

RISING STARS

SO, sugar, the weather's got to your head and your eyes are open for a time, you become more sensitive to the down and out. Must be the weather; yeah, the cold must have frozen your brain, suspending those vital thoughts about the more important things in life.

You travel the streets in a rickshaw, or a scooter, or a car, and everything that once blended into the woodwork shrieks wherever you may go, and you see what you never see.

Now, you're at the market, passing the shops on your right and the people all around, watching for place with the book you want. There are some pretty chicks around, no? Ah, the joys of life...

At your left there stands a man, his arms outstretched, black trousers, white shirt — dirty white shirt, long black hair, stringy beard; and a boy in shorts, in front, left of centre. He speaks. You aren't listening, but you are, and you hear his words. "Who will help me? I fought in the War as a freedom-fighter, for my country and my people. And this is my reward. Yes, this is my reward."

You don't want to listen, you stare straight ahead and move along, denying him attention, denying that peculiar feeling tugging at your stomach; but a moment of curiosity forces you to look around to observe how the others take this man's tirade.

They, like you, are apathetic and get on with their work, lives. Vaguely you wonder, what's his problem? Blind, perhaps. The child at his hand... What does he want, anyway? Cash? You never really care to know.

You got cash, of course, you're Momma's boy, the gutless wonder, and would your father hear of your being broke? Sure you're lucky, or may be you ain't. People don't really understand that your life is dictated by the circumstances — totally beyond your control. Just 'cause ya got a roof over ya' head, an' three square meals a day, an' snacks in between, an' ya don't have to work just yet, not if ya don't wanna t' get by, people think you lucky.

Well, may be you are, may be you ain't. Why do people forget that your life is different, ergo your problems are different, problems which can make your life as hellish as anyone else's. Your life could be even worse than that poor child on the

Stuff and Nonsense

by Ahsan S Kabir

street who's selling flowers you don't want to earn a little bit, even when she's your age. Bless the child in her ignorance, that she may be burdened with far less confusion, and perhaps a different kind of pain.

Now there's that man, stark naked. You've seen him around for some time now, and questions are always pervading your mind. Bloody hell, he wears nothing, not even underwear, most of the time, and no one seems the least bothered. He's crazy. Surely he's crazy. It's freezing out here, and there he stands, half-starting at the

bums who wouldn't bother doing work if they were offered to be paid for it.

Like at the market, you've seen one woman there all the time, coming to you for some money. She definitely one of those types. But the others... the others... Once you saw a man with his jaw dangling downward at an obscene angle, and you pondered how he ate.

On the tar of the road, you see a girl crawling on all fours from one vehicle to another, pulling herself up to the window to make herself visible. You speculate that her back is broken. It certainly looks like it. Blind

screwed up, wrapped in black rubber and rolling along the streets, four feet at a go, a go every now and then, calling out to God and everyone else.

One of those men wore spectacles — what a spectacle, that someone bothers to spare his blindness and not much else. And there was that man, you saw him twice at the market, he had all these lumps on his body, words can't describe what you saw, but it's an easy affair to say how you felt; you wanted to puke.

Well, my boy, you've opened your eyes, and you see the



sky, smoking a cigarette, not the least bothered by anything. Does he eat, what does he eat? Who is he? Why is he like that? What is it like, to be him?

Yeah, when you pass by him, in the rickshaw or in the car (though you hate riding cars), you have these heavy thoughts, but a minute later, it's back to the real thing. The real thing, Your life.

There on the street, when the cars and rickshaws and scooters have stopped, the beggars come out of their holes to beg for your mercy and your change. Some beggars are, of course, lazy

men abound. Once in a while, when you're walking along this road, you see a blind woman — she must be blind, for are those not cataracts in her pupils? — she's filthy of course, squatting under a tree, with a pan in front of her. Wait, you saw a tag around her neck and a... photo, a certificate certifying her disabilities?

