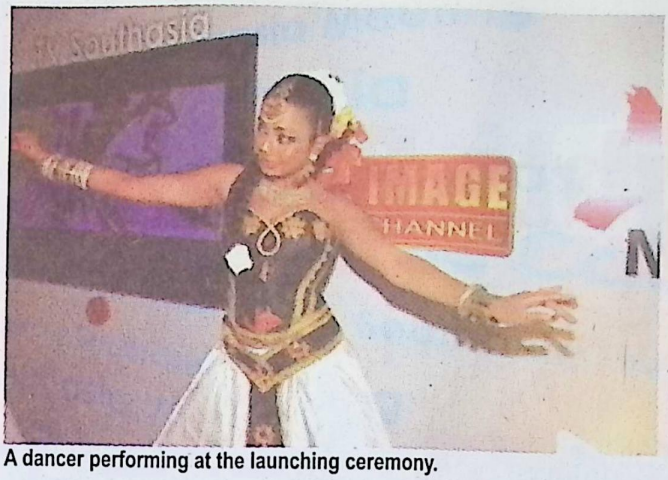
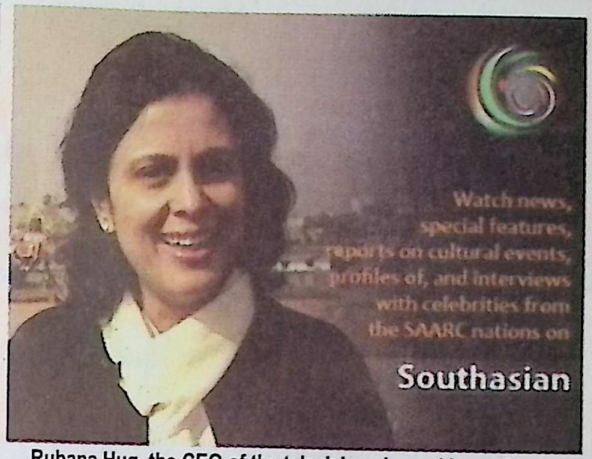


A dancer performing at the launching ceremony.



Rubana Huq, the CEO of the television channel herself hosts a weekly show called the 'Southasia Calling'.

partly in Urdu; there are 'Music of Your Choice' and 'Video Select' both music programmes from Image Channels, Nepal which are partly in Nepali, and there are many programmes from RTV which are in Bangla. Besides, there are Bangla telefilms, which are already subtitled and being televised in the channel. The stress on the projection of culture and heritage is one of the focal points of the channel."

For those who still do not get this channel through their cable operators, just switch on to www.tvsouthasia.com/programs and check out the latest in 'Chat Southasia', where interviews are hosted by Paranjay Guhathakurta in Delhi and Syandika in Kolkata, 'Southasia Calling/Southasia Meeting/ Southasia Walking (India)', a talk show hosted by Rubana Huq, in conversation with a South Asian celebrity, 'Aawaz' (Pakistan), a social barometer that highlights the concerns of the nation and allows the public to voice opinions, exploring issues right at the source, 'Nothing Personal' (Sri Lanka), a chat show of interviews of Sri Lankan personalities and celebrities, 'Cooking up a Storm' with Shawkat Osman (Bangladesh), a cookery show by gourmet chef Shawkat Osman who will cook up a storm of regional recipes and give titbits of information regarding the regional cuisine and culture and much more. In fact, many viewers find an immense amount of pleasure in the various musical programmes and



Several contestants have lined up for the Southasian Superstar Contest.

the various tele-films that are shown on this channel, giving everyone a chance to explore the neighbouring ideologies and the urban-day crisis in the many sectors of life. Currently, a favourite amongst aspiring singers and musicians, the 'Southasian Super Star' has been launched which is a musical talent hunt in Nepal, Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh to find a new singing star. After regional competitions are held, the regional winners will compete with each other in the Mega final before the end of the year to determine the Southasian Super Star. "There are, at present 80,000 viewers in Dhaka who watch the channel," says Rubana. "Some are also unaware of the channel position and therefore they need to re-tune their sets and look for the channel. As for channel promotion, we have deliberately been a little slow, as we need to assess all the markets out there in the region and also evaluate our viewership in the other participating countries."

Even though it might seem like a very small dip in the pool for many, the establishment of the channel TV Southasia, in its own way, is an effort to make the people living in different parts of South Asia aware of the strong common grounds that they share. TV South Asia, according to the authorities, should be positioned as a channel that shapes the region through recognising diversities from a unified platform. ■