



Short Story by John Arun Sarkar

A Scholar

She kicked off the pile of sweat-soaked clothes at her feet and released a breath of relief, softly dried her body with a towel to get rid of the disturbing dampness of sweat. Her last examination of MSS (final) concluded, Mimi felt like a real free bird.

In a relaxed mood, she slipped into a white cotton chemise and began to wonder about future. "Right time to get married and start a family of one's own. I must do something meaningful. It will not be wise to sit idle after completing master's degree." She put the soiled clothes in a bucket and walked into the bathroom.

Fresh and humming, she sat with her family to have the evening tea. Her brother Mahmud enquired, "How have you fared in the exam? She answered, "So, so". "Would you like to do something like collecting data and information for a scholar of a research institute? They are looking for a fresh graduate preferably in Economics and will pay well. The project is fostered by a regional organisation of Asia," her brother informed.

She jumped to the proposition. "Oh, brother, please I shall be delighted to undertake such an assignment."

Next day, Mahmud took Mimi to TradeInfo the institute and introduced her to Dr Karim, the research scholar. Mimi was well-received by Dr Karim and was briefed about the task. Dr Karim said, "You will report to me everyday morning and I shall send you to different offices to collect information. I will confirm all the appointments for you. This will require approximately three months." As per arrangement, Mimi started her work.

Darted of repeated, often nasty, amorous looks of the males, she waited on the queue to get a pass to enter an office. After managing to get one she took an elevator to the 12th floor and requested the P S of the chief of the office seated in one of the drab corners to apprise him of the visitor's arrival. In five minutes, she was summoned. The chief, a middle-aged man, welcomed her gently.

After asking a few questions about her antecedents, he advised her to explore the library of the office which he recommended to have been very rich.

Complying to his advice, she spent the whole day in the library but browsing and leafing through the catalogues and books did not help. Next morning she reported her experiences to Dr Karim. Dr Karim turned red in anger and uttered some dirty words, "I told the son-of-a-bitch that I would pay him Tk 25,000/- for providing information and data but he did not agree. He wanted more and now he is not cooperating. You know they have categorised some information unnecessarily as classified and unless you quench their thirst, you don't get those information. Anyway, wait for a few minutes, I will take you to him personally and I know I have to promise him something."

In an hour, they were at the chief's office. Dr Karim at the outset cheered him with a high dosage of eulogy and identified Mimi as a bright young lady to assist, and then pledged to make him happy for his co-operation.

The chief instantly softened and told Mimi to see him next morning. Next day, she was introduced to a lady research officer of the chief's

office and the chief briefed them of the modus operandi and rendered some advices about secrecy and fidelity.

He said, "I shall make all the appointments with key persons. Mimi, you will visit their offices and collect annual reports and every possible relevant paper. Try to take interviews of the high officials. After lunch hours you will report here and sit with Manju (the research officer) to streamline the data/information. As soon as you complete collecting data, we shall sit at my place to prepare the final papers."

Within fifteen days, all the concerned officers were visited and data/information were procured and streamlined. And so they regularly met at the Chief's house to put things together.

The chief, a competent person, first set the topics to be covered. Then, he allocated one topic to Mimi and another to the research officer. They prepared the articles on the topics. He reviewed them and advised necessary changes. After alterations and corrections, the papers were sent to the office typist for typing.

Mimi enjoyed the sessions very much. The various delicacies served every evening deserved special mention. One/two item (s) was/were almost mandatorily added to the fleet of dishes every evening by the research officer. It looked that the research officer was keen to make the chief happy.

In seven days, as the final paper was prepared, an introduction was attached to it by the chief. While handing over the same to Mimi for Dr Karim, the chief told Mimi and the research officer with an appreciative smile that he had put their names in it and thanked them for the good job done.

On receiving the papers, Dr Karim simply tore off the introduction written by the chief and cursed. Mimi's face lost colour. After all, she grew an affection for the chief and with the introduction, her name was also torn off. Probably, the scholar read her mind and he instantly assured her that in his final paper, he would mention her name and that he had to re-align the whole thing for the leading regional organisation. The chief, therefore, deserved mere mention or acknowledgment for extending support and nothing more. Dr Karim thanked Mimi and told that she would be paid after he had got the bill.

