

THE LARGEST SELLING ENGLISH MONTHLY MAGAZINE

SHE

APRIL 1994 Rs 40

THE NEW AGE LOOK

WE'RE BRIGHTER AND BOLDER

CONTENTS

SHE

FEATURES

- 17 **OPINION**
In place of escalating confrontation
- 44 **LOLLYWOOD'S METAMORPHOSIS**
From romance to rowdiness
- 50 **FOUNDING KHALDUNIA**
Eqbal Ahmed's blueprint for the future
- 53 **A CHAT WITH MADEEHA GAUHAR**
Coming Face to Face
- 83 **IN MY LIFE**
Badar Khalil talks...and reveals
- 87 **CAN PARENTING BE A ONE WOMAN JOB?**
Single Mothers speak of their trials and triumphs
- 104 **SHORT STORY**
The Nautch Girl
- 125 **A CELEBRATION OF WOMEN**
Feting Feminism
- 126 **FAIZ IN VILLAGES AND TOWNS**
The Mela at Kala Kadar
- 131 **CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD**
AURA helps children to come to terms with Cerebral Palsy

FASHION

- 56 **FASHION ESSENTIALS**
- 58 **POETIC LICENCE**
Magnifique Meeras
- 69 **OUT OF THE BLUE**
Farida Qureshi's saris for the Nineties
- 74 **MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE**
Cotton and Cotton's new collection of casual wear

BEAUTY AND HEALTH

- 93 **BEAUTY NOTEBOOK**

- 94 **NATURAL ADVANTAGE**
SHE takes a look at herbal skin care and facials available at Shehnaz Herbals
- 96 **HEALTH UPDATE**
- 100 **PERIOD DRAMAS**
It's 'that' time of the month again
- 103 **FIGHT THAT FLAB**
Shape up with aerobics

FOOD AND LIFESTYLE

- 109 **FOOD REVIEWS**
- 110 **SWEET NATURED**
Tutti fruity desserts
- 113 **HOLDING COURT**
Ming Court's tasty, trendy Oriental offerings
- 116 **BRIGHT IDEAS**
Light fittings galore
- 118 **LIGHT 'N SHADE**
Samar Ali Khan and Tariq Hassan lighten up your life
- 122 **LAHORE RAILWAY STATION**
Nayyar Ali Dada's magic wand restores a historical monument to its former glory

REVIEWS

- 29 **TV TALK REVIEWS AND REWARDS;** Musing on Minatures; Bjork and Bunny voice off; Indecency and Action Heroism

REGULARS

- 11 Briefing
- 13 Issues
- 14 Dispatches
- 26 What's in Store
- 128 Et Cetera
- 135 Bridge
- 138 Horoscope
- 140 SHE Directory
- 141 Write Back
- 142 Look Back Gently



APRIL

Cover Look

Styling: Mehreen Ilahi **Outfit:** Meeras **Hair and Make-up:** Shehzad **Photography:** Qayum **Model:** Iffat Rahim

OUR NEW LOOK

The sense of achievement that we experienced as we celebrated our thirtieth anniversary in December last year, was tempered by the realisation that the magazine could not continue to bask in its glory indefinitely without a radical look at its appearance, contents, and get-up. An infusion of young blood in the office was in many ways a catalyst, but we were increasingly conscious that some of the features which we carried regularly in each issue had now outworn their usefulness. The bad old Zia days were over and a new sense of liberation was in the air, this warranted a change of presentation and style. Similarly there were significant lapses in the magazine, not in keeping with today's priorities. Health, home and the kitchen have at best received cursory treatment over these years. Much more attention was needed to be given to these important areas of a woman's life.

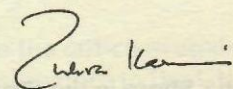
Furthermore, we decided to adopt some of the features of the old SHE-of the 60's and 70's-into the new format. They were popular in those days, were much read and talked about, and it seemed a good idea to incorporate them into the new 'SHE'. Similarly, with so many weeklies and supplements now devoted to children, the two miserly pages which were devoted to our younger readers in each issue, appeared to be superfluous, and have given way to more updated features.

While a considerable amount of thought, time and expense has gone into the planning of these changes, we have never lost sight of the core issue of this magazine, the uplift of our women. The majority of whom, despite 54 years of independence, are victims of rampant discrimination. More girl babies die, more girls are uneducated, women die earlier and earn less than men. The list is endless. Focus in on the ordeals facing women, exacerbated by the Hudood and Zina Ordinances and the rising trend of crimes of violence against them; we would be found wanting indeed if we did not continue to raise our voice against these deplorable conditions.

