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Dear Children,

It was past 10.30 pm and the light in my neighbour’s house was still on. That was rather unusual as they were early sleepers. I looked through the window to find both the children at the table peering into books. Burning midnight oil! That said it all!

Exam time is special indeed! Especially ‘Board Exams’. When I took my board exams, I had felt very important.

Mum and the rest of the family fussed over me. I was given the VIP treatment and all comforts. Even the neighbours looked awed. “Oh, Board Exams!”

“Yes,” I would nod feeling very Royal. In short, I felt like a legendary hero setting off on a perilous journey to kill the fire breathing dragon. To keep me awake to study, mum would even bring me piping hot coffee, which on other days was taboo. No one was allowed to disturb me. I was given a room all to myself! “No loud music in the house,” said mother, when my brother tried to play his favourite record.

He was not even allowed to enter my room. And I pretended not to notice his threatening glares which seemed to say, “Wait till your exams are over!” I put up notices on the door.

“Genius at work. Don’t disturb!”

“Study zone/ Quiet please.”

It took me a while to realise that such last minute gimmicks were unnecessary if one was up-to-date with one’s lessons.

Love,

[Signature]

Editor.
Dear Editor,

Recently, ‘Leprosy Association’ members visited our school. We were all tested and one of my friends had leprosy. I was very sorry for her but gradually, I distanced myself from her. After reading the story by Lavanya, in the Feb’97 issue, I decided to care for my friend and check if she is following her doctor’s instructions.

S. Deepa (aged 15),
Bangalore - 560 094.

Dear Editor,

I have a suggestion for the Cover Story, for Gokulam. It would be really interesting if we could know about the magazine itself. How and when it was started and by whom? What the cover story and contents of the 1st issue were etc.

Pradha Narasimhan (aged 15),
Mother’s International school,
New Delhi - 16.

Dear Editor,

My friends told me that GOKULAM is an international magazine. Is it true?

Ramesh (aged 13),

We receive several pencil sketches, for the Gokulam Art Gallery. Though some of them are really good, they are very light and will not print well. Please use black ink or a very dark pencil.

- Ed.
on “Freedom and Independence.” I totally agree with her. She has really done a very good job. “Congratulations!”

V. Kavitha (aged 15), Chinnappa Garden, Bangalore - 560 046.

Dear Editor,

I enjoyed reading the article “The Strength of Friendship” (Feb 97). It says that friendship is the biggest treasure in the world. I simply love this article because it also helps me to realize that the disease (leprosy) is curable. One who leaves a friend when in trouble and befriends when happy, is not a true friend.

Divya G. Rajan, Neyveli - 607 803.

Dear Editor,

It is heartening to note that Gokulam could encourage and bring out superb, thought provoking articles like the one by T.S. Ganesh, “The Kurukshetra Mystery” (Gokulam - January 97).

If young minds can scientifically explore, we can one day find an answer to prevent the holocaust unleashed by atomic weapons. The world will one day, realise that the Great Indian Relics are not mere stories spun by our Rishis, but are recorded events.

K. Senthil Nayagam
Indian Bank, Chennai.

Dear R.K. Yoganathan,
Kerala - 673 633.

Dear Yoganathan,
You must not copy, that will amount to violation of copyright act. You can however, retell a story you have read, in your own words. - Ed.

Dear Editor,

This is with reference to INDIA QUIZ in Feb ’97 issue.

It says that the highest peak in India is Kanchenjunga. Some books also say that Nanda Devi is the highest peak. But actually Mt. Godwin Austin (also referred to as K2), which is 8,611m. high is the highest peak.

Priscilla Jawahar (aged 15),
St. Joseph’s A.I.H.S. Chennai - 11.
Error regretted! - Ed.

Dear Editor,

Boatman: Look! There’s a hole in the boat and water is flowing in.
Friend: Don’t worry we can make another hole for the water to flow out.
B. Ramprasad, Neyveli - 607 803
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reports were sent to parents. The best part, recalls Mr. Sundaram, was the Pop Quiz. The teacher would walk in one day and suddenly announce the ‘pop quiz’. Books and pens had to be pulled out and the questions answered in a jiffy. The time allowed was usually around 15 to 20 minutes. But they were most valued as they added to almost 45% of the final exam marks. Such quizzes were held frequently and throughout the year.

The students had to be prepared at all times and be up-to-date with their lessons if they wanted to fare well. Regular study is very vital.

For Krishna, from India who went to study at the U.S. it was rather different. His aim was to prepare for the exam and score an ‘A’ grade as he had always done. But the school seemed more interested in what and how much he knew and understood than in his 98%.

Pichai, loved his Show and Tell classes in his school.
in New York. He could take anything from a pet snail, a tortoise or even a
trumpet and talk about it to his class.

Wherever you live, across the globe, you cannot escape tests. And whatever be the exam pattern, method or system the world over, its purpose is to assess the understanding and knowledge of the pupil and not just test his or her capacity to learn-by-heart.

Dr. Maria Montessori, tells an interesting story of the 4 doors of intelligence. 'Intelligence is like an apartment with 4 doors, each representing Understanding, Reason, Memory and Interest.

A stimulus knocks on the door and is answered by Memory. If Memory is treated harshly, he just ignores it and closes the door. When the others see what a hard time memory is having they, too, close their doors.

If Memory is overburdened, it collapses. It is best to call forth all the four (Reason, Understanding, Memory and Interest), if we wish to help the construction of intelligence.

Memory is like a manual labourer. If Memory does all the work it will build only a Mechanical Intelligence, which is like a person dressed in Royal clothes to make believe that he is a king when he is not.'

Last minute cramming seldom helps. On the contrary, it creates tension and blocks one’s understanding.

It might be wiser to be like the slow but steady tortoise than make a desperate dash to the finish line like the foolhardy hare!

Priya T
If Nalini was famous for something, it was for giving others a suitable nick name. School names ought to be official, like Priyanka, Ramya and Gomathi. But, when they come under the penetrating vision of Nalini, they are, there after known as Kaka, Rambamba and Goli.

"Golly! Don't they sound different?" In a desperate move to honour such esteemed social service by Nalini, the class began calling her "Nick Name Nalini" which, due to corrosion, erosion and by application of Darwin's theory of evolution evolved into Nicky.

Nevertheless, Kaka, Rambamba and Goli became an instant hit with the class, which made us forget their original names; the daily attendance being the only reminder. Nicky named tall, lean Parvathi as "PVC pipe" short stout Manjula as "Brinjal" and gave ever-sweet, ever smiling Charumathi, the name "TOPA", an abbreviation for Tooth Paste Ad!

I was not spared either. Teeyal, was my nick name! I was happy for it sounded decent. But, what I did not know was its descent. Being new to Madras and the school, I had no idea how the name evolved. I continued to be under the belief that it was one of those a 'no-meaning but sounds good, catchy words,' which were getting famous in our school.

But, Buddi (Shwetha) told me, after a long time that it was TL, an abbreviation for Tube Light and not Teeyal. I, at once, hurried to Nicky and demanded an explanation for the defamation. Why must I be called a Tube Light, after all?

"Because you are so bright," Nalini said and smiled.

"Oh! Me! Bright?" I was flattered.

"Yes. So bright a face. So bright a brain. And so bright are your beautiful eyes that they can light up the whole night."

Those words had a profound cooling effect and all my anger disappeared in thin air. I was flattered and did not even have the slightest idea that she was mocking me! Tube Light - a dull-head or slow coach. One who is miserably slow in understanding things. This, I realized only during the summer holidays, that year.

During the holidays, my mother was keen that I spend my time usefully by learning a foreign language. She wanted me to choose German. Nalini happened to meet my mother and recommended an organisation called IFL - Institute for Foreign Languages, which she had joined.

On hearing the name IFL, I thought that it would have a big premises with several classes, many students, and probably Anglo-Indian looking teachers.
it two minutes late? I started concentrating on my German. The classes went on for twenty minutes, and I sincerely noted down all that he said. When the class was over, I went out, and saw several people standing outside.

Funny, I thought. All these people must really hate the dungeon. But, it so happened that they started moving inside the class, and a new teacher was accompanying them in. Only then did I realise that those people were actually waiting for the next class to begin. I hurried home, and told my mother that I was late for the class that day.

