

MUNIRA'S SUCCESS STORY

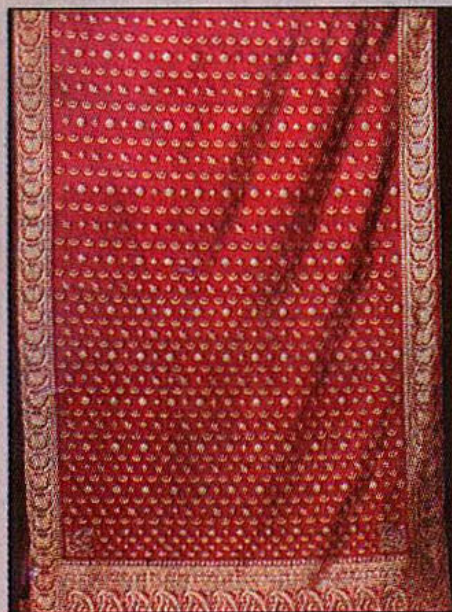
Behind the revival of handloom saris

SADYA AFREEN MALLICK

THE Eid Shopping spree is on! The brightly-lit shopping arcades now pulsate with life.

Taking a look at Bailey Road, one finds that during the past few years, it has developed into a popular 'shoppers stop' for deshi saris and other handloom products.

With limited capital of US Dollars 1,000, Munira gathered some weavers and set up a single roomed outlet at Baily road in 1982. 'It was sometime after



An exquisite Chand-tara design in Kataan Sari



Back to the roots in vegetable dye sari



Munira Emdad

liberation, I noticed,' went on Munira, 'the weavers of Tangail and Pabna designed and sold saris at the market. These saris were coarse and inadequate in length. Naturally it failed to attract the ladies with finer taste.'

'It was a time when skilled artisans were thinking of shifting from their age-old profession due to falling demand. I decided to gather a handful of weavers and provide them with new ideas and latest designs.'

Munira extended her help to buy yarns and materials for better

designed saris. Within the last 22 years, the one room store has grown into a multi-storied show room with 50 employees at four branches in Dhaka. A proud owner of Tangail Saree Kutir, she has become an icon in the field of local sari. She has been recreating original designs in cotton saris and other local materials. More than 2,000 weavers and 500 women are directly working under her and engaged in hand embroidery, block prints and other associated work.

'A gorgeous silk Jamdani in subdued colour made specifically for a

bridal wear took six months to weave, said Munira. The entire sari is in diagonal floral designs with sachcha (pure) zari work of silver and gold thread. The sari costs about Taka 50,000 and is one of its kind. The order has to be placed well ahead for similar designs, she said.

'New dimensions have been re-created in embroidered Tangail silk sari with karchub work for the fashion frenzied. The Mirpur Katans, Benarasi, silks and pure cotton saris are also available in a wide range of colours and shades. The Muslin, the craft silk in tie-dye, the chand-tara designs in kataan, bring back the feeling of the bygone days.

The 'Shwamala' design was collected from a sari about 150 years old' said Munira.

As Munira puts it, 'following one's dream with commitment reaps rich reward.'

With proper guidance, direction in motifs, latest trends in design and materials Tangail saris are now in full bloom in various shades and designs, capturing the hearts of the picky customers. Munira Emdad has gained wide recognition as a successful entrepreneur. Her contribution to our culture has been immense and no doubt a model for other entrepreneurs.



'A creative person has to be romantic' --- Mehreen



There is no stopping singer Mehreen from spreading her wings. Primarily known as a pop singer, she is also adept at other genres of music.

Here goes: What keeps you going? I believe in living in the present and making optimum use of it. My reasoning is that the present will take you to the future and it is the present which comes from the past. So live life happily in the present moment.

What is your greatest achievement till now? So far I think the answer would be winning the trust of my audience. In my line, you have to prove yourself. People want entertainment. As an artiste I strive to give them healthy and positive recreation. Overtime will tell if I can prove myself.