How does she take care of her biological needs, who really takes care of her — you once saw her eat *murti*, and sometimes you don't see her at all. Where does she sleep? On occasion, you see four men with their limbs

people, a veritable sort they are: the rich, the middle-class, the poor, the unspeakables, the beautiful, and the ugly, and the average, the figurines and the disfigured. Over there are the rich and beautiful. Some of course lack anything in the way of good taste, but some are quite... aesthetically pleasing.

Like that sugar fr instance, with her slender figure and delicately chiseled face and that stone-melting smile.

Now — though you may hate very much to do so — check the disfigured, the poor; stare at them if you dare.

timing yourself. For how long can you sustain your examination of their features, without the slightest urge to look away, without that inner revulsion, the shuddering, the scream Look away! Aye, for how long, sugar?

They scare you, these powerless freaks who won't do a thing to harm you, and the apprehension disturbs you. What are these people doing on the streets, the broken and disfigured, these people who impose themselves in your vision, shattering your serenity? Why doesn't anyone care? Well, sugar, you don't. Why should anyone else?

Little boy, little child, you thought you were so strong, but you were wrong, this is how it has been all along. They care nothing for you, these people, poor or broken or crazy. And it sickens you, all these sights sickened you. Why let it bother you? Thank God you aren't them.

No one else is really bothered about their lives for it is said, 'tis the will of God, *insha'Allah*, the poor shall stay poor, the rich shall stay rich, and everything happens, come what may, but this balance, this balance cannot be afforded to be disturbed.

All this is stuff and nonsense of course, you shall forget these morbid thoughts next week, tomorrow, in an hour, right now, no? Yes. Of course. Who the hell do you think you are, someone who's going to do something about it? And next week, we'll all be one huge happy family, black and white and yellow and brown and purple polka dot, Bengalis and Russians and Irish and Arabs and Ainu, Jews and Muslims and Christians and Shintosts.

Dreaming. For now, anger is seizing you, you dream of a future when you raise your fist and extend a helping hand to one of those sorry creatures.

Don't dream things you won't ever do, even if you got the power to. You aren't God, you aren't president, you aren't even selfless, you're just nothing. You're a bloody man, a homo sapiens of the finest salt, a man, descendant of Adam and Eve and all those other people.

Do you think you would defy all that means, for some poor weak fools who don't hope, who don't dream? Get a reality check, sugar.

Copyright (c) 1994 by Ahsan S Kabir

Eid with All Its Absurdities

by Prima Chowdhury

IT'S almost inevitable, it happens every year, this countdown for Eid, this feeling of something special, something grand — that's bound to happen on Eid day and then boom! Nothin'! Well, not exactly nothing. The usual stuff prevails — the preparation of *semai*, sweets, *halwa* — all those rich calorie-laden foods, which you have to gulp down and all at once, after the month long festivity.

Tradition... waking up early, packing the menfolk off to do their *namaz*, and us, the supposedly inferior women folk, bathing, then dressing up to look pretty for God

knows what. Now don't get the idea that traditional values mean nothing to me — because I do appreciate the idea of togetherness on a nice family breakfast, and then a nice family gathering, watching TV or reading books... till the guests stream in.... That's mainly what Eid is all about, you know — guests. Long-forgotten relatives, everyday relatives, casual acquaintances on the street — everyone drops in to do the once again traditional hug of 'ola coling'. The grandparents of course expect you to grovel at their fact in a respectful *salaam*. At least

some of them pay well for the groveling.

The so-called 'special programmes' on radio and TV are another matter. Oh boy! The announcers and news readers cannot hide their glee, in their most expensive silken *katanas*, *benaroshis* and what not, not to mention the particularly heavy makeup.

The 'Kiddie' programmes feature an array of kids trying to convince you of their true happiness, in their loud, and quite shocking, pink, orange and black silks, laces and so on.