"I must be there at 4'O clock tomorrow," I told her. The phone rang and my mother went to answer it.

"It's Your classmate," she said.

I wondered who it was and when the person on the line yelled out "Hello! Teeya!!", I knew. It was Nicky.

"Did you attend the German class?" she asked.

"Yeh!"

"How was it?"

"Okay."

"What did they teach you?"

"...............German!"

"Of course, I know that Teeya. Tell me, what they taught you in German", she asked, and I tried to recollect.

Nicky must have got weary of waiting. So, she said, "Tell me a sentence in German."

"Mmm.... Wait."

"That is English."
"What? A French book?"
"Yes."
How could that be? A German teacher had recommended his student a French book. I immediately rang up my teacher and asked him why he had wanted me to buy a French book.
"To learn," he replied.
"But, Sir... I have a doubt," I said.
"You may have your doubts cleared in the class tomorrow. But, let us get one doubt cleared. What do you learn in a French class? French only, I believe."

"God! Give me time to think, Nicky! Ah...yes. Comment allez vous?"
"What is that?"
"That is German for, how are you?" I said.

"Oh! Really?" she asked and laughed, laughed and laughed. "Stop laughing," I yelled feeling rather hurt and put the receiver down.

In the next day's class, the teacher wrote in a slip, the name of a book and asked me to purchase it immediately. I went to a shop which sold exclusively German books.

I showed him the slip.
The shopkeeper kept staring at it for some time.
"This... we don't have. We have only German books," he said.
"What do you think this is then?"
"This," he said with a smile, "is a French book."

At this stage, well, all of you must have realized that I had after all attended French Classes instead of German Classes. Nicky had laughed because she knew I was speaking French. I had not gone late for my first class, but the batch that was waiting outside, was the class I had to be with. It took me a long time to understand this.

So, What do you think makes me a Tube Light?

I am sixteen years old.

I had taken three months to understand that Teeyal meant a tube light, one year to understand that tube light meant a dull head, and sixteen years to understand that I was (don't rub it in) a Dull Head!
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How many times have I told you not to compare me with Sinduja," protested Uday angrily. "It's always, she did this and she did that and why am I not doing all those things. Look Mummy, I cannot do everything she can do and vice versa."

It all started when the progress report arrived. As usual, Sinduja topped her class and Uday was an above average student but not a topper. The lectures from
his parents seemed endless. "Look how your sister plans her studies. How carefully she studies right from the beginning. It was not the same with Uday.

Uday would spend his entire evening in the nearby playground and by the time he sat to study, he would be hungry and after dinner he was very sleepy. He barely spent about 30 minutes studying. It was always a problem for mother to make him sit and study. While Sinduja participated in all the academic competitions like elocution, essay writing etc, Uday kept away from them. Mother was really worried. However, the comparison with Sinduja always irritated Uday.

There was less than a month left for their annual examination. Mother was really worried. She wanted her children to bag the proficiency prizes in their respective classes. There was no doubt about Sinduja. But Uday...

It was their sports day. Uday left for school very early in the morning. Sinduja stayed at home and she was to go with her parents in the evening to attend the prize distribution function.

The playground was colourfully decorated. And who was that in the victory stand!... It was Uday. He received first prize in the 100m hurdles. Then came the 400 m dash. It was Uday again! Mother could not believe her eyes. Uday bagged several prizes. He was the Sub-Juniors Champion.

"Sinduja, why didn’t you participate in any of the events?" Pat came the reply from Sinduja: "Look Mummy, I am not Uday. Do not compare me with him."

Next month when the progress report came as usual Sinduja stood first in her class and Uday had secured the eighth rank. But the usual comparisons were absent. "You have done quiet well and I am sure you will do better, Uday!" said mummy with an encouraging smile. And Uday was determined to do even better next time.

P.V.Subha Siva Prasad, Std VIII
Nirmala Metriculation School, Chidambaram.
Sister and Brother Undir were preparing for their exams. Sister, who was more experienced and did well in her exams, often advised Brother. "You must anticipate what you are likely to be asked. Once you know how to figure out expected questions, it is much easier to prepare," she said.

"But, how does one guess?" Brother was not particularly good at that kind of thing.

"Pay close attention to what teachers say in class, especially when the exams come close. Most teachers hint!" Sister explained.

"I don't like writing essays! English teacher always says my essays don't have proper beginning, middle and an end! Last time she asked me why the whole essay was one long para!" Brother grumbled. He had written three pages on 'My Favourite Book' without any paragraph divisions.

"And another important thing - never forget to revise. You must, absolutely must, set aside time for a quick revision after you are done!"

"This time I will revise!" agreed Brother who had been ashamed of his careless mistakes in a maths test. The sums had all been easy, but instead of adding he had carried out subtraction and lost marks. Mama and Papa Undir had been most annoyed.

And his rival in class, Kutti Mouse, had been rather pleased!

Papa Undir came in and heard some of the conversation between Sister and Brother. "Remember the four golden rules for doing well in exams; anticipate, prepare, write quickly to be able to finish on time, and revise after you have done!"

"I must beat Kutti this time!" Brother Undir said. So saying he began to prepare in earnest.

He sat down to study for his English language paper. "Hmm! Essay! What should I write about? Anticipate... Teacher was saying something about family, animals, nature, a pet! I think this time we may be asked to write about 'My Pet'. Most of the others will write about their pet cat or puppy or a parrot! I'll be different. I'm going to write

Remember the four golden rules!
about ‘My Cow’. Next, prepare....”

Brother wrote out an essay on ‘My Cow’. He got Sister to suggest improvements. Mama Undir helped him make some corrections. His final version was ready. Papa heard him read it over several times. Brother even wrote it out without looking at the original. No paragraph mistakes, no spelling mistakes. It was finally perfect! He felt confident. He had memorised his ‘My Cow’ essay so thoroughly that he could say it out loud without a single interruption even if you just woke him up from sleep.

Soon their exams began. Both, Sister and Brother Undir had studied hard and were well prepared. Sister had her Maths paper first. Brother started with English. Mama and Papa Undir wished the two of them good luck and waved good-bye.

As soon as Brother got his question paper, he gave it a quick look, picked out the essay question first and began to write. He did not want to waste any time. “Write quickly and then revise!” he thought to himself as his pencil flew over his paper. He completed the essay on ‘My Cow’ without slipping up even once and then moved on to other questions. He was rather pleased with his performance. There were five more minutes left. He started to revise, comparing the questions with what he had written.

“Oh my God! The essay question says MY MOTHER, but I’ve written about My COW! What do I do, there’s only five minutes left!” Brother had to think and act fast. Wherever he had used the word ‘cow’, he started cutting it out and replacing it with ‘mother’. “I think it will work. After all, the cow gives milk and so does mother!” he thought, working furiously.

“Only one minute more! Please check that you have written your roll numbers correctly! I’m coming around to collect your answer sheets!” announced teacher.

Brother’s paper was taken away just as he replaced the last cow with mother! His hands were shaking with nervousness as he handed in his paper.

At home Brother did not tell anyone what had happened. “I think I did OK! I hope I beat that Kutti!” was all that he said.

“I did well too!” said Sister Undir. “But there was one question where I kept getting a remainder in division! I don’t like remainders! I hope that sum was correct!” Sister was worried.

It was a busy month with Sister and Brother studying most of the time. Mama Undir remarked to Papa, “What peace we have at home! Hardly any fights!”

GOKULAM April ‘97

15
“Just you wait till the exams are over and done with! Then all the arguments and fighting will start all over again!” Papa said.

Soon it was time for the results to start trickling in. Each subject teacher began to return their exam papers. Sister had done very well. So had Brother... so far. And then, finally, it was the day of the English class. Brother waited expectantly, wondering what might have happened. He got his paper back. This is what it looked like:

MY COW MOTHER

I have a cow mother. She has four legs. She is mostly brown in colour, but also has some white patches. I have named her Dhenu. My cow mother gives me milk every day. She eats grass, leaves and cotton seeds. There is a large, red, plastic tub for her to drink water out of.

We have a separate place for Dhenu to stay. I help my family in keeping the cow’s mother’s shed clean. Her dung is picked up and stored in a separate place since it makes very good manure for the garden...”

