

Endeavo

Avant garde designs for the bourgeois demand

"Banglar Mela" opens with a bang

FAYZA HAQ

BANGLAR Mela, a new boutique, opened at Banani last Thursday. It has "shalawat kameezes", "Punjabis", shirts, saris, bed-sheets and handicrafts of terracotta and cane. The prices are reasonable and the colouring environmental friendly. The shop was inaugurated by the well-known artist Monirul Islam.

Monirul Islam, giving his view of the new outlet of clothes and gift items, says, "This is a good attempt for a Bangladeshi endeavour. The prices are heart-warming. The gift items are cute and eye-catching. I've liked the designs of the patterns of the clothes as the black and white combinations appear new to me. They have mixed designs using folk and other universal motifs which appear new and attractive to me. The loose 'punjabis' could be found in Africa too and so they appeal to me for the broad outlook of the designers. As for the mixed jute canvas found here, it should easily be popular abroad."

Sharkar Abdul Al Shafi, the director of finance of the project



A tie & dye saree in magenta and black



A block print shirt for men



A cotton salwar kameez set for summer



Brown slacks and cotton shirt for women

says, "I used to work with Grameen at one time and admired its philosophy of helping people in the far flung rural areas who do not have enough finance to support their handicrafts specially the Bangladeshi traditional handloom. Our products are all made by hand such as clothes coloured with vegetable dye and are free from health hazard. Meanwhile, the gift items endeavour to be different in designs from those that you find elsewhere. The new designs and cuts in the clothes is nouveau and is very reasonably priced. Our designer Imdad Hoque is well known and is both talented and persevering. He is not a designer by education but has been well-trained on the job. This has been done after organising the needy craftsmen who now work for us. We are here to give marketing support so that today we will be exporting these items within a month to Germany, France and Spain, and our next target will be USA."

Imdad Hoque says, "Our main target is to get the middle-classes

although you might think only the elite will come to Banani. Even the well-to-do have a penchant for cheap but durable items at a reasonable price. They don't want to go to places like New Market or Chandni Chowk because these places involve traffic jams. In order to get clothes and gift items in Gulshan and Banani, you normally have to pay a steep price. Our main aim is to create a market for cotton fabrics, along with those of jute and silk as well fabrics that are a mix of the three. We are also selling terracotta items and pure jute handicrafts. Thus we are selling hand-made items.

"I have the BRAC and Grameen background for eight years. I went into designing. Having completed my Masters in Marketing, I know what type of marketing that one is going for. I know how to isolate the textile oriented products and channel them to a suitable goal. I have studied the taste of the people. In 'Banglar Mela' I am doing the same work that I was doing earlier. I began with sericulture products and their

development. At Grameen I was a product development designer dealing with textile and other finished products. I have introduced commodities such as jute, cotton union canvas fabrics and they are used for handicraft items such as hand bags, jewellery boxes, photo frames, etc. Combined with leather we even make smart jackets. These fabrics will be introduced by Monirul Islam in Spain to paint on. What is unique about our products are the cheaper cotton fabrics for home and casual wear. They have earthy colours or are pastel and cool. Thus you have fashion within a reasonable budget. You don't have to spend a couple of thousand taka just to get a simple set of 'shalwar kameez' or 'punjabi' or even 'fata' or shirt."

"Again, our cane and terracotta products don't contain any chemicals. Incidentally, we have blended terra cotta with cane. Similarly our vegetable-dye and silk items are totally safe health wise.

"There are too a variety of items like jewellery boxes, 'batuas',

albums, ring box and they too are not costly. We even sell home-made pickles of a variety for only Tk 50 a bottle. Even the range of the 'shalwar-kameezes' are from Tk700 to Tk 11,00. In them we have used oriental motifs with paisley patterns, floral and folk designs along with subtle geometrical shapes. 'Kantha' patterns have also been included. We will go for the 'kantha' stitch very soon. In the dyes we have used 'hortoki', 'khoir', indigo and olives. The patterns on the 'shalwar-kameezes' are very much in vogue, and we have also introduced the very avant garde short 'kurta' and 'kameezes' with delectable tie and dye patterns."

"We have a number of designers for our work such as Shoibal Shah and Khalilur Rehman Shaheen who have been trained at the Institute of Fine Arts, DU. Biji Huq and Bashi, who owns a boutique of her own, and belong to this group. A number of skilful weavers, who live in Chapainawabganj, Sirajganj and Narsindi, Comilla 'khadi' workers and terracotta experts are also

included in our payroll. Orun Guho Babu, famed for his 'khadi' work is also with our group. For cotton hand woven fabrics we go to Sirajganj where Tangal provides our saris."

Khalilur Rahman Shaheen, one of the artists in the organisation, says, "I've completed my studies at the Fine Arts Institute in 1992 and worked at Arong from 1994 as a designer. I did various types of work there varying from 'punjabi's to 'shirt' using block and screen print as well as embroidery. I worked with wrought iron furniture and accessories too such as frames, lampshades and candle stands. I came to 'Banglar Mela' in order to do some original designing of my own."