At the end of the day, the Eid dramas are however, quite a different matter, especially those written by Humayan Ahmed. My hats off to Ahmed for his superb efforts in creating dramas which really bring out the much needed humour and the long lost fun.

Watching 'Aranda Mela' on TV has become another tradition. Even if it, does not live up to my expectations, I do end up watching it.

Well readers, I wrote this, while the Eid episode is still fresh on my mind and going on, so forgive the harsh criticism.

We are Muslims — with our own traditions and our own special ways of celebrating the holy festival of Eid, and our own unique way of looking at it. So what I say or write, Eid day (with all its absurdities) will always be a special day.

Remembering Eid

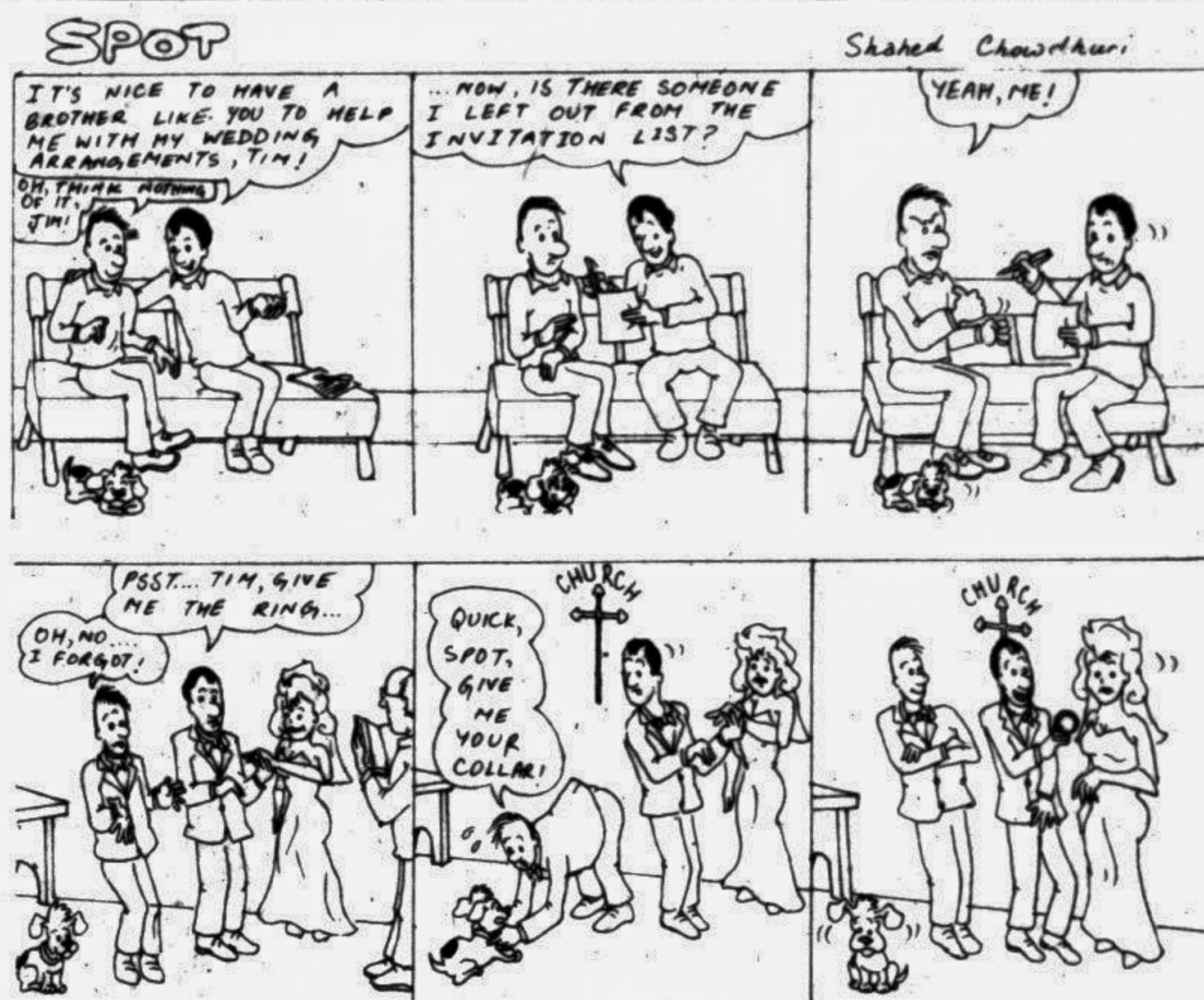
by Rabeth Khan

THE Eid comes every year with promises of love and happiness. It is a very special day for all of us, we celebrate it together, regardless of the difference of class, sect and race.

May all countries bury themselves in eternal peace and live in communal harmony. We hope to make new friends to love and care for. Let a new sunshine blaze through our life.

The Eid comes with a golden sparkle. A sparkle, which lifts the heart of everyone. The pangs of hate and jealousy are substituted for love. The rich and poor share their dreams. Under the same shower of happiness. The young and the old become alike. Two souls join together to be one.

Eid comes as fast as it goes. Just leaving a worthy advice to remember. That happiness should be all a life should have. A two word messages is left as gift of love. 'Eid Mubarak'



Raju in Bombay

by Abu Sayeed Saleh

IT was November 1993, we were sitting by the famous Marine Drive of Bombay, with the Arabian Sea behind us. After our day of scavenging through the Architectural relics of the city, we were in search for a bit of tranquility by the sea shore.

"Cold drink Saab? Only six rupee" — a man stood with a bucket full of Limca bottles. Quite naturally we didn't need any company and told him to look for other potential customers.

There is something wrong with this guy" said one of my friends, "just watch how he looks at us." Immediately our attention was drawn to this 'man with bucket'. Curiously enough, he was still standing and trying to decide something. So we asked him what else he wanted.

