

LIVING

Animals as Companions

by Lavina Ambreen Ahmed

A few weeks back a mother of an eight-year old complained about an unusual gift that her son got on his birthday. Unusual was an understatement. They were four small turtles, gift wrapped in an aquarium, so that he can play "Ninja Turtles" with them. The child was obviously in seventh heaven but the mother could not be more perturbed, not having the foggiest idea of how to handle them.

Then, there is this other child in the neighbourhood, whose best friend seems to be a duck, and when the two walk together, side by side, one can't help recalling that old nursery rhyme "and everywhere that Mary went the lamb was sure to go."

These are just two examples of uncommon pets. The truth is, through the ages, many people all over the world have been keeping pets, and when it comes to pets there are no limits or laws as to which animals can be pets. The bond between *Homo Sapiens* and animals is not a new phenomenon. It started from the ancient times, before the beginning of history, when men learned to tame wild animals for practical purposes, i.e. kept herds of cattle, flocks of sheep and domesticated some other poultry like chickens, ducks, geese etc. They also trained horses for riding, dogs for hunting, camels for carrying loads, pigeons for sending mail and so on. In other words, though at first, animals were strictly used for some purpose or other, later on this concept slowly changed and animals were started to be acknowledged as man's loyal friends.

Why do human beings consider animals as their trusted friends? Maybe it is because unlike mere mortals, the animal's affection and loyalty are always hundred per cent genuine. Among them, the most faithful one is undoubtedly the dog. Many have felt the death of a dog as a very sad bereavement. Dogs saving their masters from some danger, as pining away and dying with grief at the death of their master has often been portrayed in books and films. In Edinburgh there is a bronze statue of a Skye terrier called "Bobbie" put up outside the "Grey Friar's" cemetery, where the faithful dog lay on his masters' grave all day and night, refusing food, till he died of a broken heart. The dog is known as "Grey Friar's Bobbie".

Some time back, a similar incident occurred in our country. A common dog of a convicted criminal used to sit by the jail gate and await patiently for his master's release. Charmed by its devotion, the guards relented and let the dog share its master's meals. When

it comes to devotion, next to the dog is the horse. Alexander The Great was so upset when his old horse "Bucephalus", which carried him through all his campaigns, died in India, that as a mark of his affection he built a magnificent tomb over its body.

Sometimes we get to hear,

affluent can afford or boast giraffes, dolphins or elephants.

Many animal lovers throughout the world have made miniature zoos, bird sanctuaries or marine worlds in their own homes. The renowned artist S M Sultan of Bangladesh has built up such a miniature zoo in his home back in Narail.

some of the shops of that area which attract many people everyday. Even if a person isn't interested in buying animals, he/she might be tempted to browse through the shops and see what kind of animals they are selling.

There, one will find dogs of many breeds, adorable Spitz dogs with their teddy bear like eyes costs about Tk 4000-6000, while ferocious looking Doberman or a German Shepherd or Alsatian dog costs around Tk 7000-9000. Sometimes, Lasa, Chihuahua and Callie dogs too can be found there. The price of these dogs are from Tk 5000-7000. There are also mischievous looking monkeys Tk 200 a pair, cute bunny rabbits Tk 200-300 pair, small local turtles Tk 50-100, Singaporean or Thai Turtles, Tk 300-400 pair. The two kinds of pets that are available there in plenty, are numerous species of birds and fishes, i.e. Love Birds Tk 300 a pair, Bengali Finch, Bullfinch, Goldfinch Tk 300 pair, Red Avadavat or Red Glory Tk 550 pair, Dove Tk 150, Parrots and their relatives — Macaus, Cockatoos and Budgetgers are all over Tk 2000. Pigeons, Canaries and Cuckoos and some other birds too can be found. While the fish shops have all kinds of fishes such as Gold fish, Fighter, Discus, Oscar, Pomade, Tiger Shark, Albino Shark, Silver Shark and many other small fishes are sold there. The prices of these fishes ranges from Tk 30-500 pair. Animal food and beautiful aquariums can also be bought in these shops.

