in a debate championship is a blatant lie.

You humiliated them by calling them ferocious and writing about them so strongly. You know that our present situation of relationship with the girls are in a stable manner and we have started thinking about them as our own. But talking against them at this moment can hamper this relationship and hamper the progress of unity. So please for the sake of unity and to keep you name "Shahrukh Khan" (that is what the girls call you), don't write anything such boast anymore. Or else you will have to face the future earth, full of your bad dream "Dangerous Girls."

## The Power Of My Brother

by Nusrat Ahmed Tanni

LAST time when I visited England to spent my summer vacation at my Auntie's place at Bath Terrace of South East of London I met with an English teacher. He was our neighbour and a very close friend of my uncle. I liked him a lot. He knew lots of wonderful stories. I often visited him; when one day he told me a story of his retarded little brother Oliver. It's not only a story but a true as well as a sad one.

And I thought it would be better if I write exactly the way Christopher Vinck (English teacher) told me. Although at certain points I added some information about Christopher Vinck.

He was the most helpless human I ever met. But we were blessed with his presence.

In the house where I grew up, my brother was on his back in his bed for almost 33 years,

in the same corner of his room, under the same window, beside the same blue and pink walls. Oliver was blind and mute. His legs were twisted. He didn't have the strength to lift his head or the intelligence to learn anything.

Today I am an English teacher, and each time I introduce my class to "The Miracle Worker", a play about a blind and deaf Helen Keller, I tell my students about Oliver. Once a boy raised his hand and said, "Oh, Mr Vinck, you mean he was a vegetable?"

I stammered for a few seconds. My family and I fed Oliver. We changed his diapers, bathed him, tickled his chest to make him laugh. We listened to him laugh as we watched television downstairs. We listened to him as he rocked his arms up and down to make the bed squeak. We listened to him cough in the

middle of the night.

"Well, I guess you could call him a vegetable," I finally said. "I called him Oliver, my brother. You would have liked him."

When my mother was pregnant with Oliver, she was over come by fumes from a leaking coal-burning stove. My father pulled her outside, where she revived quickly.

On April 20, 1956, Oliver was born. A healthy-looking, plump, beautiful boy. A few months later my mother brought him to a window and held him in the sunlight. Oliver looked directly into the sun and my mother realized that her baby was blind. My parents learned, with the passing months, that blindness was only part of the problem.

The doctor at Mt Sinai hospital in New York City told my mother and father there was absolutely nothing that could be done for Oliver. He didn't want my parents to grasp at false hope. "You could place him in an institution", he said.

"But he is our son", my parents replied. "We will take Oliver home, of course."

The good doctor answered, "Then take him home and love him".

We'd wrap a box of baby cereal for Oliver at christmas and place it under the tree. We'd pat his head with a damp cloth in the middle of a July heat wave. His baptismal certificate hung on the wall above his head. A bishop came to the house and confirmed him.

Even now, after his death, Oliver remains the weakest, most helpless human being ever met, and yet he was one of the most powerful, he could do absolutely nothing except breathe, sleep and eat; yet he was responsible for love, courage and insight.

When I was small my mother would say, "Isn't it wonderful that you can see?" Once she said, "when you go to heaven, Oliver will run to you and embrace you. And he will say, 'Thank you'. I remember, too, that my mother explained now we were blessed with Oliver in ways that were not clear to her first.

So often parents are faced with the problem of severely retarded child who is also hyperactive, demanding or wild, who needs constant care. So many people have little choice but to place their child in an institution.

We were fortunate that Oliver didn't need us to be in his room all day. He never knew what his condition was. We were blessed with his presence, a true presence of peace.



**Just For You**

★ Eid Mubarak  
 To my best friend and *La sis* Kanta with lots of love, hugs and kisses.  
 Simon

★ Fizz E,  
 Blood is thicker than water. It's still moving in there. A-level results are coming college responses are coming. Have a Happy 19th BIRTHDAY?