The tie and dye and printed saris and "shalwar kameezes" along with the other garments and gift items have an attraction of their own, specially considering the prices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Theatre

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy has organised a week-long theatrical shows from May 6 to 12 at Shawkat Osman Auditorium of the National Public Library Directorate, Shahbag. Seven theatre groups from across the country are due to take part in the programme.

Inaugural ceremony holds today at 6:00 p.m. at the above mentioned venue with Prof. Kabir Chowdhury as the chief guest.

Music.

Closing session of the on-going 12th National Rabindra song Festival holds today at 7:00 p.m. at the Bangladesh Shishu Academy Auditorium with Prof. Anisuzzaman as the chief guest and Anup Bhattacharya in the chair. Day's programme includes a reception to be accorded to eminent Rabindra song artiste Kalim Sharifi and musical recital.

Photography Show

A solo photography exhibition by Albert Khan opens today at 7:00 p.m. at Aerial Centre, House # 15, Road # 7, Dhamondi. The show runs from 2 to 8 p.m. daily till May 12.

Photography

A photo show featuring works of noted photographer and author of two important books on photography Mohammad Rafiqul Islam is now being held at National Photographic Gallery at 63/2 Science Laboratory Road, Dhaka.

Satyajit Ray Retrospective

Satyajit Ray Retrospective organised by Zahir Raihan Film Society is now being held at the auditorium of the High Commission of India at Road No. 2, Dhamondi. Screening schedule: Nayak (The Hero) on May 6 at 3:30 p.m. and Aranyer Dinratri (Days and Nights in the Forest) on May 6 at 6:00 p.m.

Art Show

"Mindscape" - 4th solo painting exhibition by Syed Iqbal is now being held at the Bengal Shilpalya, Road # 27, House # 275/F, Dhamondi. "Mindscape" is a series of sensitive art work by the artist. The show will remain open to public from 12 noon to 8 p.m. everyday till May 7 instead of May 4.

TV GUIDE

PICK OF THE DAY



Robbie Williams on HBO at 7:45 p.m. HBO brings you Robbie Williams, the concert of the month from Manchester. An electrifying personality who knows how to party. In front of one hundred thousand fans including Let Me Entertain You, Angle, Kids and the high rotation super hit - Rock D J. You can not expect a show that is not just visually spectacular, but rip roaring good fun too!

STAR MOVIES

6:30 Drama: What's Love Got To Do With It

8:30 Thriller: Puppet Masters

10:30 Action: Mod Squad

12:00 Thriller: Murder Scene

1:45 Thriller: Thirteen

3:30 Star Kids' Club: Muppet Christmas Carol

5:15 Comedy: Mickey Blue Eyes

7:00 Sunday Megamovie: Dreaming Of Joseph Lee

8:30 Drama: That Championship Season

10:45 Thriller: Puppet Masters

12:45 Action: Broadback Justice

2:30 Comedy: Mickey Blue Eyes

4:30 Drama: What's Love got to do with it

6:30 Comedy: The Marrying Man

HBO

8:30 First Time Felon

8:45 Gremlins

11:00 The People Under the Stairs

1:00 Poison

3:00 Stepmom

5:30 Bird On A Wire

7:45 Robbie Williams: Live From Manchester Arena

9:30 Little Women

12:00 The Hunted

2:15 Gremlins

4:30 Cast a Deadly Spell

8:30 Harmony

9:30 Shree Ramlal Hanuman

12:30 Hotlist

1:00 Khamosh

3:30 The Left vs Right Cup (3pm-11 pm) Day 3

5:00 Kohram

7:30 Khamosh

9:00 Kisan Aur Bha

10:30 La Femme Nikita

11:30 For Your Love

12:00 Jesse

1:30 The Sopranos

2:30 Friends 7

3:00 Living Single

3:30 If Tomorrow Comes

4:30 Central Park West

5:30 Er

6:30 Touched By An Angel

7:30 La Femme Nikita

8:30 Sesame Street

9:00 Secret of the Sword

9:30 Suddenly Susan

10:00 Verronica's Closet

10:30 The West Wing

11:30 Late Show With David Letterman

12:30 Police Academy

1:30 The Sopranos

2:30 Friends 7

3:00 Living Single

3:30 If Tomorrow Comes

4:30 Central Park West

5:30 Er

6:30 Touched By An Angel

7:30 La Femme Nikita

8:30 Sesame Street

9:00 Secret of the Sword

9:30 Suddenly Susan

10:00 Verronica's Closet

10:30 The West Wing

11:30 Late Show With David Letterman

12:30 Police Academy

1:30 The Sopranos

2:30 Friends 7

3:00 Living Single

3:30 If Tomorrow Comes

4:30 Central Park West

5:30 Er

6:30 Touched By An Angel

7:30 La Femme Nikita

8:30 Sesame Street

9:00 Secret of the Sword

9:30 Suddenly Susan

10:00 Verronica's Closet

10:30 The West Wing

11:30 Late Show With David Letterman

12:30 Police Academy

1:30 The Sopranos

2:30 Friends 7

3:00 Living Single

3:30 If Tomorrow Comes

4:30 Central Park West

5:30 Er

6:30 Touched By An Angel

7:30 La Femme Nikita

8:30 Sesame Street

9:00 Secret of the Sword