What makes you tick? I go for a friendly and positive environment. Although I welcome praise, I really appreciate the constructive criticism of all my fans and friends who have shaped me as a singer. The criticism could relate to my style, looks, hair, walk or even my pronunciation.

Are you a romantic or a realist? I would say both. A creative person has to be romantic and live life imaginatively. Take the examples of the

romantic era of the early 19th century. In the course of my studies in English literature, I have seen the imaginative flights of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Byron. But despite being imaginative geniuses, they were firmly rooted on the ground. To me imagination is timeless and the romanticism of the past exists now and forever. Imagination can take you anywhere. More people should read Shakespeare, Tagore and Bankim, whose works have a universal appeal.

But I also am a realist in the sense that I abide by the rules of the world--educationally, socially and financially. Bridging the gap between realism and romanticism should be the keyword for human beings.

What makes you happy or angry? I feel happy if I can create good music. Alternatively, when I am not productive I get agitated. For instance, today is not such a great day as I haven't been able to practice music. My 'riaz' usually ranges from 15 minutes to two hours.

What is your source of inspiration? My biggest inspiration is my family--my parents and husband Intekhab. My husband has no background of music but appreciates all that I do. I get both positive feedback and criticism from him. He can be ruthless in his criticism--whether it is about the lyrics, tunes or the choice of songs. I appreciate his honesty.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? I will soon be thirty plus. Either I will be a good housewife and a mother of two or an exponent of North Indian classical music. I want to be known as a good musician and have my own recording studio.

'Meemangchina' to be performed in Kolkata

ERSHAD KAMOL

Come December, the Department of Drama and Dramatics of Jahangirnagar University (JU) will go to Kolkata for a drama festival. The occasion, a part of the academic

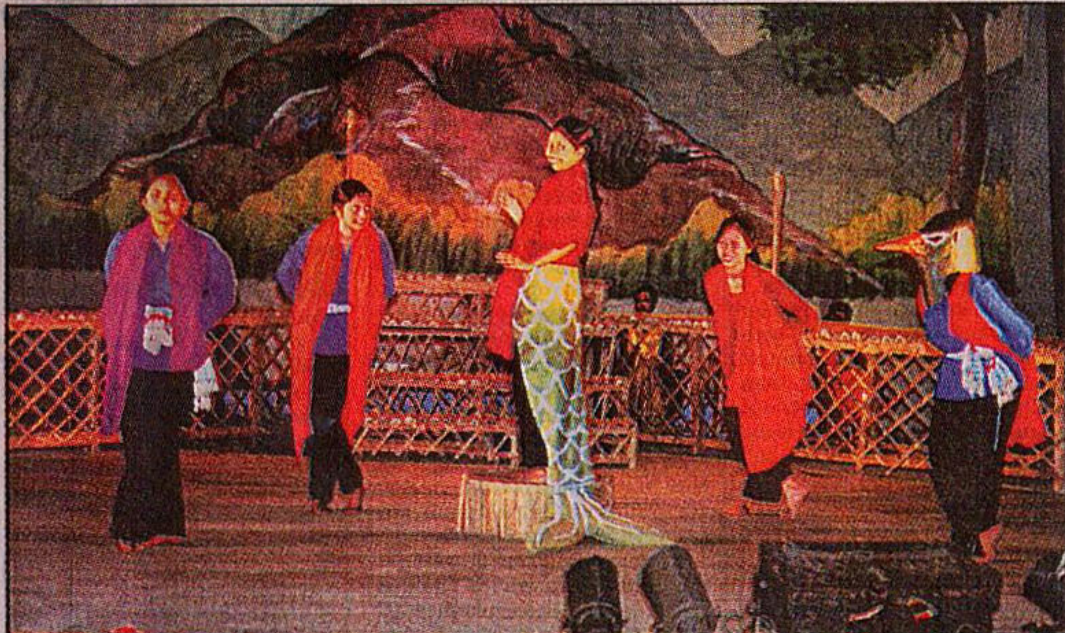
theatre, is at the invitation of Surrect, a theatrical group of Kolkata. Last year, the Department of Theatre and Music of Dhaka University took part in the academic theatre festival. In the second ses-

