

RISING STARS

The life of an Ostrich

by Zia-el-shams Ahmed

DARKNESS surrounds me as I float in the fluid inside the egg. It has been like this for the last two weeks. And you know something, my living accommodation was getting kind of cramped. May be I should complain to the management, that is my mom. It is pretty boring, too. No MTV, no music nothing except this stupid liquid. I finally gave up, and being a smart, big mouth said, "let there be light" and crack. A shaft of light hits my eyes. What I did not know was that someone had already used this line and got the same effect. What really happened was that my mother had given up on me and probably guessed I could not find my own way out. So she decided to give me a hand for should it be a beak in this case, another huge crack and ouch! Jeez, talk about bad timing and bad aim. My mom had hit a little too hard. Anyway she had made a hole big enough for me to get out. I stumbled out and believe me, I was not even graceful about it.

Yellow sand surrounded me now (something always surrounds me) and in the middle of it stood my mom. Tall, beautiful, healthy and green. I ran towards her to give her a hug and stumbled. But what great will power my mother had. She did not even move a bit to help me. Anyway, I half ran and half stumbled to her, and put my small wings around her. Ouch! My mom had thorns all over her body. But me trying to be nice and gentlemanly said, "Oh, mom, what lovely thorns you have". "Hrrumph son, why in the heavens name are you hugging a cactus?"

Who dare interrupt this touching scene of a mother and her son. I turned around and saw this weird looking creature looking at me. Hey, what do you know, it looks a lot like what I will look like when I grow up.

"Mom?" I asked.
"No son, I am your dad," come on now you can't exactly blame me for being ignorant. No one told me what my parents look like.

"D-a-d-d-y-k-n-s" I shouted while running towards him. I reached him and grabbed one of his thin scaly legs. "Now, son, I forgive you, though I am still not sure about what wrong you have done." So I went to meet my family still hugging

my dad's leg. To my dismay, I found out that I had an elder sister. When my dad introduced me to her, she came over to me, kicked my backside and then walked off, smiling all the while, my parents found it very amusing. And me not knowing whether this was some kind of an ancient ritual found it very confusing. From then on, for the next few weeks, she did this once in the morning and once before going to bed. So I guess it became a kind of habit of mine to harden my backside every morning and right whenever it was time for her to kick it. If she would forget to do it, I would be very depressed and hurt, because for me to break a habit was very hard. For the next couple of days I was kept very busy by my mom. It was believed that if a newborn was not introduced to all its neighbours in a span of four days, it would grow huge wings and fly off into the sky. Thus it would no longer be the only bird that cannot fly (i.e. an ostrich). So I had to meet everyone. One day I was walking down the road with my mom when I saw a small ostrich wearing sunglasses. So I asked mom, how come I wasn't introduced to him. My mom took me aside and said very sternly, "Now, son, I want you to promise me that you will never mix with him."

"But why, Mom?"
"Because it is a known fact that he is a very bad ostrich, and has done something very bad."

"What, mom?"
"Be quiet! you are too young for these things."

"But please, mom!"
"No!"
"Please, please, please.... pretty please with sand and cactus flower on top."

"Okay, okay!" then she whispered, "he has been known to take food from human UGH! what more he liked it!"
Taking food from humans was the worst of the worst things an ostrich could do. The reputation of a whole family could be destroyed by a single bite of a sandwich. I still felt bad for the ostrich (though he did not even look a bit worried about the fact that he was an out cast) come on, just because he likes sandwiches does not mean he has to be shooed from the rest of the ostriches.

Two months after my birth, there was a sudden shortage of

food. No it wasn't me. It would not be possible for me to eat that much. So all of us waited for the ostriches (that is the version of US marines for ostriches) to come with food, but no one showed up. So all of us went to a nearby airfield to wait for the US marines to come with food. No, I am sorry to say this but when our stomachs are concerned we do not

on for days and days, sometimes getting something to eat and sometimes not getting anything at all.

One day I was playing around when suddenly I noticed a pair of green eyes staring at me, so I went forward to find out what it was. I saw this animal standing on four legs with a lot of bushy hair on its head. Me, being a nice and friendly guy



exactly care for our reputations. We were sure that since they were helping the Somalis, they were sure to help us. Saddam decided to show what a great fool he was exactly at the same time. So the US marines and UN were too busy killing their own kind to help us. Yeah, why save ostriches when you can have fun killing humans? Anyway we just could not starve to death, so we decided to break away from the rest of the ostriches and look for food. The three of us set off. My sister had just got married so she had to stay with her in-laws (about time too. My backside was beginning to hurt a lot.) So we walked

said, "Hi, mister."

