

LIVING

The Irresistible Television

by Lavina Ambreen Ahmed

THE ANC leader Nelson Mandela was elected the first black president of South Africa on May 9. Forty-six years of apartheid ends at last. A memorable event no doubt, that took place thousands of miles away in Cape Town, but was watched by millions all over the world — thanks to the "square shaped magic box", known as the television.

When the British scientist J. L. Baird first invented this magnificent gadget, way back in the early twentieth century, he probably didn't have the slightest idea what a tremendous breakthrough it was going to be in the years to come. To the average person, TV holds more significance than Einstein's famous "Theory of Relativity", Darwin's "Origin of Species" or Alfred Nobel's invention of the dynamite.

Scientists are constantly coming up with brilliant new ideas to make life easier for the comfort-loving Homo Sapiens, yet no other achievement so far, not even the computer, can match the widespread popularity of the small screen.

Recent studies show that majority of the people consider the television as an absolute must for their homes.

Why is TV so popular with us? Mainly because it helps to bring the world closer to us. Somehow hearing or reading about something can never be compared to seeing the same thing for yourself. Also, seeing something with one's own eyes gives a certain event or occurrence more credibility. The ravages and after-effects of any kind of natural calamity, e.g. floods, cyclones, earthquakes, landslides, seem more real and vivid on the TV screen. This beautiful planet is constituted by inhabitants of numerous races, cultures, traditions, religions and then there are also so many exotic places to see. So what if you can't go everywhere in the world? Do the next best thing, turn on the tube and learn more about the world at your own home. There is an old saying, that a picture is worth a thousand words; then what can be said about talking and moving shapes and forms? It is truly a remarkable gift to mankind.

Another reason for its immense popularity is the news updates it gives us. How else could we get the live and often in-depth reports on, say, the Gulf War, Soviet Union's final collapse as a powerful communist nation, US presidential elections, Somalia crisis, or the Bosnia-Serbia situation? Recently, we had a great opportunity to witness a historic event: a peace accord signed between PLO and Israel, via the television.

Happy news, sad news, disaster, tragedy, accidents, discovery, oddity, novelty, sports news, suspense, intrigue, — we get everything. You first name it and "la tele" will present you with it. That's why in the western world TV and cable networks are slowly taking over the place of the once dominating print media.

The television actually performs two functions. It informs and it entertains. All TV programmes should have a proper balance of both educational and entertaining programmes. Our precious one and only channel BTV could do with a whole lot of improvement. This is quite a common complaint among the viewers, and not a bad idea, even though perhaps each and every programme is broadcast after careful consideration and thinking about the different types of people throughout the country.

One must admit that the tube has a great impact on our lives. Doubts? Well, what if there was a discussion or an open debate on a controversial issue on TV? The following day you're bound to see processions in the streets, in support or against it. An individual might start off the day with BBC and CNN, then go to work, come back home and try to relax putting the hectic day behind him. So, he may switch on the "magic picture box" and watch his favourite show, whether it's a musical programme, the weekly drama, sports programme or one of the English series. Some even look out for commercials. Can't say they are all eager to watch out for new products, rather for the brightly attired care-free young people promoting those items. Often the faces of models, drama artists, musicians, dancers and all other TV personalities become so familiar that the excited public mob

them or at least try very hard to covertly observe them when they are seen anywhere else but their TV sets. Take for example the rough yet sensitive "mastaan" "Baker Bhai", a role played to perfection by the mass-favourite gifted actor Asaduzzaman Nur in the popular playwright Humayun Ahmed's drama series "Kothao Keu Nei". Angry protesters condemned the tragic end before and after the concluding part of the series. This applies not only to our country but to the rest of the world.

The "ordinary" people, specially the younger generation, copy the hairstyles, get-up and even the attitudes of their TV idols. Sometimes people will do anything, well, almost anything, to appear on the small screen. There is a magazine programme-cum-talent show on BTV that caters to all these aspiring, fame-starved hearts. All you have to do is know some tricks with the football or maybe some martial art moves and your wish will be granted. So what if we can't kick the ball and lose at every single football match abroad? As an alternative use of this thing and also to mend their bruised egos, our boys have now taken to various "finger" or "head" tricks with the ball it seems. May their consistency and efforts pay off one day and we get to see their names boldly printed in the Guinness Book of Records. Also, the programmes on TV, mainly "Star TV", on health, environment and literacy help in creating public awareness, though very little is actually materialized here in our country.