However, these shops do have quite a few problems. Salesmen are constantly complaining that business is pretty bad, while the customers' favourite complaint is that the animals are far too expensive.

In answer to this complaint the salesmen say that, as most of the animals are brought from foreign countries specially, Thailand and Singapore, and they can't reduce the price. But, what they can do, is transform these shops into a much cleaner and hygienic place, and add more variety of pets to attract the customers. The sales people too, should take a basic training in taking care of animals — that ought to improve the business.

Pet shops are still quite a novelty to us, though they didn't create the sensation the entrepreneurs launching them thought they would. Who knows? It's too soon to tell. Given time, Bangladeshis might get to like the idea of keeping pets, and maybe sometime in the not too distant future, this pet shop business will flourish.



Pets at a local shop

read or witness things such as — rich, lovely, disillusioned people leaving all their fortunes to their beloved, loyal friends — their pets, thinking that their feelings were far more sincere than their offsprings or blood relatives!

In ancient Egypt cats were the most popular pets, when one thinks of pets they normally visualize dogs, cats, birds or fishes, but actually according to peoples' tastes, each and every kind of living creature can be pets, i.e. horses, turtles, monkeys, rabbits, deer and squirrels. The world is filled with eccentric people who have been known to make pets of even such unlikely creatures as snakes, iguanas and other lizards, spiders, snails, crows, eagles, vultures, bees, tigers, lions, foxes, crocodiles and even alligators. Meanwhile, the more

near river Chitra, and there, one will find various kinds of animals from cats to even snakes!

Pets, seem to be quite in demand in our country too. To satisfy the desires of the animal lovers, quite a number of pet shops are seen these days. These shops are an immense delight to the pet enthusiasts.

An interesting sight will greet any person, passing by the Sonargaon Road near Elephant Road. The frenzied sounds of barking, squealing and chirping, all mixed into a wild crescendo is all that it takes to make one curious enough to turn one's head and investigate where the sounds are coming from. Actually, located there is a row of pet shops, "Water Zoo," "Hobby and Pet," "Neel Mouyuree," "Fish Paradise," "Black Sea," "Red Sea," "Lover's Corner," and "Mermaid" are

Education for Young Ones

by Sylvia Saleem

MOST parents start a process of education almost as soon as their children are born. This encouragement and guidance continues into the formal period of education and goes on through adolescence and young adulthood until it becomes a kind of lease-lend of ideas and experience, and it is difficult to decide who is educating whom!

A loving, gentle form of discipline starts in the first year and to small children is a solid foundation on which to base their behaviour — the beginnings of acceptance of the world in which they have to live. Parents can help a young mind to expand and explore by selecting carefully the activities they enjoy with their children, and the toys they buy for them. By three or four, most children like wooden beads on wire to push along and count, and bright plastic letters and numbers to experiment with. Plenty of paper and pencils or paints encourage the child to use his imagination. In this way, by the time he is ready for school he has some familiarity with numbers and letters.

Never try to force a young child to learn. Your methods may be quite different from the ones he will encounter at school and will only confuse him. But provide him with interesting, constructive toys and let his imagination and natural inquisitiveness do the rest.

A Great Adventure

At the age of five a child's formal education begins, and he sets off on this great adventure. Now the parents must relinquish some of their responsibility to a schoolteacher. Much can be gained by teacher and parent working together to help a small child accustom himself to this new life. Teachers are dedicated people whose first thought is for the child's good. Discuss any problems with them while your child is settling down, and learn what they expect of him.

Try always to uphold a teacher's decision; never openly disagree with it in front of your child. If, in fact, you cannot see the justice of it, and feel seriously concerned, take the matter up with the teacher privately.