We don't need to say very much about the 'look', obviously it's smart, sophisticated and has a brighter, up-market appeal. In keeping, we like to believe, with the modern, liberated, woman of today.

Popular cinema in Pakistan has really gone to the dogs. The feature entitled "Lollywood's Metamorphosis" explores the steady decline of the medium in Pakistan. Urooj Samdani doesn't mince his words. With the increasing availability of Indian video films and now with ZeeTV storming in on satellite, Pakistani cinema is tottering on the edge of the precipice. The problem so much is not of revival but of survival itself. The top echelons of the cinema hierarchy seem well aware of this fact. They object to Jurassic Park being shown in Urdu, dubbing it as a western conspiracy, but they admit that it might open sluice gates that would signal the end of the industry altogether. What is more dangerous though, in terms of popular consumption, is the debased role of the heroine in cinema today. She has been indiscriminately transformed from romantic to vamp. The portrayals of strong central feminine characters have degenerated into formula plots with ugly sexual undertones sporting gun toting, rain drenched singing hyenas.

Happy reading!



WHAT'S SHE SAYING?

Good design is not just a matter of aesthetics.

A design can be clever, attractive, innovatively wild and very expensive to produce, but if it doesn't answer the brief, it's a colossal waste of time and paper. Design has to first be relevant and functional and then if you can add the aesthetics, it becomes *really great* design. So when Mrs Karim set the brief for SHE's new look, we consciously resisted the urge to produce something wildly different that would show off our ideas and technology, but would probably not have sold more than 10 copies. Keeping in mind what the objectives really were meant going back to the basics. Who is SHE? Who buys SHE? and who should be buying SHE?.

The brief required that the new 'look' be cleaner and easier to read, more playfully modern and yet sophisticated in terms of visual ideas. The personality of the magazine had to be clearly defined and the significant contribution that SHE had made to the Womens Movement and womens issues over the last thirty years also had to be taken into account. It was important that the magazine's personality and design evolve out of, and be a progression of the previous thirty years worth of ideas and identity.

After performing a sort of editorial and design dissection of the magazine with Ayesha Karim (Senior Editor) and Kabir A. Khan (Art Director), a list of the magazines vital statistics was compiled and reviewed. Once we knew what the rules were, we could decide which rules to break. Thus began the transformation from the old to the new look.

Few readers really know how many hours worth of painstaking work goes into producing the magazines and newspapers that they read and casually discard everyday. Starting with a blank page, everything from typography and graphics, to photography and illustration, to the actual *style* of the editorial writing has to be considered. Someone has had to decide the size, style, shape, alignment, resolution and colour of every element on that blank page – including the fullstops!

Good design and format should function like the magazine's voice, talking to its readers and conveying the ideas of its writers in a clear, attractive and readable way.

Please let us know if you like SHE's new look and what SHE is saying.



Ayesha Shoro is the Graphic Designer and Illustrator who designed the new formats for SHE, and will continue to contribute to the magazine as a freelance consultant.

SHE

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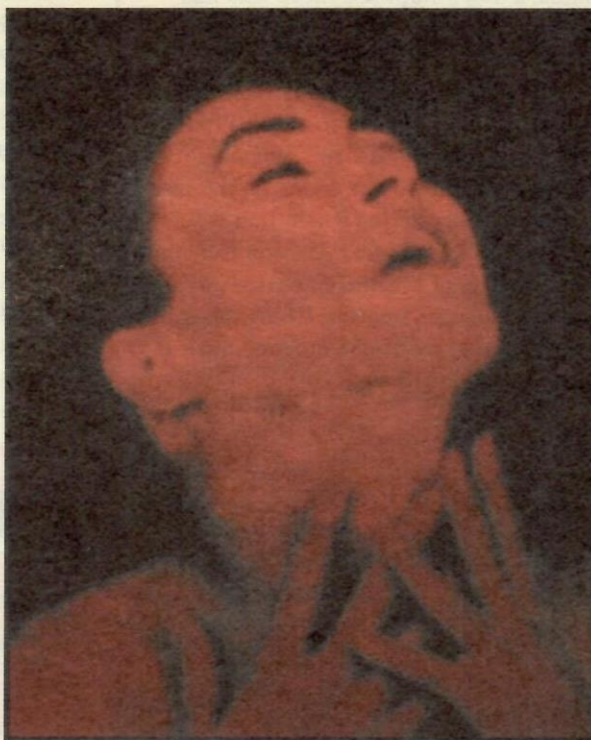
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NEW DIMENSIONS IN VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Zainab has become a household name today. Not because of anything else but because of the way she was treated by her husband. Qari Sharif, Zainab's husband, did what has never been done before or more likely has never been reported before. In Qari's own words, *'The night of the incident, at around 9, Zainab left the house, I brought her back but I was extremely angry with her. I put her on the bed, tied her body and the bed together with a rope, shoved two iron rods into her 'Sharam Gahs', attached electric wires to them and connected these wires with the switchboard. My intention was to scare her, since there was no electricity. I went outside to urinate. While I was still out in the courtyard, the electricity came.'*