"Aap loy Calcutta se aya?" — came the question and not a new one, ever since we left 'the city of joy'.

"Tum Bangali ho?" I asked. "Yes, and my name is Raju" he replied with that distinct West Bengal accent. We earned that he came from Calcutta. He was her looking for a new job. When we told him, we were from Bangladesh — he gave a big grin — "why are you here?"

We told him we were studying the Architecture of India. "I'm also from Bangladesh, actually I'm from Bagerhat, and my real name is Haroon." The sudden change of identity took us by surprise — I asked Haroon to sit down with us. He put his bucket of cola down and let out the whole story.

Haroon came from Bagerhat, Khulna. He was quite happy with his life in the village. Happy for him maybe, but the village was terrified of this naughty kid — with a long list of victims falling a

prey to his, endless, practical jokes.

What is the cure? His parents found a sure medicine — yes, get him married. That should quiet him down for a while. But no, our hero had greater ideas — the first chance he got — he ran like hell, evading the wedlock.

Haroon reached Calcutta. He wandered around the city for a few days. He worked there for three months — doing every sort of odd-job. He then headed for the BOLLYWOOD — maybe to try his luck in the cine-world. But the cinema people were not ready yet for such a talented rogue — so he was content with selling cold-drinks to the visitors around the India gate. The owner of a small workshop let him sleep in his shed at night. For each bottle sold, he got one rupee.

"How do you find this city?" I asked him. "At first it's dazzling, then you get to know it's hostilities and eventually, you get absorbed in it" — the philosopher in him spoke out.

"Do you plan to return home?" "I'm in no hurry, and besides I am off to Delhi next week. I have a lot to see yet — by the way could you do me a favour and post this letter to my family please?" — came the casual reply from the boy of Rupsa.

"Yes, and my name is Raju" he replied with that distinct West Bengal accent. We earned that he came from Calcutta. He was her looking for a new job. When we told him, we were from Bangladesh — he gave a big grin — "why are you here?"