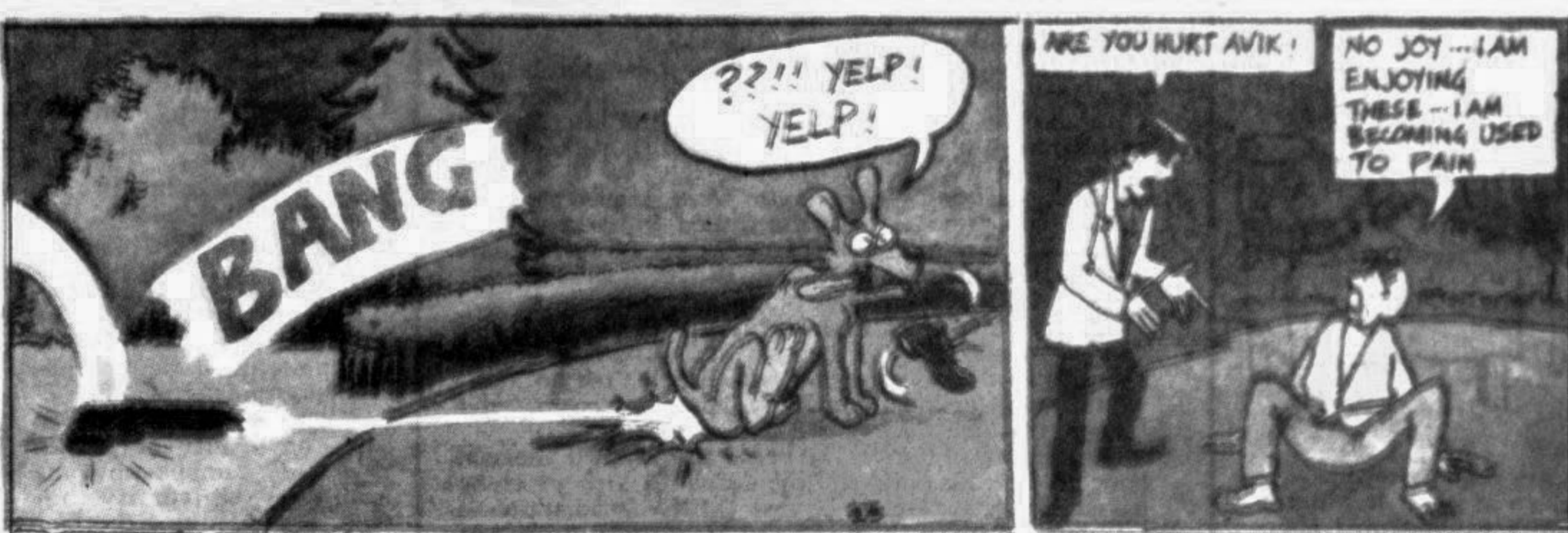
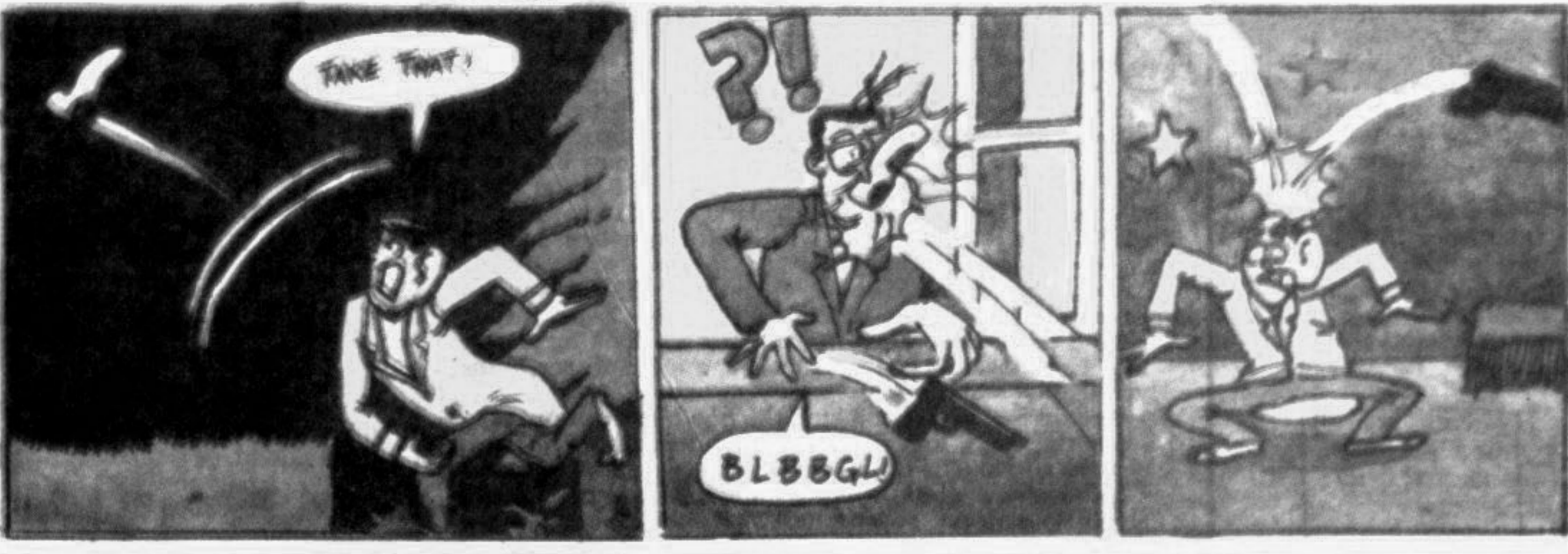
At her hint, Dr Karim immediately wrote a nice commendation for her which Mimi thought would give her a good opportunity to get a job in future.