father complained and her body was exhumed.

In Karachi, the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (Altaf Group) claimed that the 22-year-old sister of a MQM worker was harassed, humiliated and stripped naked in front of army and police personnel who had raided her house.

In Islamabad, a 10-year-old girl was raped by an unknown man, who threw the unconscious and wounded child in the nearby bushes and escaped. The girl's father is not ready to seek justice through police or any other government agency as this would ruin the victim's future.

Does losing his temper give a husband the right to violate his wife's body? Qari learnt the Quran by heart when he was 17 years old. But did he ever bother to learn that the Quran says that a wife is not obliged to cook or do anything else for her husband. He proudly tells the police, *'Many a time, she did not cook for me, I used to get angry and beat her with a stick'*.

Meanwhile, doctors state that Zainab will not be able to lead a normal life anymore. 'She cannot have a marital relationship, will not be able to bear any more children. Her stool and urine system has also been completely damaged. There is only a hollow cavity. A big bunch of cotton has been placed in the cavity in order to stop the pus and urine which is continuously flowing out of her body.'

A ray of hope shines for Zainab as she is sent abroad for medical treatment on the Prime Minister's directive. She will be operated upon for reconstruction of her bladder. However doctors say that even after successful surgery, Zainab will have to live with a colostomy (artificial rectum through incision in the colon) bag forever.

In Sargodha, a pregnant housewife, murdered by her husband and in-laws and buried secretly, gave birth to a dead baby in the grave.

The incident came to light only when the dead woman's

In Faisalabad, a six-year-old girl was raped and mauled. Daughter of a poor weaver, she was abducted on her way to the mosque. The girl was found tied up, half-naked and unconscious. She had been wounded and was bleeding profusely.

Islamabd-March 12

The Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto during her visit to Zainab said 'No one will be able to get away with violence against women on the pretext that it is a domestic affair. This is a shame for Pakistan. It's a reflection on our society'.

March 17-The News

United Nations: Pakistan has urged the international community to take immediate and resolute action against the countries indulging in state-sponsored violence against women.

March 18-Dawn

Islamabad: Referring to the criticism against the government for not being signatory to the UN Convention on all kinds of discrimination against women, Special Assistant to Prime Minister Begum Shahnaz Wazir Ali said, Pakistan may sign the convention with reservations.

HISTORIC PEACE ACCORD

The Bosnian President, ALIJA IZET-BEGOVIC and the Croatia President, FRANJO TUDJMAN signed an historic peace accord at Washington under the aegis of US President CLINTON.

The pact will create a tiny federation for Muslims and Croats on the 30% of Bosnian land not occupied by the Serbs and the principles underlined by the agreement will among other things, include a joint army.

The so-called Bosnian Serb parliament rejected the agreement, its speaker calling it an 'unnatural creation' which would tear itself apart. The Serbs have refused to talk about peace until UN sanctions are lifted.

VIOLENCE IN BALDIA

An indefinite curfew was clamped on Baldia after an outbreak of ethnic violence. 300 MQM activists were arrested in a massive crackdown in connection with the breakdown of law and order. Shops have remained closed and panic-stricken families have started leaving Baldia. When an edited official governmental version was telecast by PTV, the Senior News Editor MUNAWAR MIRZA was man-handled by the CIA.

Twenty two year old NAHEED BUTT, revealed that during a raid on her house at 1:30 a.m (her brother Taqi is an MQM activist in hiding since the 1992 army crackdown), she was verbally abused, and forced to strip naked. To 'mourn' her humiliation, the MQM (Altaf) called a strike which brought most of the city's economic activity to a standstill.