Now, let's concentrate on the bad effect. Ah, that too are many. Watching TV for long hours is not only harmful for one's eyesight, it also makes one very lazy. "Turn off the TV and hit the books now or else!" this is quite a common rebuke the students receive from their weary mothers. "I am very worried about my son, he spends half the time with eyes transfixed on the tube and no amount of extreme measures that I have taken can break his habit," confides a frustrated mother. Yes, to some it really is quite a nuisance. With easy access to violence, terrorism and uncensored programmes, TV sure does have some negative influence on the youngsters, who become more ill-mannered and rowdier than ever. There are some TV addicts, who remain glued by the TV side for hours. Work and studies get neglected, not that they are perturbed about those mundane things at all. Later on these people will turn into reclusive, anti-social human beings, their whole life revolving around that troublesome object called TV.

No matter how much we criticize the TV, even the person who has the strangest contempt for it would want to get rid of it from his home. Volumes can be written about the disadvantages of the TV, but then, advantages too, can be quite a lot in number. So thanks again to Baird for his wonderful invention and let's all say "long live the television!"



Beauty Aids from the Kitchen

by Farhana Ahmad

SO you thought that a beauty treatment involved long, tortuous hours at the beauty parlour? Well, you are wrong. Try out these simple yet effective beauty tips and see the difference. Where does one find the ingredients? They are right there in your kitchen.

The best part about using ingredients from the kitchen is that they are natural, pure and cost very little, unlike the cosmetics available in the market, which can possibly cause some harm besides being expensive. Certain cosmetics claim to contain natural substances such as almond oil, honey, sandalwood, egg and lemon juice. But how far is this true, only the manufacturer can tell and he certainly won't reveal the truth. Today, more and more women are returning to their kitchens to find out all that granny used once upon a time to beautify herself.

Here is a list of the natural food from the kitchen which can be used for taking care of your skin and hair.

Gram flour: "Besan" is generally used as a face pack. "Besan" and milk are mixed to form a smooth paste. This paste should be applied on the face, neck and also on the body, before taking a bath. Let it dry for ten to fifteen minutes and then wash it off with wa-

ter. This helps to tone, cleanse and smoothen the skin.

Cucumber: For refreshing tired eyes, take thin slices of cucumber and place them on your eye lids for ten minutes. Then wash your eyes with cold water.

Curd: Curd can be used as a face pack and a body pack. Curd helps in toning the skin. When mixed with "besan" and used on the face, it helps in cleaning the skin and preventing wrinkles.

Curry leaves: Boil curry leaves in coconut oil and strain and cool the water. Use this water for oiling your hair. This stimulates hair growth and prevents hair from greying.

Eggs: Mix the white of an egg with one teaspoon of lemon juice. Use this as a face pack for oily skin. The egg yolk can be used for nourishing the hair. It also adds natural bounce to the hair.

Honey: It is used by itself on the face to soften the skin. A teaspoon of honey and pinch of turmeric powder can be mixed and used for curing the pain caused by boils.

Lemon: Lemon juice is used as a mild bleach on the upper lip and on the sides of the face. The area around the eyes should be avoided. A mixture of honey and lemon juice is used to lighten dark spots on the body specially the elbows.

Using lemon juice on the hair helps to prevent dandruff.

Mint: Mint leaves can be crushed to form a paste and used as a face pack, on a face affected with pimples.

Milk: Milk is a natural cleanser. It can be mixed with "besan" to form a face pack. The cream of the milk "malai" is good for dry skins.

Potato: Thin slices of potato can be used for rejuvenating tired eyes. They are also used to lighten blemishes on the face.

Sugar: Sugar is heated to form brown caramel. Lemon juice and water are added to form a wax which is used for removing hair from the body. This wax is used in almost every parlour. It can be made at home and costs very little.

Tea leaves: Boil tea leaves in water and after straining, use the tea water for making a henna "mehendi" paste. Tea leaves add a dark colour to the henna, which is good for dyeing the hair. Besides, henna works as a good conditioner.