Teacher had put several exclamation marks and question marks on the essay. Brother got three out of ten on it. “While the choice is wrong, he is awarded some marks for presence of mind in a situation of stress.” she had written while grading his paper. When Mama and Papa saw it, they had a good laugh. Sister began to tease him mercilessly:

“A four legged mother
Has my dear Brother;
He feeds her grass
In a shed she rests.

She is brown and white
Her dung a delight;
A very rich manure
Helps the garden for sure.

Her milk Brother milks
Full glasses he drinks

“Stop! Stop! A-a-a-a!” shouted Brother Undir, chasing Sister around the dining table! Round and round they ran, screaming deliriously!

“That’s the end of peace and quiet at home!” exclaimed Papa Undir.

“I suppose it was too good to last!” agreed Mama.

Anuradha Khati Rajivan
ACROSS:
1. Public park (7)
4. Past tense of meet (3)
7. One plus one (3)
8. Wise old (3)
9. Purchase (3)
11. Midday (7)

DOWN:
2. Female deer (3)
3. Consumed (3)
4. Unruly crowd (3)
5. Plaything (3)
6. Tiny fairy (3)
10. Container (3)

Mrs. K.C. Murthy, Chennai.

Solution on page 65
Whenever we think of Lord Krishna, the picture that comes to our mind is a feather-crowned young lad, playing a flute under the shade of a tree. He is surrounded by gopikas and cattle - all deeply lost in the magic of the sweet music flowing from the flute. Most of you may wonder why Krishna dances with so many Gopikas.
Well, the story goes like this.
Before the Dwapara Yuga; that is the era when Lord Vishnu reincarnated as Lord Krishna and ruled Dwaraka along with his brother Balarama; Lord Vishnu was born in the Ikshvaku dynasty as Lord Rama. It is said that Lord Rama was a very handsome young man with a pleasant personality and soft manners. Everyone was attracted towards his magnificent personality.

Several women were so obsessed by his looks and features that they wanted to marry him. So in order to please Lord Rama, they did penance for many years. Pleased by their devotion, Lord Rama appeared before them. He decided to grant them a wish. When they expressed their peculiar desire, he said to them that he was already married and an “Ekapathnivrathudu” (one

who is loyal to his wife and on no condition will marry anyone else). He would, however, fulfil their wish in his next incarnation as Lord Krishna. So the gopikas who always surround him are none other than his devotees who did penance to be near him.

So, whenever anyone accuses Lord Krishna of being a flirt do narrate this tale. I think after reading this story most of you will agree that whatever God does, there is a reason behind it.

B.Swapna.
Bolarun.
uch to the relief of the inhabitants of Madhuban forest, tiger population had dwindled. Thanks to the trigger-happy hunters and gun-toting poachers. But some wildlife enthusiasts protested, "We can’t think of a forest without the tigers. They will soon become extinct. They play an important role in maintaining the balance of nature."

Strict vigilence prevented tiger poaching and the number of tigers in Madhuban had now in-

King Tiger and the Jackal

creased!

But gloom descended on all the other animals. The tigers had become a menace.

"A tiger killed my stag yesterday!" cried the doe. "He left nothing of him, except the head and the hooves!"

"I had to witness the killing of my young one!" wailed mother elephant.

"I was shocked to see a tiger trying to whisk away my little darling!" said mother rhino, angrily.

"They do not spare even small creatures like us!" said the hare, tearfully.

"The increase in their number is a great threat to us!" the wild boar grunted angrily.

"They are killing all the animals of our forest, from a tiny hare to a big buffalo," said the elephant.

"Soon there will be no animals left in Madhuban forest!" The sambar’s voice choked. He had tears in his eyes.

The buffalo was mud larking in a shallow pool. He raised his head. "I can’t imagine life in Madhuban forest without the animals!"

"Let’s go and ask king tiger to have mercy on us," said the monkey, standing on the branch of a tree.

"How can you change the habit of the wild rogues?" the buffalo lost his temper. "We must teach the tiger a good lesson!" He glared at the monkey with his red hot eyes. "No tiger will be allowed to live in our forest!"

"Right, right!" the wild boar rose to his feet excitedly. "Madhuban
will be a better place to live without the tigers”.

“Yes, yes!” cried the rhino, thumping the ground. “We want the tigers’ death, friends. Let’s fight!”

“Death to the tigers of Madhuban!” cried the wild boar, the bristles on his neck rising like spikes.

But the other animals kept quiet. They looked at each other with fear.

“How can a small animal like me fight a tiger,” said the hare, timidly.

“Easier said than done,” said the monkey.

“I can’t dare to fight a tiger,” said the deer.

The wild boar looked at them angrily.

“My dear brothers,” the wise bear now stood up. “We should think twice before we act!”

“What do you mean?” asked the boar, whirling around in blind rage.

“Brother boar has the worst temper in our forest,” laughed the bear, showing his white teeth. “But even if we’re able to kill a tiger, men will not forgive us!” he warned.

All the animals stared at him in
stunned bewilderment. “What’s the matter?” asked the rhino in surprise.

“Have you heard of ‘PROJECT TIGER’ launched by them?” asked the bear.

“Project tiger?” the animals looked at him with wide eyed wonder.

“Yes,” replied the bear. “Madhuban forest is under ‘Project Tiger.’ They will create a hullabaloo over the death of a single tiger. Do you know that?”

“Yes, I’ve heard about it,” said the elephant. “Tigers are now specially protected by men. Oh God! We can’t antagonise them. They have guns!”

The animals were speechless. The mere mention of the gun made everyone turn pale.

“Do you know men are spending lakhs of rupees to save a tiger?” asked the bear, looking at the boar.

The boar was stunned. Their eyes went up in disbelief. They kept quiet for some time.

“Oh, pooh!” The chital was the first to speak. “They are spending lakhs for tigers and nothing for us!”

“I do agree with you,” said the bear, with a mournful smile.

“Little has been done for other animals of Madhuban.”

“They’re not showing any concern for us,” said the boar, regrettfully.

“Shame, shame!” cried the animals in one voice.

They were very much disheartened. The bear tried to cheer them up, “It’s true, we cannot kill a tiger. But we have the right to self-defence.”

The animals looked at him askingly.

“We have a hundred ways to save ourselves from the attack of the tigers,” said the bear. “Don’t forget. We have our sharp teeth, claws and horns to protect ourselves.”

The inhabitants of Madhu-
ban forest heaved a sigh of relief. "Hear, hear!" They struck their tails on the ground to applaud the wise and intelligent bear. The bear acknowledged it with a bow.

The elephant was the first to speak. "Look at my heavy legs and murderous tusks!" He banged the end of his trunk against the ground. "I'll crush the tiger under my legs and pierce him with my tusks!"

"I'll charge the tiger with my powerful horns!" The buffalo thumped the ground angrily. "Let him attack, me!"

"Have you seen the fearful horn on my snout?" boasted the rhino. "Would it not be foolish for the tiger to face me?" He looked at them proudly.

"I'm not as big and powerful as my rhino brother is," said the boar. "But I am far from cowardly! Once attacked, I'll rip the tiger with my fighting knives!" He curled his upper lip, displaying his canines, curved upwards and shining like silver!

"I'll inflict to the tiger fatal wounds. Look at my sharp antlers and hoofed legs," said the sambar, and he hit a rock with his hoof, making a metallic sound.

"I am a fast runner," said the chital deer. "I'll take to my heels as soon as I spot the tiger. I will gain safety by flight!"

"I'll climb up a tree at the sight of the tiger and make faces at him!" laughed the monkey, hanging by his tail.

"I'll simply vanish as soon as I spot the tiger," said the hare, with mischief twinkling in his eyes.

"How will you do that?" asked the bear staring at him curiously.

"I'll fool the tiger by lying down on the ground and keeping dead still," explained the hare.

All the animals looked at him admiringly.

The cunning jackal knew that the tigers were the most powerful animals in Madhuban forest. He must not antagonize the king of the jungle, but must remain in his good books. The sly jackal, slunk away and ran towards the tiger's den.

"Oh! Dear Uncle tiger," cried the jackal, panting.

It was shortly before noon. The Lord of Madhuban Forest was enjoying his midday siesta in his lair,
after a heavy meal. He was very much annoyed to be awakened by the shrill cry of the jackal.