Sindh Chief Minister, SYED ABDULLAH SHAH has discredited Naheed Butt's claims as being fabricated by the party saying that ethnic differences were being deliberately created. He denied rumours that the party may be banned.

☆☆☆

Though the US has supposedly confirmed the proposal on the F-16's, (paid for by Pakistan but not yet delivered) the condition is that Pakistan cap its nuclear programme. Pakistan has firmly rejected any capping and rolling-back of its nuclear programme, linking it to the Kashmir solution.

☆☆☆

The Opposition triumphed when its candidates for the top positions in the senate won by large margins. Chairman Senate, WASIM SAJJAD was re-elected and JWP's MIR ABDUL JABBAR was elected as his deputy.

☆☆☆

LOTA PRICE LIST

1. Plastic lotas
Rs 15.00
2. Aluminium lotas
Rs 60.00
3. Assembly lotas
Rs 10-15 million
(Rupees one crore to one and a half crores)

Note : Prices are fixed except item No: 3 which is negotiable.

☆☆☆

Four international companies have been given licences to explore oil and gas in Balochistan. Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources ANWAR SAIFULLAH KHAN, disclaimed reports that exploration had been deliberately delayed for 40 years because international companies were more interested in the Gulf.

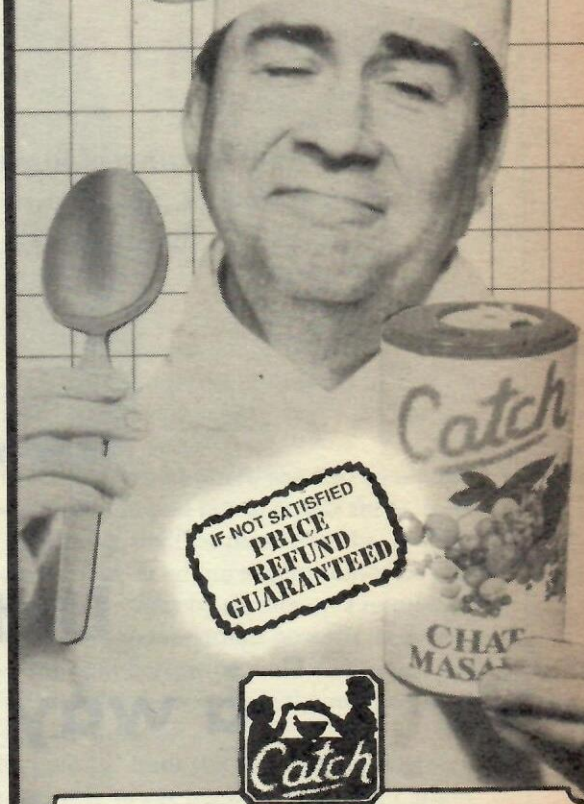
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چائے ہی ایسی ہے



دنیا کی بہترین چائے کے باغات
۶۰۰۰ فٹ سے زیادہ کی بلندی پر پائے جاتے ہیں۔
ان ہی باغات کی نازک ترین کونپلوں کا انتخاب۔

ٹپال اسپیشل

چائے۔ جو آپ کو تازگی کی بلندیوں پر لے جائے!

THIS IS KARACHI



A DAY FOR WOMEN

To celebrate International Women's Day, a conference was held at the Karachi Press Club which was attended by various women's organisations. Such as WAR (War Against Rape), PWLA (Pakistan Women Lawyers Association), HRCPL (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan), ASWA (All Sindh Women's Association), Shirkat-Gah, PILER (Pakistan Institute of Labour, Education and Research), Women's Action Forum, Katha and Tehrik-e-Niswan. The speaker Zahida Hina highlighted the continuing discrimination against women saying that 1200 women had been raped during 1993 and that rape cases have increased by 32% in the last decade.

Sheema Kirmani and Khalid Ahmed narrated a piece of prose by Ismat Chughtai on the awareness of women's rights. On the same topic, eminent poetesses Fahmida Riaz, Shahida Hasan and Zahra Nigah recited their poetry.