Now this stranger did the most amazing thing. He roared and started running towards me, have heard of people getting excited when they meet old friends but this was ridiculous. I did not even know who or what it was. But anyway who was I to damper his excitement. So I also ran towards him to greet him. Only when I got close to him did I notice the anger and hunger on his face. So I said, "Hey mister, why... he cut me off with another huge roar. Talk about rude people so I tried again "Look mister" another roar. May be he did not like being called "Mister"

But he did not have to get touchy about it. So I decided that it would be much better for my health if I did not stick around to find out what was wrong with this guy. So I changed direction and started to run towards my mother. He kept on chasing but I was faster. When I reached my parents, he was quite far from us. But while I was telling my parents about him, he jumped in our midst. Talk about pushy people I certainly did not want him to join our conversation. "Lion" screamed both my parents and buried their heads in the sand, performing both these actions in perfect emission. They must have been in the army. I ran to my mom and shouted "Mom this is no time to look at the world from below the surface." Mom pulled her head out and said in the most serious manner, "Son you must try to gain knowledge at all times," saying this she went back to her study of the world.

"Go away son. Don't disturb me now." Knowing that I could not badge any of them, I started running for my life. And what do you know leaving these two huge stationary targets the stupid guy had to chase this small moving target, i.e. me. Talk about stupidity. Anyway he swiped at me and managed to hit my backside, causing me to follow our Third Law, Oh, by the way, we had these three laws that were taught to us when we were very young. These were called the new ostriches universal law. The first law was "If you can't see it, it cannot see you." The second law was, "No matter how great a danger you are in, don't waste your time trying to fly because not everything with wings can fly." And the third law was, "If you are in great need or danger and there is nothing to do, go 'SQUAWRK' now squawk was the most frequently used word in our language. Come to think of it, it is the only word in the language of the ostriches. No wonder, it is used so much. Haring only one word in your language creates a lot of problems for example, one day an ostrich called Sostrieh was hungry. So he went to another ostrich called Nostrich and said 'SQUAWRK' in a loud voice (which he thought meant I am hungry). But Nostrich thought he said, "I love you" and so she

said yes she would go out with him. Now a really confused Sostrieh got into something he did not want to get into in the first place.

Now back to our original story. That is me going "Squawrk," this dumb lion kept on roaring for some reason I could not figure out. I knew he was right behind me and he knew he was right behind me so why in the heavens name was he reminding one of a fact that I was already aware of. Anyway I ran and ran, and he ran ran, I guess he had to, as he wanted to catch me. But somehow I managed to lose him. Not that I regretted it, I was so relieved to lose him that I forgot that while in the process of losing him, I lost my way and so I guess I also lost my parents. Now that was too many things for an ostrich of my age to lose even if he is a little forgetful. So there I was wandering all over the place looking for my parents. Then out of the blue came this fence. Now it was pretty dark and I guess I wasn't exactly looking where I was going so I just walked into the fence and got my beak caught in it. Oh Christ, this is a very embarrassing position to get caught in. I tried to get free but the more I struggled the more tangled I became. Nice position I guessed I had to wait until morning to be rescued. So I went to sleep there with my beak caught in the fence, and sure enough in the morning came a small boy.

"Oh my god, you poor bird you got stuck there during the night, didn't you?" he said.

"No, I usually go around sticking my beak into and getting stuck in the fence, you stupid human. Of course I am stuck so will you help me out or not?" I said to myself.

"Oh, I have to get you free."

"Now we are getting to the point, aren't we?" so he came forward and put his hand against the fence and pulled me out. I looked at him. He was a small boy with brownish skin and eyes to match it.

He asked me "Are you hungry?"
I was, and I don't care what the other ostriches say, when I am hungry I will eat anything from any one. So I followed him to the farm and my new life began. But I guess that is another story.

What is Love

by Shaker Karim from Tehran

LOVE can be a beautiful thing. It can be as pleasant as the breeze in Spring. It can also be as harsh as the winter winds. For love is what you make it. And you know not when it ends and when it begins. A flicker of the eye, a momentary glance. A hint of affection, a feeling of romance. Oh, how great it would be. To fall in love! But love needs to be nurtured. And it may take a lifetime to learn how. For love can bleed, and love can die.... I often sit back. And wonder why.

Picture Quiz

Here is another Picture Quiz for you this week. Can you name it and say where is it?



The Eland—The world's largest antelope, the Eland has spiraled antlers that can grow to 3½ feet long. The Eland is over 6 feet tall and weighs over 1,500 pounds.