So you will see that your kitchen holds almost everything you need for your beauty treatment, right from cleansing lotions to moisturizers face packs to hair nourishers and hair removers. Use nature's gifts to you and watch heads turn in envy.

Dutch Children Help Dhaka's Street Kids

by Nancy Wong

THANKS to the caring attitude of seventeen-year old Nicole Van Kempen, a student of Durendael school in the south of the Netherlands, thousands of street kids in Dhaka will have a roof over their heads, three square meals a day and medical treatment when they fall prey to illnesses due to exposure and acute malnutrition.

Durendael school, situated in Oisterwijk (a small town of 20,000 inhabitants), is only a few years old, but in this short span of existence, has made a name for itself on the world scene by raising funds to help those less fortunate than themselves. Its past efforts consisted of projects supporting an orphanage in Morocco and a reformation project in Tanzania.

Apart from high academic standards and a practical approach to life as manifested in the school's domestic science and home economics programme, the teachers also encourage a vibrant attitude to extra-curricular activities. It was in this area that Nicole became involved in raising funds for the street children of



Dutch kids (above) playing street corner concert (top right), selling snacks at food stalls (right), dressed up as Bangladeshis in exhibition.



With Dhaka's street kids at a CSKS centre



Dhaka. Being acquainted with the honorary consul to Bangladesh, Johan Voldman, who lived in Oisterwijk, she came to know of the plight of these abandoned kids who lived in a world of deprivation and degradation. Moved by such suffering, Nicole, together with some teachers and the Director of the school, who were on a committee to decide what projects to undertake to improve the lot of the underprivileged, decided to raise funds to help them.

Thus, the school contacted Martine Gajentaan, the wife of the Netherlands Ambassador

in Dhaka and Rita Imanuel, the first secretary at the embassy, to select an NGO involved with looking after street kids. After visiting one of the centres of CSKS (Chhinnamul Shishu Kishore Sangstha) where destitute children received food, medical care, some vocational training and shelter, Mrs Gajentaan and Imanuel decided to allocate them the funds so enthusiastically raised by the students of Durendael school.

By a happy coincidence the Gajentaans were in the Netherlands last February when the two-day fund raising took place. They made a trip to

Oisterwijk and enjoyed the events specially prepared for the occasion. Six classes (about 200 students) participated in a "lecture-marathon", lasting twenty-four hours! Only candidates who could raise 2,000 Taka were allowed to say their piece. In addition, there was an indoor soccer marathon which took place from 9.30 pm to 9.30 am. Again, sponsors had to be sought after to enable students' participation.

The second day of the fund raising campaign saw Dutch boys in T-shirts with the map of Bangladesh walking around the town as well as pretty Dutch girls dressed up in lovely saris. Bangladeshi cuisine and snacks were prepared by girls from the domestic science unit of the school and souvenirs made by enterprising students were sold at the fair.

Information about Bangladesh were highlighted in an exhibition showing its history, culture and natural beauty of the countryside. Mr and Mrs Gajentaan addressed a large audience of students giving them glimpses of their experiences and life in Bangladesh. A video made by CSKS illustrated how abandoned kids from the other part of the world survive under heartbreaking conditions.

Thus, the motivation of a teenager, ignited into a spark which grew into a flame which attracted donations of over six lakh Taka to help thousands of street kids in Dhaka lead a more bearable life. The warm hearted students of Durendael school in a small town in the Netherlands, have applied to the Dutch government to give a correct amount from their aid programme. They have also resolved to target next year's fund raising for the same organisation — CSKS.

COOKERY

Apple Souffle

1 1/2 pints milk
1 oz. castor sugar
1 teaspoonful rice
1 oz. butter
1 lb. apples
2 eggs

Boil the rice in the milk until tender, then add the butter and the egg-yolks, without allowing to boil. Stew the apples with sugar to taste and put them at the bottom of a buttered pie dish with the rice on top. Bake in a cool oven until set. Beat the egg-whites to a

stiff froth, fold in the sugar, pile on top of the soufflé and bake till golden brown. This may be eaten hot or cold.