Sigs

★ Dearest Fizz,  
 A friend is one who knows your faults yet loves you in spite of your virtues. Enjoy your birthday.

A Friend

★ Dear Fizzy,  
 The years are really flying, aren't they? If you need someone to lean on (literally and metaphorically) you know who to call! But have a great birthday anyway!

Love  
 Judy

★ Dear Fizzi rooni,  
 All the good times, all the bad times, through thick, through thin, I'll be there for what it's worth.  
 Happy 19th!

Love  
 Sue

★ Dear Kodu,  
 Naku is in love with you.  
 From 'Balki'

★ Dear Stubborn Miss Wandering,  
 Yes, I am on a diet. Last night I had 3 pizzas (thick crusts), 2 litres of ice cream, 5 gallons of coke, 3 plates of biriyani and a dozen servings of chaupati. Ok doko.

Alisan

★ Goods,  
 I'm sizzling at the prospect of dinner.

Gas

★ Dear Secret Admirer of Kalin Khan  
 Get a life!  
 Not-So-Secret, Non-Admirer of Secret Admirer of Kalin Khan.

★ Eid Mubarak to all the members .... of the Rising Stars.

From  
 Sunvia

★ Dear Kalin, K.  
 Are we an item yet??  
 Guess who!

## Global Awareness

by Tadib Muqtada

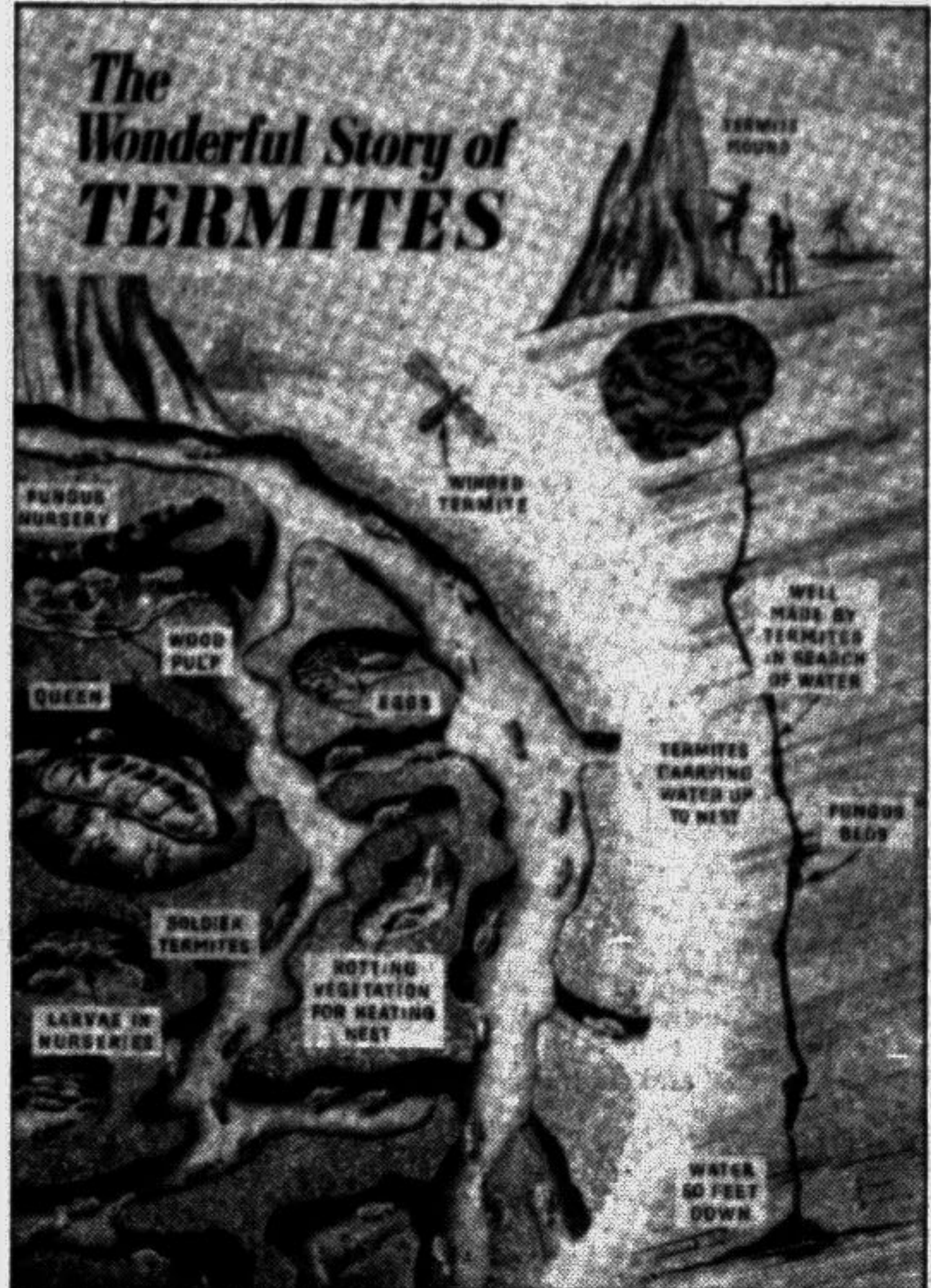
OVER the last few decades the people and the countries of the world are coming closer and closer through trade, political and cultural exchanges. There are several major problems and concerns which would require collective efforts to solve these. The first step is surely to raise Global Awareness.