Yen and the cake

by Sanjida Shaheed

ONE day Yen's mother was going to bake a nice, round, sweet chocolate cake. Baking isn't easy and Yen knew that her mom would call her for a helping hand. (But she wasn't in the mood!) Her guess was right cause her mom called just then, "Will you fetch me some eggs, please Yen?" "Oh mom, I'm too tired to help, and I'm lying in my bed. Why can't you fetch it yourself, instead?" Again called her mother, "come here, Help me with the beating, will you Yen dear?" "Oh mom, I'd not dare, Cause I'm much too tired to even wink or stare!" Yen's mother called her again in a pleading tone.
But all Yen did was refuse and groan.
Soon the aroma rose in the air. So, now Yen really couldn't but go near. And saw mom just taking the overhot cake out. It looked most delicious, no doubt! "Wow," said Yen, "Can I have a bite please, mom?" "No dear, said mom", you're even too tired to come. Poor child, you are too tired to be fed, I'm afraid, all you may do is go to bed! Well, what would Yen do, she was ashamed and red.

Every one knows that one of you is dying for a person who lives at Topkhana and the other one would do anything to get a date with someone in SO4 (guess who?). So don't fight and don't lie.

Best wishes
Adeeb

* S. Tass, I (Car doll) and A Z Mahmood, see us in the usual place at 1630 hours.
From the persons you least expect.

* Kh. A Z Robin, P S awaits you.
From the person you least expect.

* Wishing all Josephites a great, prosperous year.
From one of you Tashfeen

* Dear Sumaiya, Me? Hinting at something? Of course not! Not! Ahsan

* Dear Somebody (you know who you are) Guess What? Ahsan

* Dear Everyone Else, What is it with you guys? Ahsan

* Ahsan, Don't "Dear every one else" us. Everyone else.

* Congratulations To all the guys who have been accepted in the human race. WH

* Dear Running Nose, Make em' bigger only way you'll get accepted! The Demturge

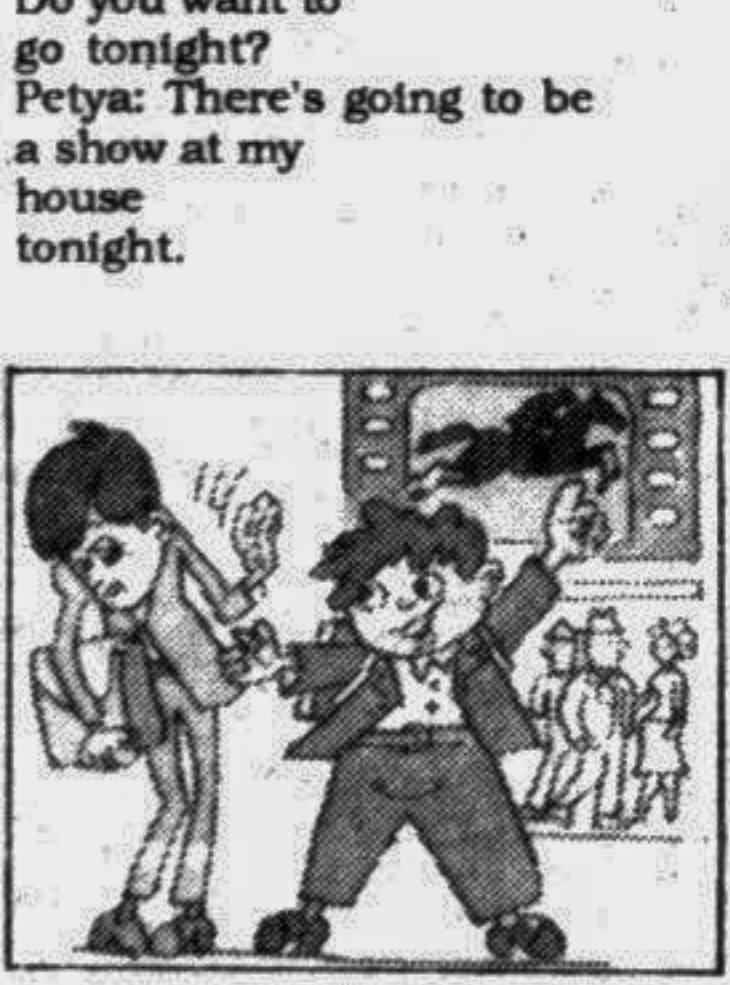
* Dear Betsy and Bertha Back from the dead need your assistance. Fred.

A story riddle

Sasha and Petya are walking home from school. Sasha: What a wonderful day. I'll eat and go to the river Sunbathe.

Petya: Wonderful! I'm dying of the heat.

Sasha: Great! Now I won't need to go swimming. Petya: Now we're sure to get a cold.