Exchange Ideas

One of the most difficult things for parents to accept is the fact that someone else is now disciplining their child. It is a very good idea for parents and teacher to meet and compare notes on the "Open Days" which most schools hold. Take advantage of these occasions to enter into your child's school life a little — get to know his teacher and friends — and inspect his work. It is a pity for a child to feel that home and school are two completely different worlds — one unconcerned about the other. Take advantage of all the social occasions, sports days, plays, pageants, and the like, to get to know this new world of his.

Milestones

The first milestone in your child's school life comes at the age of seven when he leaves the infants for the Junior School. Most county education author-

ties have a system of grading at this stage. Children are put among others of the same ability, and work at their natural pace. The theory is that it is better psychologically for a child to be working happily in a lower form than continually to be struggling along at the bottom of a higher one. This system

ents, out of misplaced solicitude and sympathy, start up a resentment in children over the question. Soon the children are skipping over the time to be taken — being careless and uncaring. Homework has to be done and is a part of school life. Make it so much a part of routine that the child gets it done

study are sometimes difficult to come by in an average family house. Young children shout and play, the television set may entice thoughts away from the work in hand, and even mother is not always blameless when she exhorts the student to hurry because the table is needed for tea!

Try to set aside a part of the house where your child can work in peace. A bedroom is a very good place. Here a child is away from distractions and can concentrate. Make sure that the room is adequately heated in winter, and make, if possible, a study corner with a desk or work table, a comfortable chair and a good light. Reference books and an encyclopedia could be close at hand.

Try to keep younger ones away. They can be a great distraction, but they will usually respond when it is explained that their brother or sister is working hard and must not be disturbed.

How Much TV?

It is always a pity if television becomes a bone of contention within a family. Parents may feel that adult programmes are unsuitable — children want to watch anything and everything, to the detriment of reading and homework. Try not to make a monster out of it. There is much that is good and stimulating in television — particularly in the children's own programmes. Discovering about other lands, the way different peoples live, the problems these people have to face, all help to move a child's interest away from his own immediate circle.

Then wise parents can stimulate this interest with visits to the public library and perhaps museums, searching out more information, making the child think for himself. Serialisation of "classic" books is excellent, too, on television. Often very well done, they can again be the stepping stone to more reading. Programmes about hobbies can start an interest in hobbies at home.

Select the Programmes

So much is good. What then should be avoided? There is a school of thought that says that a child's mind rejects what it cannot assimilate — so no harm is done. A good many parents treat this with some reserve. There is still an innocence about childhood, and a rude awakening to some of the more sordid aspects of life, by way of a television screen, should be avoided.

Ultimate responsibility for vetting programmes must lie with parents. Don't forget that magic knob labelled "Off". And when the set is silent, show the children the enjoyment they can make for themselves — in cheerful, active games out-of-doors, in reading and hobbies, and in lively exchanges of views within the family circle.

Education doesn't stop with schooldays: it goes on as long as we live. But the training, and the will to learn, begin at school. What more wonderful opportunity, then, for parents, than to start their children along the road to the richer, fuller life that education makes possible?



does not apply in every country. New methods of teaching are constantly under review and new ideas being tried out, perhaps on a small scale.

Between eleven and twelve he child transfers to secondary education. This may involve an examination, or the child may be placed in his secondary school on the results of tests made over the whole of his Junior school life. Another system adopted in some countries is for all the child's primary teachers and the headmaster to confer, to build up a sort of profile of the pupil's capabilities and interests. From this they can decide on the type of secondary education which, in their considered opinion, would benefit the child most.