With a satisfaction of fulfilling a mission, getting a certificate praising her highly and a dissatisfaction of not getting the money immediately, she started for her home.

After a few days, her brother Mahmud asked her to collect a cheque from TradeInfo. While collecting the cheque for Tk 2,000/-, she came to know that Dr Karim had been to the States on a "Scholars' Conference" and he had earned lakhs from the project.

In the rickshaw, on way home, Mimi asked herself, "Who should get the credit for the paper prepared - the research officer and herself or the chief or the scholar or all of them? Will this paper serve anybody or any purpose? Who is a scholar? What does a scholar do?"

AVIK in The missing JOY in The missing ARGUMENT by SHARIF



What can we do?

Sonia N. Ahmad

As I sit and hold this pen to the paper, I wonder why I write these words. Countless articles and reports have been written on the worsening crisis in Bosnia, infinite numbers of 'important and powerful' meetings have taken place to find a solution. Yet I, like others, still write. For what? Peace of mind? Hah-what hypocrisy!

Two bodies lying on the ground. Those bodies weren't merely dead bodies, but the bodies of a father and his son burnt to charcoal. The caption underneath it mentioned that some Serb troops came and set the town on fire. The father and his son weren't allowed to escape. I can imagine the troops laughing fiendishly as they watched the bodies burn to death. True it is that this war hasn't only affected the Bosnians, a number of Serbs and Croats have also died. But, if one only takes a thorough look, then one finds that the majority of the victims killed, raped and wounded are Muslims!

And you know, that's what it boils down to-you're Muslims, we're not. Ethnic cleansing! All the important meetings that have taken place, all the resolutions made-they're all fabricated lies! And it's not just in Yugoslavia where there's war or differences because of might or religion, but also in front of our very eyes.

battalion in Bihac, and was trapped in a besieged Bihac. That Bihac was cut off from food, medical supplies etc. As a result, one Bangladeshi died. Later there was a missile attack on the Bangladeshi peacekeepers, killing one and seriously wounding four others was there a big outrage at such an attack? Hardly any! I can only agree with what one UN official said.

"If the French battalion and not the Bangladeshi's was still in Bihac area the political pressure for decisive action would be overwhelming by now" (New York Times, December 6).

The 1996 Wills World Cup Cricket

by Ishrak Ahmed Siddiky

The much awaited World Cup Cricket is not too far away. It will be held in our sub continent regions - India, Pakistan, Sri-Lanka. It is our bad luck and to some extent, our fault as well, because we lost in the ICC, cricket tournament held in Kenya. A great chance was thus lost. Seventeen matches including the two semifinals will be held in India; 4 matches will be held in Colombo and Kandy, while in Pakistan sixteen matches including the two quarter finals and the final which will be held in Lahore. Pakistan

the reigning champions are quite a strong team at this tournament. On the contrary the Australians are the most favourite team in this tournament. They have improved themselves, and if they keep up their present form, they might win the world cup, who knows but of course can have fierce competitors like - England, West Indies and South Africa, and to some extent India also. There are three new teams in this World Cup, Holland, United Arab Emirates and Kenya. These countries are not so experienced but they

can also turn the table and can challenge the top teams. In my best knowledge, last year England unexpectedly lost to Zimbabwe in their last group match. It came as a horror to the rampant English supporters. The World Cup is very hard to predict because you can't say anything till the last ball of the last match is bowled. Any thing can happen. In this World Cup there are two groups, Group A and Group B. The countries which are contesting are Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, West Indies, Kenya, Holland, England, Australia. New

Zealand, United Arab Emirates and Zimbabwe. Nine countries, including the three new countries will fight for the beautiful cup.