Australian Pudding

1 lb. flour
8 oz. butter
4 oz. currants
Pinch of mixed spice
2 oz. candied peel
1 teaspoonful bicarbonate of soda
4 oz. raisins
8 oz. sugar
Salt
A little grated lemon rind
1 pint milk and water

Sift the flour, add the suet, fruit, peel chopped finely, lemon rind, sugar, salt and spice. Mix well together. Warm the milk and water and pour on to the soda so that it froths up well. Pour at once into the dry ingredients and stir thoroughly. Put into a greased dish (it should come only two-thirds of the way up because it rises), cover with a double piece of greased paper and steam for 3 hours, or bake for 1 1/2 hours in a moderate oven.

Baked Bread Pudding

4 oz. baked bread-crumbs
1 tablespoonful sugar

1 tablespoonful Golden Syrup

Pinch of salt
1 pint milk
3 oz. currants
1 oz. chopped lemon peel
1/2 teaspoonful mixed spice
1 egg

Heat the milk and pour it over the bread-crumbs. Add all the other ingredients, except the syrup, which must be mixed in last. Stir the mixture well. Put into a greased pie dish and bake in a hot oven for 1 hour.

Banana Stuffed Pancakes

These are made with the usual pancake batter but are folded in three round a spoonful of banana filling, and served either with a smooth vanilla sauce or a hot jam sauce.

For the banana filling
2 large ripe bananas
A good squeeze of lemon juice

1 desertspoonful sugar
Mash bananas, mix in sugar and lemon juice to taste. Put 2 or 3 tablespoons in centre of each pancake and fold ends over.

For the vanilla sauce
1/2 oz. butter
1/2 tablespoonful flour
1 teaspoonful vanilla

3/4 pint boiling water
1/4 cupful sugar

Melt butter, add flour and stir over low heat until it bubbles. Do not brown. Add boiling water with sugar and cook until smooth and thick. Add vanilla, strain and serve hot. **SL**

Fruitful Shopping: British Fashion Shot on Location in Barbados



Picking the best Bajan produce at a fruit market in Bridgetown, Barbados in a loose-knitted linen shift dress by Sophie Gorton and suede pumps by British fashion chain Hobbs. After only two years in business Sophie Gorton Designs has broken into the international clothing market with a range of softly flowing modern classics. Each season various weights of linen and silk jersey are specially dyed to suit the muted earthy tones of the chosen colourway and are made up into this easy to wear collection.

— Courtesy LPS

My Beloved "Bua"

by Sayeda Choudhury

THAT day was very bright and sunny. I was expecting some of my close friends for breakfast. As I was preparing some special dishes for them, I suddenly realised that I did not look after my garden for the last few days. I ran to the roof to have a look at my tiny but neat garden. In spite of my unavoidable negligence, the plants looked fresh and lovely. It seemed that they felt my presence and were smiling at me. I started watering them and then under the bush something caught my eye. It was an old, broken pair of glasses. I stared at it for sometime and then tears started streaming down my cheeks. I could not resist it. It was my "bua's" glasses, a beloved person who filled my life by her ceaseless devotion and unending love and care. The memory of those twenty-five years came flooding over me.

I remember so vividly the day my "bua" came to our house as an "aya" for our eldest son Afak when he was only a year old. Her first appearance made me a little apprehensive as she appeared weak and fragile. She could not see properly as she had developed cataract in one of her eyes. But ignoring all these difficulties she began taking care of our son. And in no time she became our son's best friend. Steadily she gained strength and energy. She was blessed with very cheerful and lovable disposition which distinguished her from other persons. And above all her outstanding devotion and obedience made me very attached to her. I could not imagine myself without her. Since then she started living with us leaving her own home and family. As days went by, she was burdened with more duties with the birth of our daughter Tahia and our youngest son Albab.

Slowly old age was catching up on her and she was becoming late in getting up in the mornings. One day when I was occupied with my work, she suddenly came running to me and we hugged each other not knowing it would be for the last time.

The following week she became critically ill. The doctor came but nothing helped her. If only I could comfort her, I thought. That night she breathed her last.

In death she looked so frail but a heavenly smile was still on her face. Tahia stayed beside her death bed for the whole night, motionless, only with tears in her eyes. It was a heartrending scene to witness. Many years have passed but her fond memories are still with me. The lesson of sacrifice that she had taught unknowingly is the best lesson that I have ever received from any one.