Homework

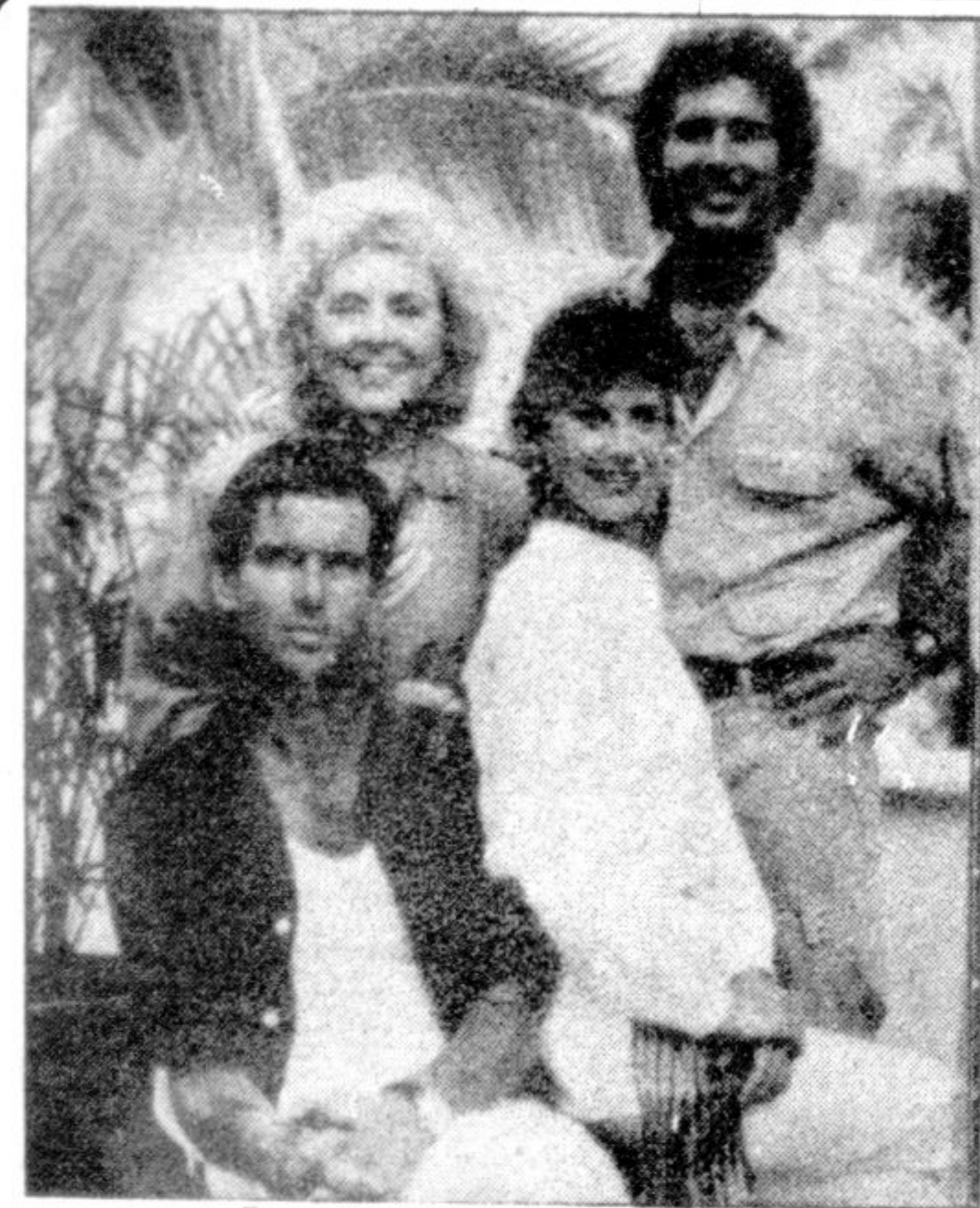
When secondary education starts, so too does homework, with a child expected to do extra work in two or three subjects every night. Parents can very often instill the right attitude to homework from the very start. Never suggest that it is a kind of chore and rather boring and useless. Quite a few par-

as a matter of course as soon as he comes in from school. A small snack will stay the pangs of hunger.