"Gr-rr-rr-rr!" He growled angrily. "Who dared to disturb my slumber?" He opened his eyes and grimaced at the jackal.

"Er...rr...! Forget your sleep, dear Uncle!" said the jackal.

"What's the matter?" asked the tiger. "Is the forest on fire?"

"It's worse than that, Uncle. All the inhabitants of Madhuban forest are conspiring to teach you a lesson!" The jackal told him all about the meeting.

"W-rr-oo-o-f!" The tiger leapt to his feet, opening his eyes wide. "I'm the king of the jungle!" roared he, fuming with anger. "Look at my mighty paws! Look at my sharp fangs! I'll kill my prey with a single blow of my paw! I'll stalk them near enough to seize them in a lightning pounce, and catch hold of their necks. Who will stop me?"

The tiger rolled his red-shot eyes, rattled his sharp teeth and swished his tail in great excitement, "Gr-rr-rr!"

"Oh Uncle!" cried the frightened jackal, as he looked at the angry tiger. "I am jackal, your nephew!" His voice was trembling with fear.

"Oh, Yes!" replied the tiger. "I'll never forget you, my nephew!"

"You are great, Uncle Tiger!" said the jackal as he broke into a broad smile and moved his tail from side to side.

And you know, from that day, jackals sneak after tigers for the scraps of left over food from the kills of the Lord of the jungle!

Sukhendu Dutta, Calcutta
Here comes the cunning April,  
A month full of thrill.  
We can have our own game,  
Of fulfilling our little aim.  
We make the clever ones at school,  
That day, look a stupid fool!  
It is the game which we play  
Giving laddoos made of clay!  
People jump out of fear,  
Lest they be made the fool of the year!

Shreeya A. Pandit (aged 17),  
Thane (W) - 400601.
It was a cool evening. The rain had just stopped and they had come out to collect food. For Joey, it was a brief outing - one of those rare occasions, when mother allows him to go around all by himself! He could not imagine doing that some two months back.

Joey was excited. The experience of moving alone and hopping around was new to him. Other children of his group - most of them older than him - were going on long jumps. Joey too joined them. He hopped and jumped and forgot everything about home, about mother. Suddenly he heard the shouts and cries and saw the elders of his group rushing towards the children.

"O! Some danger! Some enemy must have come nearby. I must quickly get into my home. I should first go to my mother. Mother. O... Mother... Where are you?"

Joey looked up at all those coming towards them.

"Oh! no. How I am to spot my mother? M...other."

Joey gave out a loud call. But his mother recognised him. She reached him and leaned forward towards him. Joey caught hold of the edges of his home, the pouch. He put in his head first and then curled in, his body quickly. At last, he is back home, his sweet home, the
The new baby, formed as a fertilized egg soon after he (Joey) was born had waited till Joey became big enough and left the pouch. The fertilised egg gets implanted in the womb some 11 months after Joey was born.

The new one is born after 5 or 6 weeks. Guided by the smell of the pouch it quickly crawls up into the pouch. The new born is just the size of the thumb nail and cannot see. There is no sibling rivalry between the two. The old Joey continues to drink milk from his mother until he is 18 months old. After that the male joins other males of the group and the female stays close to her mother.

By two years, it is ready for mating. Usually the tall and bulky among the males dominates and fights with other competitors to win...
Why did the skeleton climb a tree?
Because the dogs were after his bones.

M. Siva Prasad, Hyderabad.

Over the females. Another generation of babies are born. But strictly one at a time and one baby a year. Isn’t this nature’s boon to spare the mother the difficulty of carrying too many at a time in her pouch?

The Kangaroo lives for an average life span of 23 years. The males are larger in size reaching up to 5 to 6 feet measured from head to tail. They are heavier, too. They like to eat grass and small plants. There was a time when Kangaroos were giving trouble to farmers. Farms were destroyed indiscriminately. But today they are a protected species — a symbol of pride for the people of Australia and Tasmania where they are found in good number.

Jayashree Saranathan, Hosur.
To the attention
Of all those who are in tension
On the eve of the examination!

Important is preparation,
To avoid confusion.

Keep still your concentration,
To make up for your distraction.

Unbearable is temptation,
But to avoid, is television.

Result of your preparation,
Is appreciation.

Study well, if you need a
profession
A job with a high position!

C. Vinitha
Std IX ‘D’
R.S.K. Sr. Sec. School,
Tiruchi - 620 014.
Hidden here are seven SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) countries. Can you spot them?

L. Ravindra,
Mysore - 570 010.

ANSWERS ON PAGE - 65

Once at the party, we forgot all our fear and had a gala time with so many delicious things to eat and games to play.

It was already 8.00pm when we decided to go home. As we walked along the path, I saw a bench and wanted to rest my feet for a minute. All of a sudden my cousin started screaming and jumping all around. “There’s a scorpion in my shirt collar!” She cried.

I quickly jumped to my feet to push the scorpion away and — I burst into laughter. The scorpion in her shirt collar was only a twig with dry leaves clinging to it.

Megha Prakash,
Presidency school, Bangalore.

April '97 GOKULAM
AN UNFORGETTABLE NEW YEAR

This happened on a new year's day. On the first of January, I woke up at 6 a.m. as usual. On seeing me, my mother screamed and looked shocked. My face, hands and legs were yellow in colour.

"A severe attack of jaundice," said everyone. Since it was a holiday, there was no doctor nearby. At last, we found a doctor and she tested me. She told us not to worry and gave some medicines.

due to this. When I think of it now I feel like laughing at myself. Really it was an unforgettable new year.

S. Sindu (aged 12),
Trichy - 637001.

Ram: You know our ancestors were gods.
Ravi: But, my father once told me that they were monkeys.
Ram: But we aren’t talking about your ancestors.

J. Danalakshmy Jothy (aged 12),
Pondicherry - 605 001.
Hari was going on a holiday to his grandparent's village.

Something is amiss!

The ring the Starlings gave me... I feel it move.

I'm going to the toilet, Mom!
Look! A flying boy and a dog?

 Been working overtime! You need to rest, buddy!

The tracks...

Someone has tampered with them.

Wuff!

We must stop the train!

It's an emergency. Stop the train!

It's a sabotage! The train will derail! Radio the police!

Is this some joke! Who are you?
We must catch the culprits.

O! God!!

The train screeches to a halt! Just in time—

Wuff! Wuff!

What have you found, shag?

A jeep with remote controls! The culprits must be around.

The train should be here any minute. Let's go!
Looks like someone has upset the apple-cart. The train has stopped! Let's escape.

Hey, Who's that?

Power of the Starlings! Guide me.

Soon the police arrive—

STAR-RIDERS! You helped us before.

Bye officer. You can round them up!

They are captured along with their stranded jeep!

That night at Haris's house—

Wonder where he comes from?

The mysterious Star-Riders help nab terrorists and...
It was a spring day. In the Green Woods all the birds and animals were out. Some played about and some others chirped or chatted under and around the trees.

On a patch of grass sat a mouse, a squirrel and a parrot. Just then a crow, with its beak open, flew in there. He seemed to be eager to tell his pals something.

"Have you heard," he almost panted out, "that the tortoise who lives over there has gone on a trip round the world?"

"The tortoise on a trip round the world?" repeated the three. Then they laughed at what they thought was a good joke.

"It is not a joke," said the crow. "His neighbour, the frog, told me about it. He wished the tortoise a happy journey day before yesterday."

"But the tortoise," said the red beaked parrot, "never told me anything about the trip when I met him last week."

"The frog..."
says that it all happened suddenly," answered the crow. "The tortoise had no time to call on anybody."

"What made him go on such a trip?" asked the squeaky mouse. "Doesn't he know how big the world is and how slow he is?"

"Even in his whole life he will not be able to go round the world," remarked the squirrel, his tail up in the air.

"Give him 100 years," put in the parrot, "and yet he will not, the slow fool."
"He is a fool indeed," said the mouse. "The distance is so long. There are so many hurdles in the way. Just think of the high hills and deep seas. I am afraid he will die midway."

For a moment the four fell silent. They had known the tortoise for pretty long. He was a good fellow. But they had never thought that he was so foolish. They pitied him for the risk he had taken.