We told him we were studying the Architecture of India. "I'm also from Bangladesh, actually I'm from Bagerhat, and my real name is Haroon." The sudden change of identity took us by surprise — I asked Haroon to sit down with us. He put his bucket of cola down and let out the whole story.

Haroon came from Bagerhat, Khulna. He was quite happy with his life in the village. Happy for him maybe, but the village was terrified of this naughty kid — with a long list of victims falling a

WHEN a little girl steps into her teens, she starts growing up, and in due course of time blossoms into a young lady. There are many changes taking place within the body, and there is a change in the emotional outlook on life too. You can observe the change in the texture of the skin. From a baby-like softness the skin starts looking mature, and develops that teenage glow which everybody longs for.

Now is the time to start looking after yourself. You may like to experiment with some cosmetics, but it could harm your skin at this

Teenage Special

by Gulshana Yasmin Hoque (Shukti).

stage. So be very careful and use only those cosmetics which are needed, and not just what anybody tells you to use or what catches your fancy. All that you have to do is to follow a simple routine which will carry you through your life, and promise you an everlasting and healthy skin.

ANIMAL FEATURE

FREE BOARD AND LODGING

The tiny pea-crab lives most of its life in a mussel shell. Its host seems quite happy to share its home and its food with its 'guest'. The female crab sometimes grows so big that it can no longer leave the mussel shell.

SENTINEL WITH A STING

The hermit uses a whelk shell as its portable home. To this shell a sea anemone may attach itself. In return for free transportation, and the food scraps it picks up, it protects the crab from attackers with its stinging tentacles.

FLYING DENTAL SERVICE

Crocodiles are frightening creatures — but not to the Egyptian plover. This little bird explores the croc's back for parasites which it seeks for food. It even ventures between the fearsome jaws to peck between the teeth for scraps of food. The crocodile does not harm this useful scavenger.

MILKING THE GREENFLY

In their underground homes, ants keep "tame" greenfly, or aphids, whose honeydew they drink.



Care at night: You just have to ensure that every night before you sleep you clean your skin with a good, non-greasy cleansing milk. The correct way to apply cleansing milk is to take a bit of cotton-wool, squeeze it out of hot water, dab a little cleansing milk on it and apply all over your face very gently, and in small circles. Make sure you do not drag or pull or press the skin in the process. Just work on the surface.

Wipe off the cleansing milk with a facial tissue, and ordinary water. Now rub ice all over your face. Wrap up a piece of ice in a clean



muslin piece and rub it all over your face.

In the Summer, to ensure that the skin down the centre of your face does not get too oily. It is advisable that no greasy creams be used overnight. If the skin feels dry, use only a moisturizer at night. However, if the skin feels very dry, you can use a bit of cold cream.

Care in the morning: As you get up, wash your face with plain water. Use soap while having your bath. Dab a bit of skin tonic after drying your face. Use just a dot of moisturizer, and make sure you blend it all over your face and neck.

Care during the week: Once a week, use a face pack. You could make your face pack.

Beauty Contest

Answers: for the Beauty Contest

- (1) Shoma, (ii) Black hair, (iii) 18 years old.

Place	Name	Age	Hair	Height
1.	Shoma	20	Brunette	5' 5"
2.	Rubaba	18	Blonde	5' 6"
3.	Zareen	22	Red	5' 3"
4.	Sharmin	19	Black	5' 4"
5.	Marina	21	Auburn	5' 4"

Star Profile

Name: Sushmita Sen

Age: 19 years

Did you know:



- She is Ms India '94.
- She is 172.5 cm tall.
- As a kid, she wasn't a stunner at all.
- She started her modelling career at 15.
- Between 15 to 18, she was on the Femina cover.
- She believed that the first runner up Aishwarya Rai would win the crown.
- But now she believes that winning the Ms. India show is the beginning of a dream and the ultimate.