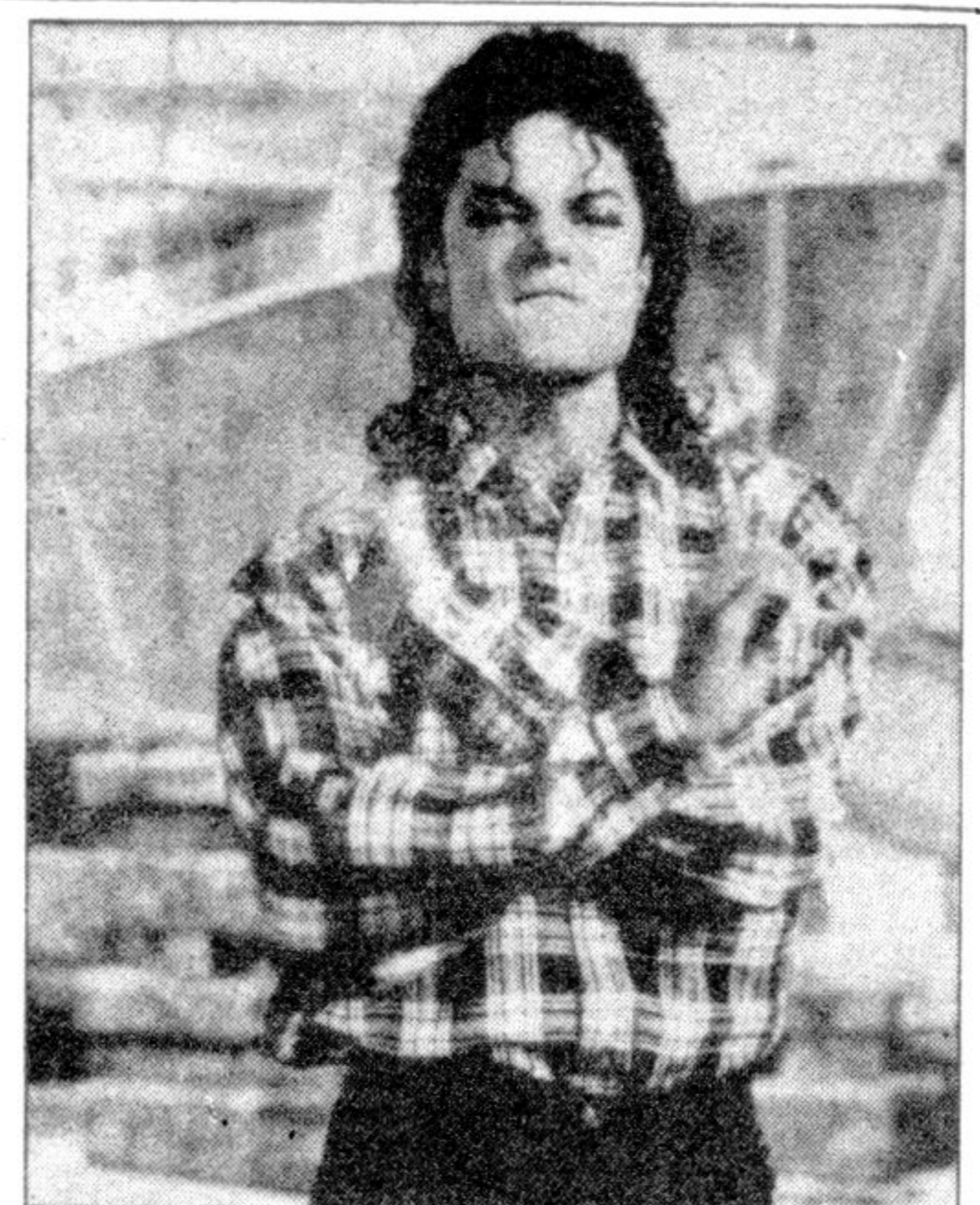
Help or Hindrance?

Most schools consider that the time taken for each subject should be about twenty minutes to half-an-hour, and set the amount of home-work accordingly. No child should be allowed to sit far into the evening puzzling over a difficult problem. Clearly this will only make him over-tired the next day, and over-anxious, too, about the unsolved problem.