"You said that he left day before yesterday, didn't you?" said the squirrel. "He should not have gone far yet. If you two, crow and parrot fly, you will soon catch up with him. You must go and tell him to go no further on this unwise venture."

"Yes, we must stop him," said the mouse. "How nice it is here. He must come back and enjoy himself like us. If at all he feels like taking a long walk, let him go round the woods."

The others liked the idea. The crow and the parrot got ready to fly. But they did not know which way to go.

"Look, who comes there!" said the parrot excitedly.

All looked up and saw the tortoise. As
My Pets

Two pets have I,
A German shepherd dog
That sleeps like a log
And an aquarium with 16 fish.
Mollies, Guppies, and gold,
Angels and black mores that’re bold.
And my Dog’s best pass-time
Is to watch the fish,
And mine is to watch both of them.

Abhimanyu Kumar, Std III,
Mount St. Mary’s School,
New Delhi - 110 070

usual, he was coming up slowly.
Though rather tired, he seemed to
be beaming with joy.

“He did not go,” said the squirrel, with a sigh of relief.

“No, I did go,” uttered the tortoise, coming near. “I just came back from the trip around the world.”

The four burst into laughter.

“No,” was the reply. “It is wider than your wildest dreams.”

“Then how did you go round it so soon?” asked the mouse, with a twinkle in his beady eyes.

“I did not go on foot,” said the tortoise. “I was invited to join an animal welfare group on a round the world flight!”

“Wow!” shouted the four friends. They hugged and kissed the tortoise who had been so honoured.

O.P. Bhagat, New Delhi.
Short hand is the art of writing fast, using signs and strokes which can be made very quickly. These signs are not the same as words - but can be read by anyone who knows the system. Today the art of writing fast is also known by some other names such as Stenography (little or narrow writing), Tachygraphy (swift writing) and Brachygraphy (short writing).

You may think that the idea is a new one - but it is over 2000 years old! In ancient Rome when great orators like Cicero and Seneca made speeches in the Roman Senate, a man called Tiro had successfully employed a system of shorthand writing — invented by himself in 63 B.C. — to take down those speeches.

Tiro’s system was so good that it was taught in the Roman schools. It was learnt by the Emperors. It remained in use for hundreds of years. This system was based on the use of initials which made it a sort of abbreviation. The consonants could be written in three different slants, denoting the different vowels that followed it.

Modern shorthand was born in England at the time of Queen Elizabeth. A system was invented that allowed each sign to slant in four different directions. The base of each sign could be made in twelve different ways.

In 1837, Issac Pitman introduced his system of shorthand based on sounds so that the words were written down the way they are spoken and not the way they are spelt. There are 26 signs for the consonants. Dots and dashes are used for the vowels.

In 1888 Gregg introduced an improved system which is most widely used today.

VEENA RAMANI,
Coimbatore.
S.M. Shobana,
St. Mary's Primary School,
Bangalore.

A. Aswini,
Steel plant Mat. High School,
Arakkonam.
Nirja Kumari (aged 11), West Bengal.

K. Kannan, Std VIII, DAEC School, Kalpakkam.
The tower of London is not in London. It lies in Stepney.

It took seventy six years to build the great pyramid.

There is enough telephone cable under New York to reach Venus.

An art student in Pretoria who submitted a picture drawn by a chimpanzee, instead of his own, was awarded a pass mark by his examiners.

Twenty ants held up a Melbourne electric train for twenty six minutes. They crawled into a steel casing of the electric signal mechanism and the signal remained permanently at stop.

In Japan, broken dolls are not thrown away but are buried in the school playground every June. A Buddhist priest presides over the ceremony.

A scientist weighed people immediately before and after death and concluded that the human soul weighs 21g.
If all the zips on earth were laid end to end they would reach the moon and back twice.

A bull’s front legs are shorter than its back ones which help it to run faster.

James W Marshall, the man who discovered gold in California, died a pauper.

A church in Bureney, Channel Islands, has accommodation for six persons only and is claimed as the smallest church in the world.

Maria Feodorewona accidently caught sight of the following note appended to the bottom of a death warrant: “Pardon impossible, to be sent to Siberia.” Maria transposed the comma so that it read, “Pardon, impossible to be sent to Siberia.” Whereupon the convict was released.

A lizard discovered inside a block of ice buried 33 ft below ground level in Siberia, was found to be alive.

Young men in Malagasy Indian Tribes must pay their fathers for the right to grow taller than them.

Workers on Japanese building sites sometimes use kites to carry bricks up tall buildings.

Lakshimi Ravindran.
Std XI, Rosary Matric, Chennai -20.

GOKULAM April '97
Hey! Stop that you stupid monkey!

Can't you see he's a baby dinosaur who has wandered away from his mother.

Take that, you rock head!

Ha! Ha! You jumbo! It is not a dino! It's a rhino, a baby rhinoceros.

Appu you wait here with Rhino. I shall fly high and see if I can spot his mother.
HIGH UP IN THE SKY

HA! THERE SHE IS!

APPU, BRING RHINO, AND FOLLOW ME...

COME RHINO, WE WILL TAKE YOU TO YOUR MOM.

ER... I'M SURE IT IS A DINO!

THANK YOU BOTH FOR FINDING AND BRINGING MY BABY BACK TO ME!

I HAVE A DOUBT... ARE YOU A DINOSAUR OR A RHINO?

HA HA! A RHINOCEROS
Once a pious man found a blind man begging for food in the bazaar. He took pity on him, went to him and asked, “Will you be my guest for lunch today? I am going away from my home on an urgent work. Please drop at my house by twelve O’clock. Here is my address.”

After finishing his work, he returned home and said to his wife, “I have invited a blind man for lunch today. Prepare food for two more persons.”

The wife, surprised, asked, “Why food for two when you have invited only one person.”

The pious man smiled and replied:

“Don’t you know that a blind man always requires the help and guidance of another!”

Grind the grated coconut with a few drops of water and take out the milk. Mix coconut milk, mango pulp, lemon juice and sugar. Blend with ice cubes. Pour in cups. Decorate with pieces of mango.

That makes a cool, delicious summer drink!

Budding Chef

Fresh coconut (grated) ½
Mango pulp from ripe mangoes 4 cups
Lemon juice ½ tsp.
Honey 3 tbsp.
Ground sugar ½ cup
Crushed ice cubes 2-3.
Bondu Monkey plucked another apple from the tree. Lying in a comfortable position on a strong branch he began munching the big, red, juicy apple. This was his sixth apple of the day.

"Bondu, you lazy good-for-nothing! Why don't you get down and work! Why don't you too, like the rest of us, help in growing these very apples you relish!" Aar Rabbit yelled.

"With all of you working so hard I don't have to," inviting trouble on yourself," Aar predicted.

"Poor Jealous you," teased Bondu and plucked yet another apple with a defiant look at Aar.

Aar turned away to continue his work.

Hardly had Bondu taken a few bites from the apple that he suddenly felt giddy and lost balance. Being a natural expert at swinging on trees he managed to hold another branch during his fall downwards. He found himself weakening and fell to the ground. "Help..." he called out seeing Aar near-by. He belched and threw up. Weakly he called again. "...Please help..."

Aar heard him. He ran towards Bondu's feeble voice and found him on the ground turning black and blue all over. "Bondu, are you O.K.?" he asked in panic, but didn't get a response.

"Someone please call Dr.Owl," he said to the crowd of animals that had gathered around Bondu.

In no time Dr.Owl was examining Bondu.
to any activity at all. Activity or exercising makes us stronger. Lazy Bondu is weak. The apple he ate may have been slightly under-ripe and Bondu's system couldn't accept and digest it. It created problems - that's all.

Bondu gradually recovered and became conscious. He opened his eyes and was given water. He felt better. "Thank-you Doctor," he said weakly, and thanks to you too, Aar. I'm sorry I called you names though you were right and I was wrong."

"How is he?" asked the animals, in concern.

Dr. Owl gave Bondu an injection. "Nothing to worry," he said. "He'll soon be O.K. Give him only water for two days and when he is better tell him to be more active rather than just eat and laze around..." Someone interrupted, "Could the apple that he was eating be poisonous?"

And from then onwards lazy Bondu changed. Not only did he become hard working but he also learnt to be nicer to everybody. "I learnt it from Aar," he confesses with a smile.