OHIO The Gateway State

by Tyseer Khaled

The state of Ohio is located in the midwest region. She is the 35th largest state with an area of 41,300 sq miles divided among 88 counties. In 1990, the state's population was 10,847,000, making it seventh among all the states in the Union.

Ohio gets her name from the Iroquois Native American word *ohio*, meaning "something great," "great river," or "beautiful." The state has two nicknames: "Buckeye State," and "Gateway State." "With God, All Things Are Possible" is the state motto. Did you know that Ohio produces more tomatoes than any other state except California? No wonder the state beverage is tomato juice. Here is a tongue twister for you: The people of Ohio are called 'Ohioans'.

Herein you will read about Ohio's rivers, lakes and cities, manufactured products, agricultural products, transportation, communication, tourism, service jobs, education system, and her famous people. Maybe one day you will visit Ohio and some of the information below will come in handy.

Ohio has about 285 AM and FM radio stations. In 1922, the first radio station in the state went on the air - WHK in Cleveland, and WOSU in Columbus. Operated by Ohio State University, WOSU was the first educational radio station in North America. WEWS-TV, Ohio's first television station, began broadcasting in Cleveland in 1947. Today, Ohio has about fifty television stations. (America The Beautiful: Ohio)

River, Lakes and Cities

Of all the rivers in the state, the Ohio River is the most famous. Flowing in from the east, the river winds along the entire southern border of the state and separates her from West Virginia and Kentucky. Lake Erie, on the northern border of the state, acts almost like the Ohio River to the south. Ohio has several big cities: among them are the Capitol city, Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dayton, Akron and Toledo. Toledo and Dayton are cities very important for their Islamic activities. (Ohio)

Transportation

The Great Lakes and the Ohio River maintain Ohio's position as a major shipping center. Cleveland receives more iron ore than any other port in the nation. Much of it is shipped to ports on the Atlantic via the St. Lawrence Seaway. Toledo is a leading shipping center for coal. Immense tows of twenty barges or more push their way into Cincinnati to take on coal, iron ore, steel, and a host of other products bound for the Gulf of Mexico. (America The Beautiful: Ohio)

Manufactured Products

The number of workers in manufacturing in 1995 is likely to be 1.1 million. Investment in industries 1990 was \$6.3 billion. The average weekly wages in 1989 was \$394. Only two other states produced more value in manufactured products than Ohio. This record makes Ohio one of the great manufacturing centers of the world. (New Enchantment of America: Ohio)

Communication

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Agricultural Products

Ohio is third in the US in the production of popcorn, and, surprisingly, is fifth in maple syrup. Most people would be surprised to learn that Ohio ranks 10th in tobacco production, and even produces a substantial quantity of sugar beets. The state is sixth in grape production. Agriculture is multi-billion dollar-a-year industry. Dairy products account for about 20 percent of that income, hogs 17 percent, cattle 15 percent, and poultry 11 per-

Education System

In 1990, the gross state earnings was \$220 billion, 40 percent of which was spent on education. There were 616 public schools with about 1.8 million students. There was one teacher for every 18.3 students.

The writer is a 9¹/₂ year old, Grade 4 student of Ms. Lenard Cornelia Elementary School, Edina, Minnesota.

BBC World Service Investigates Today's African Music Scene

TOP African singers Youssou N'Dour and Baaba Maal talk about their music in a new radio series which begins on BBC World Service later this month (June). Called 'The African Ear' the four part documentary series investigates today's African music industry and is presented by Lucy Duran who makes a rare visit to Ethiopia and travels to Senegal and Kenya.

She begins her journey in the Senegalese capital of Dhaka where Baaba Maal tells her of his musical influences and his approach to music. Lucy catches a late night performance by Africa's best known singer Youssou N'Dour who recently had an international hit with his single 'Seven Seconds', visits his club and catches up with him for a tour of his recording studio.