Parents' help with homework should be given with discretion. Sometimes, if the child is completely confused, only his teacher, with his knowledge of what has gone before and the correct method of procedure, can give adequate help. But parents need not abandon their children entirely to the complexities of homework. Often a new line of thought can be introduced, a book found to shed new light, and the child is stimulated by the knowledge that his parent is interested too. Ideal conditions for quiet



Remington Steele on "Star Plus"



Michael Jackson on "MTV"

STRESS

STRESS is one of the most common problems affecting women today, and can affect you at any stage in your life. Pressures and emotional upheavals are part of all our lives, but their mental and physical effects vary from person to person. A moderate amount of stress can be good for you, as it can improve performance, efficiency and productivity. But too much stress, especially continuing over a period of time, can cause a wide variety of physical and emotional disorders.

Symptoms of stress

The classic signs of stress are recognizable enough. These include headaches, ulcer flare-ups, temper outbursts, impatience, stomach pains and upsets, sleep disorders, menstrual

disorders, and digestive upsets. You may notice that you are eating, smoking or drinking more than usual, or that you have lost your appetite and are unable to eat.

Stress relief

Everybody needs help coping with the effects of physical, mental or emotional stress at some time or another. There are a number of different methods to help ease and alleviate stress, and gentle exercise is one of the best.

Now stand upright. Link your fingers together, palms out, and as you breathe in extend your arms to shoulder level. As you breathe out take them up above your head.

Breathe deeply, maintaining the stretch in your spine (left). Keep your feet firmly planted on the floor, toes spread out, and feel yourself stretch very tall. Hold for a few seconds. Breathing out let your arms droop and relax your shoulders (right). Stand straight and breathe deeply for a minute or two without straining.

Stand with your feet 15cm (6in) apart. Stretch up and forwards until your hands are resting on a high shelf or window-sash. Breathe out and feel your spine stretch from your tailbone towards your head. Continue to breathe slowly and after each out-breath feel the tension ease in your shoulders and upper back. Hold for up to

1 minute. First kneel on all fours. On an out-breath straighten your legs and take your hips up and back, keeping your back straight.

Then take your heels down to the floor. Hold this position for about 30 seconds, then come back on to all fours.

Sit on your heels on a rug, with your knees together. Dropping your shoulders, stretch one arm up and bring the other up behind your back (left). Catch your hands as shown but do not drop your head forwards. Hold for a few seconds, then change hands. Afterwards, sit quietly on your heels for a minute or two with shoulders relaxed and eyes closed, and clasping your hands behind you (right). This will relax tight muscles in your neck.

Cookery

French Cakes

- 1/2 lb. flour
- 1 lb. soft sugar
- 12 yolks of eggs,
- 8 whites of eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon each of powdered cardamoms and grated nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon each of powdered cinnamon and cloves

Put the sugar and yolks of eggs into a basin and work them together with a wooden spoon until light and full of air bubbles. Then add the spices and gradually work in the flour.

Lastly, add the whites of eggs beaten to a stiff froth. Have ready some small sponge cake tins, well greased with butter and dusted out with a mixture of flour and sugar. Half fill them with the mixture and bake in a steady oven until brown and well risen. These cakes will take about 20 minutes to bake.

Ginger Cake

- 1/2 lb. flour
- 2 teaspoonfuls of dry ginger
- 1/4 lb. sugar
- 1/4 lb. butter
- 1/4 lb. preserved ginger
- 2 oz. golden syrup
- 4 eggs
- 1/4 teaspoon carbonate of soda
- 2 tablespoonfuls milk

Cream the butter and sugar together and mix in the golden syrup. Beat up the eggs and add them gradually with the flour. When well beaten, add the powdered ginger and the preserved ginger cut in pieces about the size of sultana raisins, and lastly, the soda dissolved in milk. Pour the mixture into a lined cake tin and bake at once in a moderate oven for about 1 1/2 hours.



Thai airhostesses

Photo: Mohan