*Farhat Rehman, Bangalore.*
Once upon a time, there lived a king who was very fond of hunting. He used to frequent the forest and kill a number of animals for sport.

One day, as he was setting out to hunt, his two children insisted that they accompany him on his hunting expedition. The king persuaded them to stay back, but the children were adamant. So, he finally agreed to take them along.

Once inside the forest, the king left his children in the soldiers' care and rode away to hunt. The two children played in the open ground before their tent. Suddenly, as if by magic, the soldiers who were guarding them fell asleep. When they woke up, there was no trace of the children. They searched everywhere but in vain. They feared that the king would sentence them to death when he found out that his children were missing.

When the king returned and came to know what had happened, he was fuming with rage. "Search every inch of the forest," he ordered and sent for more soldiers to help in the search. All efforts to trace the children proved futile.

The king was distressed. He did not have
the heart to return to his kingdom without his beloved children.

Suddenly, the Goddess of the forest appeared before him and asked him the reason for his sorrows. The king told her about his missing children and also stated that he could not live without them.

On hearing the king's words, the Goddess said, "Oh king! you are worrying over your two missing children but I have lost several of my children who have all been killed in this forest."

"Who are your children and why have they been killed?" enquired the puzzled king.

"All the animals of the forest are my children. They have been killed cruelly in the name of hunting by you and your men. It has been breaking my heart," said the Goddess.

The king understood her feelings and realised his mistake. He felt guilty. At once he promised that he would give up hunting.

The goddess was pleased. "King! your children are safe in my custody," said she and Lo! The children appeared before him. He thanked the Goddess and returned to his kingdom.

He, immediately banned all hunting and cruelty to animals in his kingdom. Soon the citizens began to show love and affection towards nature and its creatures.

Gangisetty Sivakumar,
D.V.R. Palli,
Gudur -
524 102.

Patient:
Doctor, the ointment you gave me makes my arm smart.

Doctor: Then put it in your head.

S.Sindu, (aged 12),
Namakkal
I was struggling with my maths homework when the shrill ring of the telephone jolted me out of my thoughts. I tried to ignore it and continued my work, when mama yelled at me from the kitchen. I finally answered it.

WOW! I was bowled over by the news Sheila gave me. It was Mala didi’s wedding the following week and Sheila invited me. Mala didi was Sheila’s elder sister. I rushed to inform mama about it. Soon I was dreaming. How beautiful Mala would look in her bridal attire, what would I wear etc; my maths problems all forgotten.

The much awaited day arrived. I got up early, had a bath, dressed carefully and set off to the bus stop where some of my friends would join me.

The journey was quite uncomfortable, it being a hot day. We got down at our stop, and proceeded to the
marriage hall asking for directions.

We finally reached the hall and were shocked to find it empty! Had we come to the wrong place? But no! How could all of us be mistaken? We decided to call Sheila, praying she was at home. We walked a little further and found a big bungalow where we were sure there was a phone, just as we approached the gate a dog came from inside and started jumping and barking. We had no choice but to run away. A little further we spotted a house with phone connection, and we knocked at the door. A lady opened the door and seeing five new faces was about to say something, when Neelam blurted “Auntie! Can we use your phone please?” “Of course - come in,” she said. “But only two of you.” “O.K.” We agreed. Neelam and I went inside. The house was spic and span. She showed us the telephone. It was then that I asked Neelam, Sheila’s tele-

phone number. “I don’t know,” said she. “Perhaps Mini knows.” She ran outside and to our ill luck all five of us did not know it and we had come to phone her!

We sheepishly thanked the lady (for nothing at all) and came back to the bus stop. It was blazing hot. There was nothing we could do but go to Sheila’s house. We reached her residence. And Horror of Horrors! There wasn’t any decor or anything that resembles a bride’s place. We stepped into the garden sweating and panting. We were quite tired by now. “Perhaps, the wedding was called off!” said Mini. “No! Can’t be,” said her sister. “Let’s hope everything is fine,” I cried. With several questions assailing our thoughts we knocked. The door was opened by a blushing Sheila, who seeing our horrified faces burst out laughing “HOW WAS THAT APRIL FOOLS!”

Aysha, Bangalore 560 051
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WALL HANGING

You need:

1) Eighteen ice cream sticks (long ones)
2) One satin ribbon of small width
3) Some square or round mirror pieces
4) Small cloth/paper flowers
5) Thick thread
6) Fevicol

Take the Ice cream sticks and stick them with fevicol as shown below:-

Then decorate it with flowers and mirror pieces.

Make two more such pieces.

Make a loop and stick the thread on the ice cream stick.
At the back, stick the satin ribbon.

Now your wall hanging is ready.

Shweta Chavan (aged 13),
Std VIII, M.I.T. School.
Pune.
OLD TO GOLD

Find the old names of the five places given in the clues and you get the name of a wonderful country.

CLUES:
OLD NAME FOR ETHIOPIA
OLD NAME FOR GREECE
OLD NAME FOR BENIN
OLD NAME FOR IRAN
OLD NAME FOR IRAQ

Answers on page 65

S. Anand (aged 12),
Bharathi Vidya Bhavan Hss,
Erode: 638009
Kannan and Kovalan were sipping a cup of tea in Murthy's tea-shop with Moti at their side begging for a bun. Kovalan threw him a piece which Moti caught deftly in the air. Meanwhile, Murthy arrived and said, "Did you know that the village elders have decided to hold a fair tomorrow?"

"No, please tell us about it," requested Kovalan.

Murthy cleared his throat and began, "Once in a year we have a fair in which all the temple deities are brought out in procession. Every household in the village contributes something towards this fair. Moreover, traders, cow-sellers and drama players also participate in it to make it a success."

"Why don't we enact a play and earn some money for our club?" suggested Kannan.

"Good idea. Why don't you call a meeting of all the members of 'Revolution'?" suggested Kovalan.

"Bow-wow" barked Moti.

"Of course, you will be included in the play, Moti," said Kannan.

Later in the evening all the members of "Revolution" were crowded in the old cottage. Kannan spoke first. "To boost our financial situation, we propose to hold a play at the village fair. If any of you have any suggestions, you are welcome to speak."

Murthy was the first to speak.

"It would be a good idea if we stage 'Mahabharatam'. We have plenty of members and it would be a grand success to have all of us involved in the play. I believe that there is no one who could play the
role of Bheema better than me.”
Everyone agreed to Murthy’s idea and they decided that Kannan would play the part of Dharmaraja, Kovalan would play the part of Karna, Monohar the part of Arjuna, and Anand and Sathyam would play Nakula and Sahadeva.

The rehearsals began. Each member of the club was involved in the activities. It seemed as though the whole village had come alive. Kannan with the help of his grandma had acquired the required land. Murthy with the help of his father had made arrangements for mats and a pandal (tent). Manohar with the help of his
uncle who was a printer had got some tickets and a few posters printed. Each ticket had a value of two annas. One of the posters read: "Vanakkam, dear brothers and sisters and the rest of the family. We are happy to inform you that a great troupe of artists who have successfully staged 'Mahabharatam' in many towns are visiting this village and would hold the play on the auspicious day of the village fair."

Anand and Sathyam had stuck the posters almost in all parts of the village. The whole village was full of great expectations and enthusiasm.

The day of the village fair soon dawned.

All the boys were busy. Most of the members were busy arranging the stage. Some of them were busy spreading the mats for the audience to sit properly and at the far end of the stage they arranged a few chairs for the village elders. In short, the whole stage was arranged and waited only for the play to begin.

(To be continued)

G. Ravi, Bangalore.

* Namaste in Tamil
** annas: Currency in those days.
It was exam time once again and I was studying very hard. We had our exams in the afternoon between 12.30 and 2.00. I always went to school half an hour early to revise with my friends and go through the points that I might have missed.

That day, we had Maths and Language. I was tensed and occupied with the last minute revising. I looked at the clock and to my shock saw that it was already 11.45. I still hadn't eaten and was not ready.

Puffing and panting, I reached the school building and was rather puzzled at not finding any of my classmates. I asked the maid as to why nobody had come yet. She said that the morning session was still in progress. I was surprised. It was only then that I looked at my watch. And I discovered that the time was only 11'o clock. In my haste, I had mistaken 10.45 for 11.45 and had come to school much earlier.