One of the major problems is the environmental problem. Pollution is one of the important topics in the world. Dumping wastes, oil spills and global warming are all major problems of pollution. If a rich country wants to keep itself clean then it will dump their wastes in poorer countries or in the ocean. When that country dumps their waste in the poorer country that country becomes clean but the poorer country gets all the garbage. The garbage also kills all the fishes and birds in the water. The rich countries are also mainly responsible for the re-

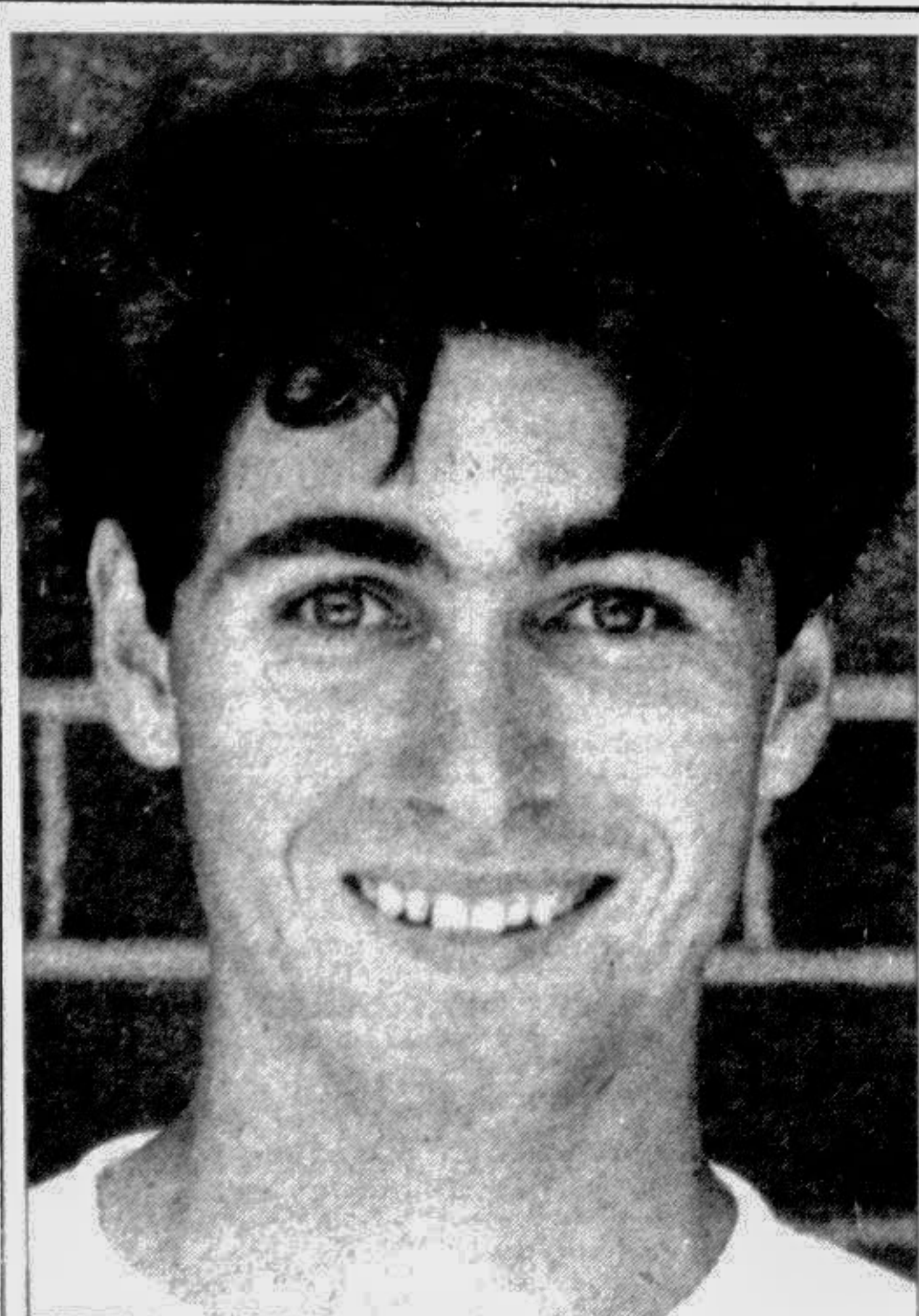
lease of CFC (carbofluorochlorine which is destroying the ozone layer). Global Awareness is needed among both rich and poor countries to protect the global climate and flora and fauna of the world.

Global awareness is also needed to fight poverty. More than half the people of the world are going hungry. So all the countries should get united and help the poor people. "WE ARE THE WORLD" was a concert organized to raise global awareness to show that Africa was starving. Similarly all countries should be aware that they should spend less money on arms and nuclear powers and more on the welfare of the people. We should also get united to fight killer diseases like aids, cancer and drug addiction.

So global awareness is needed to keep the Earth clean and peaceful.



Courtesy: The Wonder Book Of Wonders



## STAR PROFILE

Name: Richard Snell  
 Right-arm fast bowler for South Africa.  
 Clubs played for: Somerset, Transvaal.  
 Did you know that ...

... He is studying for a bachelor's degree in commerce ... Transvaal were once playing against Natal province, Natal needed 10 of the last ball. Snell bowled a no-ball which Natal captain Jonty Rhodes hit for 6. He hit the next for 4.

... His international debut figures against Australia were 9-0-15-0.

## What Someone Said When He Was Spanked

by Md Tawfiq Faizur Rahman

Some day I may,  
 Pack my bag and run away.  
 Someday, I may,  
 But not today.

Some night I might,  
 Slip away in the moonlight.  
 I might, some night,  
 But not tonight.

Some night, some day  
 I might, I may  
 But right now I think  
 I will stay.

## JOKES

A man was deaf, but couldn't afford to buy a hearing aid, so he hung a piece of string over his ear.

"Do you hear better with that string over your ear?" a friend asked.

"No," said the man, "but people shout at me now."

Policeman: Do you know you were doing ninety miles an hour, son?

New driver: That's great — I only passed my test this morning!