sion of the festival, which starts from December 17, the Department of Drama and Dramatics of JU will stage a neo-ethnic play Meemangchina on December 18 at Nazrul Stage, Kolkata. A 20-member

team, including Dr Afsar Ahmed, Dean of the Arts Faculty and Professor Rashid Haroon, Chairman of the Department of Drama and Dramatics, will participate in the festival.

Professor Haroon said, 'The Garo word Meemangchina means a colourful cloth, used during the funeral of the aristocratic Garos. Dr. Afsar Ahmed's neo-ethnic play Meemangchina, based on a Garo tribe, centres on the sufferings of a university student Hrishika after her return to her own ethnic community. The play depicts the conflict between her modern belief and tradition. Hrishika wants to say certain things to her beloved, beside the river Someswari. But, during the romantic sequences, the river symbolises the colourful cloth Meemangchina, used during the funeral.'

Haroon further said, 'In fact, it is not our new production. Last year, Dr. Afsar Ahmed did the direction of the play. It is a remake based on Dr Afsar's idea. The performers are all from JU. Besides taking part in the festival, we have plans to stage a few shows at Rabindrabharati also. Moreover, we will regularly stage Meemangchina at the Experimental Theatre Stage at Shilpakala Academy.'



A scene from the play Meemangchina

Tonatuni's new albums on Eid

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Popular audio visual production house Tonatuni has some new music albums to offer this Eid-ul-Fitr. Chokh Jurey Borsha is a mixed album containing 12 songs by popular Bangladeshi and Indian artistes like Abida Sultana, Haimanti Shukla and Arundhati Hom. The melodious songs include Tumi bijono ratey, Je kotha boltey gye, Jiboner totey tumi, Ektu ektu megh, Majhurey majhurey and Chokh jurey borsha. The lyricist and music directors are Ashraf Hossain and Aloknath Dey, Asad



and Kamruzzaman Azad.

The second album is a duet by Mohiuzzaman Moyna and Runa containing Rabindra Sangeet such as Aji Bangladesher hridaye hotey, Pranganey mor, Ektuku chhoye lagey, amra dujaney, Tumi shordyaro meghomala and Aj shobar rongey rongey. The music director of this album is popular musician Sujoy Shyam. The albums are available in all music shops in the form of audiocassettes and CDs.

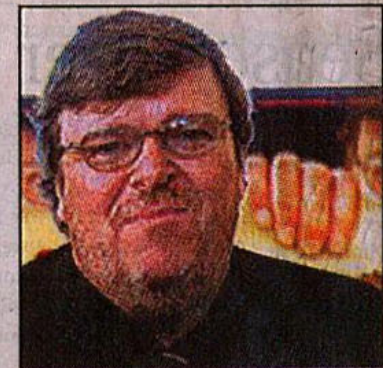
Moore's 9/11 headed for internet

BBC ONLINE

Michael Moore's film Fahrenheit 9/11 is to be made available to watch online on the eve of the presidential election.

The pay-per-view showing of Moore's anti-Bush documentary will cost viewers \$9.95 (£5.40) to watch. Internet movie provider CinemaNow said the film will be available on their website on Monday evening.

A satellite TV channel also plans to show Fahrenheit 9/11 on Monday, along with a film criticising John Kerry.



TV GUIDE

PICK OF THE DAY



Shonali Danar Chil On Channel 1 at 9:35pm Drama Serial Cast: Tony Dayes, Tania Ahmed, Sumaia Shimu, Shomu Chowdhury



Blue Crash On HBO at 5:15pm Genre: Drama/Romance Cast: Kate Bosworth, Matthew Davis, Michelle Rodriguez

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

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