Since then, whenever I look at the clock, I look at it twice so that I don't make any mistake in reading the time.

C.P. Anuradha (aged 14),
Florence Public School,
Bangalore-32.
When God created the world, everything on earth was fresh, plenty and beautiful. All the creatures enjoyed their lives. The humans considered themselves as superiors in God’s creation. They assumed that God created everything for them.

In the beginning, man was immortal. Death was unknown to him.

Humans lived in the midst of plenty. All the trees bore luscious fruits. Animals gave their surplus milk to man. There was harmony in life on earth.

There was a whirlwind in the forest. When the bamboos dashed against each other, fire was created. The fire destroyed a portion of the forest. A few animals were caught in the middle of fire. They died. The men who saw the burnt and dead animals ate them. They found the flesh tasteful. They began to eat meat. From vegetarians they
became non-vegetarians. Thereafter the humans started hunting the animals. They cut trees for fire-wood.

The trees were very sad. They wanted to protest against the cruel behaviour of men. All the trees joined together and decided to commit suicide. They began to shed their leaves and slowly fade. This created imbalance in the environment. The birds found no shelter in the trees. The animals found no shade to rest. Even the insects and creepers found it very difficult to live without green trees. All living beings except the humans prayed to God to help them by restoring the forest.

God appeared before the trees and asked them why they were fasting. They told God that since human beings were eternal, they became cruel towards other living beings. The animals and the trees could not tolerate it.

God immediately summoned all the humans and enquired about their behaviour. The men were arrogant in their reply to God. They said, "Since you have created the world for us, we will deal with the world as we please."

God, as Father of human beings was kind towards them. So he advised them, "You are superior to all of my creations. I have made you the master of this world. It is not proper on your part to harm others. Enjoy your life without affecting others."
But the men were not wise enough to adhere to the advice of God. They continued their violent way of living.

The trees continued their fast. God was touched. "What do you want me to do to end your fast?" he asked. "Since the humans are immortal, they behave like this. Make them also die like others," requested the trees.

God accepted the demand of the trees. He cursed men with death. But even then men did not repent; change their way of life. The result is that the immortal human beings became mortal.

Dr. M.P. Gurusamy, Tiruchendur - 628 215.

**PRICEY TASK!**

The National Literacy mission was in full swing and I decided to teach my illiterate servant Ramu to read and write.

I began to teach him an hour daily after he had completed his chores.

On the last day of the month as I was paying him his salary, he demanded an extra two hundred rupees.

"Why?" I enquired, rather taken aback.

"I worked over time for you every day. I had to sit and listen to you for an hour daily after all my work was done," he said.

-Samiul Hassan Qudari, Bikaner.
As you all know, King Jayabalân’s birthday was on the first day of the fourth month. The ministers and officials of Jayabalpore wanted to celebrate it grandly.

A meeting of the Council of Ministers was held to discuss the plans. King Jayabalân insisted on attending this meeting.

“But Your Majesty,” said Ayalaan, the minister for foreign affairs. “We would like to give you a surprise!”

“His Majesty doesn’t like surprises,” said Sigainasam, the home minister, with his usual oily smile.

“But we can’t discuss anything freely if His Majesty is present,” said Varisumai, the finance minister.

Solmannan, the minister for publicity, rose to speak. He cleared his throat and looked around at everyone gathered there. Then hooking his thumb in his coat lapel, he began: “Your Majesty, Fellow Min-
isters and friends, should His Majesty be here or shouldn't he be here—that's the subject of this discussion. To be or not to be, that is the question. Ayalaan says he is out of place here, and Ayalaan is an honourable man. Varisumai supports Ayalaan, and Varisumai is an honourable man, too. They are all honourable men. But the king is more honourable. So we

have to think deeply over this matter.

_Cogito ergo sum. Ergo, I say...._”

“You are not saying anything,” Ayalaan snapped.

“It's Greek to us,” said Tholaipesi, the minister for communication.

“Actually it is Latin,” said Arivili, the minister for education, with a smirk.

“Solmannan, shut up and sit down,” the king said. “Or I'll have your tongue knotted and gummed up.”

“He will be stuck for words then,” said Ganabadi chuckling.

“For a change,” said Ayalaan.

“I am a man more sinned against than sinning,” muttered Solmannan as he sat
down.

"Let us proceed with the business," Sigainasam said. "The king will stay on here. That's final". And so the discussion was resumed.

"Let us invite the famous singer, Bade Gulab Jamunkhan to sing for the king," Arivilli said.

"I thought you wanted to entertain me. Instead you are suggesting torture," said the king smiling broadly.

"You know His Majesty can't stand serious music," Sigainasam chided Arivilli. "Think of something pleasant."

"What about Jangirimala, the dancer?" Tholaipesi suggested.

"She is known as twinkle-toes," Ayalaan said.

"Let her twinkle in other skies, far from our horizon," said Ganabadi shaking with mirth.

"Say, I have a very good idea," said Varisumai. "Why not make our king's birthday the Flag Day of the nation? We'll design a national flag and...."

"That's a grand idea," said Ayalaan. "We have a national animal and a national bird, but no national flag."

That was true. The donkey was their national animal and the goose their national bird. But they had no of-
ficial emblem or symbol representing the country.

The king seemed pleased by the suggestion. “Who’'ll design the flag?” he asked.

“Send for Nikhil Anchalo, the artist,” said Sigainasam. Everyone agreed that Nikhil was the right person for the job. He was given a week’s time to do some rough designs for the flag. The Council of Ministers decided to meet again when the designs were ready.

Ten days later Nikhil presented his designs to the king and his ministers. The best of these sketches was one with three vertical strips, two in colour and the one in the middle in white. In the centre strip there was a sun with radiating beams.

“I have not filled in the colours in the side strips, so that you can choose any colour you want,” said the artist.

“I like yellow,” the king said.

“Yellow is not suitable Your Majesty,” Arivili said. “It is associated with cowardice.”

“Moreover a yellow flag is usually displayed on a ship which has an infectious disease on board.” Ayalaan said.

“Yes, it is a quarantine flag,” said Varisumai. “Blue is the royal colour,” Arivili said.

“Let’s have blue,” the king said suddenly. “How about red for the other panel?” Tholaipesi said.


“Green suggests immaturity,” said Sigainasam.

“Let’s have blue in both the strips,” the king said.

“Nothing but the royal colour for Our Majesty,” said Sigainasam with an ingratiating grin.

“It is not advisable to have the same colour on both sides,” Varisumai said. “Then we won’t know which is the right side and which the left.”

“A flag is a flag, left or right” said Sigainasam.
“Let’s stick to blue,” the king said. And so that was that.

“The sun in the middle has to go,” Ayalaan said. “The sun, the moon and the stars have all been taken by other countries or parties.”

Janwarappa, the minister for animal welfare, spoke up. “I have a suggestion to make,” he said. “Instead of the sun in the middle why don’t we have a donkey - our national animal?”

“Instead of a donkey I suggest we have a picture of our king,” said Sigainasam.

“That will be a fair substitution,” Ayalaan whispered to Varisumai. Varisumai smiled and whispered back. “The former has better looks.”

“The king in a thinker’s pose,” said Sigainasam knowing that the king would like that.

“Excuse me, Your Majesty,” said Ayalaan. “A flag is emblematic, usually having abstract designs and meaningful colours. It is not customary to have human portraits on the flag.”

“I have seen some flags with pictures of some leaders on them,” said Sigainasam defiantly.

“The picture of a person cannot be reproduced with uniform accuracy on all the flags,” said Varisumai.

“Moreover the full figure of a person on a flag, say in a thinker’s pose will make the picture so small that it will not be clear,” said Ayalaan.

“So how about the head alone?” Sigainasam asked.

The king was looking wistfully at the ministers. He obviously wanted his picture to be on the flag. Ayalaan and Varisumai noted this, and stopped further argument.

So the Jayabalapore flag was of three strips - blue, white and blue - and in the white strip a picture of the king. Just the head.

Invitations were sent all over the world, and each country sent a representative to attend the flag hoisting and the King’s birthday celebrations.

At dawn on the great day, trumpets were blown, drums beaten and chariots arrayed for the procession. Crowds started gathering in.