The Two Ws

by Sagheer Bin Faiz

WAQAR Younis was born in Punjab on November 16, 1971. His father was a cotton farmer who got a job at Sharjah when Waqar was three. He was left behind in a boarding school at Lahore. The situation could easily have crushed Waqar but he only made him self-reliant.

At the age of seven he left Lahore to meet his family in Sharjah. Waqar studied for four years at the Sharjah college. He wasn't a very good student, nor was he very interested in cricket.

That changed in 1987 when an international benefit match between the Gavaskar XI and the Mianad XI was played in Sharjah. He was transfixed by the sight of Imran bowling and from then on, cricket was in his veins.

Shortly after, the family moved to Abu Dhabi, where there was little opportunity to play cricket. Being very enthusiastic about their son's abilities, Waqar's parents sent him back to Pakistan to a school in Bawalpur. By the end of his tenth year, he was a leading fast bowler of the school XI.

He then went back to his hometown of Burewala, which gave rise to the cliché "The Burewala Bombshell". He enrolled in college there and led the team to victory as captain. He also started playing for the Burewala Whites Cricket Club.

In the 86/87 season and next year, got selected for the senior Multan Division side. He took 19 wickets in four games (9 in the first against Quetta) and helped his side into the first division over there, he did not bring forth such bountiful fruits taking 4 wickets in 5 matches at the expense of a 60 run average. However, his efforts were enough to get him into United Bank, a first class club, an offer that Waqar gleefully accepted.

He never got a chance to bowl for a while, UB boasting the experienced Sik-hander Bakht and Salim Jaffer. But then they were due to play a match on Multan's slowest pitch, the sight of which made Sikhander and Salim retire with injuries. Waqar got his chance and bowled very well, taking 1125. From then, he was rarely dropped.

In the first few games of the Quaid-e-Azam trophy, Waqar bowled very well. Taking 6-33 in one match. The match assured him of selection in the forthcoming U-19 test against India. However, he spoiled his chance during the momentous match by bowling wildly and without control, interested in speed rather than accuracy and was consequently dropped for the next 2 matches. However another five wickets bag for United Bank ensured that he regained his place for

the final U-19 test. He bowled well taking 4 wickets in the first and 1 in the second innings. He also topped the Quaid-e-Azam bowling averages with 23 wickets.

In October 1989, United Bank had a match against India's one-day champions Delhi and that was the first time Imran saw Waqar bowl. After watching the first 3 overs on TV, he was so impressed that he rushed over to the ground. He asked Waqar to join the national training camp at Sharjah. He had already decided to give Waqar a chance on the team and watching him practice enforced that conviction. "He was a natural athlete", says Imran.

Everyone helped Waqar settle into the side. He was very quiet and shy, spending most of his time with Aqib & Mushtaq. He was chosen for Pakistan's first game against West Indies and without taking a wicket, impressed everyone with a bowling performance of immense speed and hostility on a lifeless Sharjah wicket.

He was still an unknown outside Pakistan, a fact that changed by the next game against the W Indies. He took 3-28 and disconcerted everyone who faced him. People were amazed by his pace and fluency and from then on, he went from strength to strength. The rest is history.

Those Environmental Things

by Adeeb Z Mahmud

AS the jungle sun begins another sizzling climb in the sky blasting its tropical heat on the rising mists, vast canopies of trees embrace the intricate life of the forest below. Under the endless emerald expanse, the forest's secrets are guarded and the earth sings the song it has sung for millions of years before.

Destruction of forests and other habitats is driving nearly a hundred species of animals and plants to extinction every day. The losses are especially serious in the world's tropical forests which cover only 8% of the earth's surface. As nations produce millions of tons of household garbage and toxic industrial waste, the world is running out of places to dispose of the refuse. The swelling tide of humanity is wrecking havoc on the environment by chopping down forests, overgrazing grasslands and overploughing croplands in a desperate effort to produce more food. The problem is especially serious in the developing world.

Far below the towering treescops, plants and creatures witness the dawning of another day's marvels unfolding. The forest hears the earth's song — a song powerful yet fragile. But the question remains, will our future generations live to witness nature's marvels, mysteries and wonders? Will they ever see an eagle flying free high up in the air or enjoy the peace and quietness of a mountain lake? The answer lies within us. It is up to us to work together and make this world a better place to live for ourselves and our future generations.



After digging a burrow, the frog crawls in and sheds a layer of skin. The shed skin forms a cocoon-like envelope that helps to slow the evaporation of water from the frog's body.

The frog stays in its burrow until the next heavy rainfall. It lives off nutrients stored in its body. The frog's water and food supply can last a long time.

Some water-holding frogs have survived for five years without drinking or eating.