Solmanna’s speech is made up of a number of lines taken from Shakespeare’s plays.

‘To be or not to be...’ is from Hamlet.
The reference to noble men is from Julius Ceasar.
A man more sinned against.... is from King Lear.
‘Cogito ergo sum’ is a Latin statement made by the French philosopher, Descartes. It means ‘I think, therefore I am.’
‘It’s Greek to me’ - It is beyond my comprehension.
the main square of Jayabalpore. The distinguished foreigners were in a special enclosure.

The king arrived, protected by a group of security men. Sigainasam came with him, looking to the left and the right like a bird, as if he had to singlehandedly guard the king. The other ministers followed behind. Martial music was played, and the crowd rose and cheered.

The time had come for the flaghoisting. The music stopped. Everyone stood at attention in a hushed atmosphere.

Sigainasam had the honour of hoisting the national flag for the first time. It was a historic moment.

Sigainasam stepped near the flag-pole with great dignity and pulled a rope. The flag at the top of the pole unfurled, and rose petals floated down from above.

For the king's face was upside down. Just as Varisumai had feared, the man fixing the flag had confused one side for the other, and fixed the wrong side to the rope.

The representative from England, Sir. Miles Myopic, who was extremely short sighted, turned to Janwarappa who was standing near him. "Tell me, old chap," he said squinting at the flag through his pince-nez, "Are you a football - playing nation?"

"No," said Janwarappa.

"But isn't that a football on your flag?"

"No," said Janwarappa through clenched teeth. "But I wish it had been a football, or even a donkey." And then he walked away. So did everyone else. Quietly.

No one is allowed to talk about that flag- hoisting in Jayabalpore.

JANAKAN
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47, JAWAHARLAL NEHRU ROAD,
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Charles Chaplin was born in London, in April 1889. He made his first stage appearance when he was nine, as a replacement for his mother.

At the age of twenty, after having made a name as a child actor, he came to the United States. The rapidly growing film industry and daring experiments of producers opened new vistas for Chaplin.

His unique walk and fantastic apparel distinguished by his baggy trousers and bowler hat, endeared him to millions all over the world.

Almost every picture in which he featured became famous. The *Great Dictator*, *Modern Times*, *The Gold Rush*, *Monsieur Verdoux*, *A Countess from Hong Kong*, *Limelight* are among his best known films.

Chaplin was once accused of being a communist. To this he answered, "I am not a communist. I am a peacemaker." When he was upbraided for not becoming a citizen of the country in which he had made a fortune and had been living for two decades, he retorted, "I am an internationalist, not a nationalist. That is why I do not take citizenship anywhere.

This hero of the silent films spoke the language of the heart and the soul and was truly a citizen of this world. 'The only genius developed by the motion pictures,' said George Bernard Shaw of Charles Chaplin, the original and indisputable laugh getter.

Yashpal Yadav, Bikaner (Rajasthan)
THE UNSELFISH PARROT
(A Buddhist Story)

Script adapted from the material sent in by R. Vijay, Chennai, from Mira's article on 'Mother's Love and Compassion' in the 1.10.96 issue of the 'Mathravadhi'.

ILLUSTRATION: LALITHA THYAGARAJAN.

He loved to flit about and greet all the birds and animals in their habitat.

One day, there was a thunderstorm.

Lightning struck and...

...a tree caught fire.

The fire spread and in no time a large part of the forest was ablaze.

The terrified animals ran hither and thither trying to find a way out of the inferno. But in vain.

Fly away! Fly away!

I can't desert my friends, you go.
The little parrot circled anxiously over the raging fire racking his little brain.

O God! I must find some way to save my friends from a fiery death!

Just then he remembered something.

The River running by the edge of the forest! Why didn't I think of it earlier?

He flew over the burning trees...

...plunged into the river...

...came out dripping wet...

...carefully flew back to the fiery forest...

...and unmindful of the scorching hot flames tried to put out the fire.
He did this over and over again till his feathers were scorched, his lungs ached and his eyes smarted. The Devas watched what he was doing.

What a foolish bird! How can he put out that blaze with a few drops of water from his little wings.

One of them however, was moved by what he saw.

Poor bird, I'll take the form of a Golden Eagle and speak to him.

The next moment—

Fly away little bird! Your task is a hopeless one. Fly away and save yourself!
But the little bird ignored him.

Advice is not what I need. I need someone to pitch in and help.

Watching him, the Deva was so moved that he began to weep—streams and streams of tears...

...which drenched the forest, put out the fire, and washed away the smoke.

All the animals rejoiced.

Hip Hip Hurray! Hip Hip Hurray!

They had learnt a valuable lesson that day. Love and determination can accomplish anything. It can cure diseases, it can heal a broken heart, it can completely transform a person. Love can overcome all obstacles and make one immortal.
A library is not just a collection of books. It is a seat of culture, and wisdom of the ages. Here is a museum of ideas and emotions, of poetry, prose and magic. The newspapers, the magazines, the journals—all contain useful information. It is unfortunate that very few students make use of their school or college library. Even teachers rarely go there. A daily visit to the reading room should be made compulsory for every student. What do you think readers?

D. Kamala priya (aged 13), D.T.E.A., Mandir marg, Delhi - 1.

Science can give comfort but not life. With the help of science, man has invented many modern equipments to improve the standard of living. But man can never control nature. Man is at once the producer, consumer and the destroyer. He does not know that he is destroying himself.

Man is not allowing nature take its own course and to balance its unbalanced ecological system.

Man has invented many modern equipments to cut trees faster, but not even a single way to grow them faster. It is all in the hands of nature.

Our ancestors had a very high life span, But not us. Why? This is because the other side of science is destruction. "NATURE IS THE BEST MEDICINE" But man is changing this medicine to poison.

Princess & Princy (aged 15, 13), Sathya Metric, Our lady’s. Chennai - 600 106.

My parents and I had gone to Chikmaglore estate. In a nearby village, my father wanted to ride an elephant. The Mahut asked my father to remove his shoes before climbing. The elephant all of a sudden, began stamping on his shoes despite the Mahut asking him not to do so. The angry Mahut took a big stick and started beating the elephant so hard that it bled. My father regretted wanting to ever ride on the elephant. What right
do human beings have to beat other animals?

Sanjana Deshpande
Banglore - 560 050.

As a small boy, I always wondered how nice it would be to live on a star! Now, I know that it is a blazing ball of fire. I wonder if man would one day really start living in outer space, when life on earth becomes impossible due to destruction by man. I pray that the years of 2000 will be beautiful and peaceful and life on earth continues.

A. Hufaddal,
Std VI,
Vidhya Niketan,
Coimbatore - 45.

Examination! The very thought sends a chill down my spine. Even an 'A' grade holder is unnerved by this thought. I feel that examinations only cause tension among students. If at all our teachers want to test us, why can't they conduct weekly tests? The weekly tests with little portions invoke in students the feeling to do better than others. But examinations conducted in schools of today are intolerable. The thought of promotion or failure frightens us. To receive report cards is terrifying. Students cannot face failure. The results promote a sense of inferiority. Students also indulge in acts of dishonesty. Our teachers can expect better results from us if the examination portions are little. So friends, what do you feel? To conclude I say, "A STUDENT CAN LEARN BETTER WITHOUT EXAMINATION."

Rajeswari,
Std X,
St. Joseph's A.I. High School,
Chennai - 11.
EGGS
In one year, hens in the United States of America, lay enough eggs to circle the globe one hundred times.

CHESS
There are 170,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 possible ways to play the 10 opening moves in a game of chess.

LAND OF THE TALLEST AND THE SHORTEST
Africa is home to both the tallest and shortest tribes in the world.
The average 'Tutsi' man is 195.5 cm tall, while the average 'Mbuti' man grows to just 137 cm.

LAND BOUNDARIES
Of the 311 national land boundaries in the world, 107 are in Africa.

Suresh K. Anjum, Calcutta - 700 091.
Exam time folks!
LIC means Protection

When the big bowler throws a nasty ball at you, your helmet protects only your face. But LIC, the Life Insurance Corporation, provides you full protection all through your life.

Ask your parents to explain what an LIC Policy is. And how it keeps you secure and protected. Because LIC cares for you.

Life Insurance Corporation of India
Insure and be Secure