UNWANTED DAUGHTERS

A film screening followed by a discussion was held at the Goethe Institute to commemorate International Women's Day. The film 'Beti Nahin Chaiye' made by Mushtaq Gazdar, portrayed through several examples the status of girl children in this part of the

world. The crisp editing and good camera work helped in getting the message across. The participants in the discussion included Prof. Anita Ghulam Ali, Zehra Nigah and Samina Choonora besides others. The discussion often swerved away from the main topic but was nevertheless interesting and raised many issues.

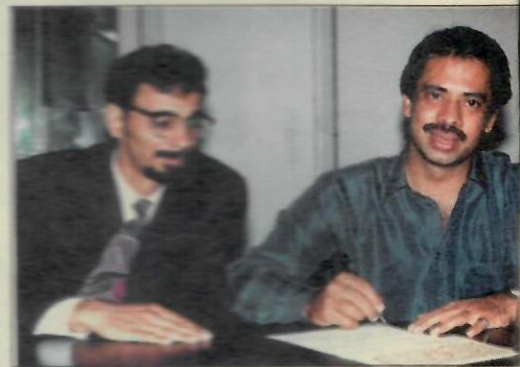
A SPLASH OF COLOURS

A floral demonstration by visiting Britisher Ms. Carol Firmstone was held at the Pearl Continental Hotel. She demonstrated several arrangements using flowers, leaves, shrubs, fruits and even bamboos. The 'bridal' arrangement with a profusion of colours and variety of flowers was specially liked by the interested women. Ms. Firmstone's witty remarks and comments kept the audience entertained while she worked hard, cutting, shaving and arranging. An enjoyable evening.



EXHIBITIONS

....Up and coming photographs Aasim Mir held an exhibition at the Arts Council. Mr. Frederick Nazareth, Creative Director, Manhattan Advertising has said of Mir's work, "He is creative in his imagery and has an instinctive feel for the finer nuances of light and shade. When not taking pictures, Mr. Mir



writes for NTM and PTV.

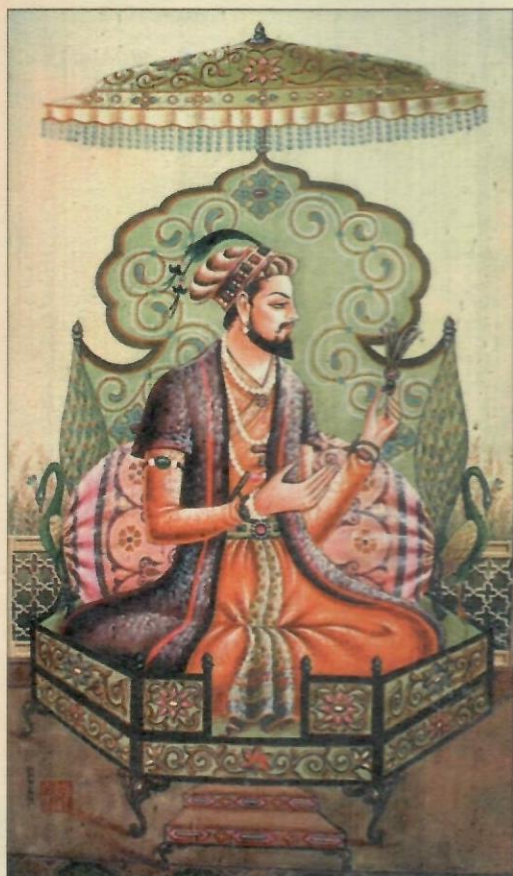
...Melreen Ilahi, once a popular model is now promoting art through her newly-opened art gallery Majmua. She says that, "The basic essence and spirit of art urged me to also get acquainted with the field resulting in my enrollment to study art and history of art." At the first exhibition held, the work of renowned artists such as Jamil Naqsh, Mansoor Aye, Laila Shahzada, Changez Sultan, Fahim Hamid, Qudsia Nisat, Mashkoor Raza and Tariq Javed was displayed.

...Budding artist Zahrah Nazir held her first solo exhibition at Gallery 122, which consisted of a melange of mixed media and styles. She says, "I don't consider my work to be realistic, surrealist or abstract. It is purely escapist."

...Jehangir Khan, the squash legend signed an agreement with the leading garment designer and manufacturer of formal and casual wear for men, Cotton & Cotton. The legendary Khan will be endorsing the casual wear and sportswear products manufactured by Cotton & Cotton.



ART OF THE PAST AND PRESENT



Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal : Painting on silk by Mariam Saeedullah

When paper was introduced to the subcontinent in the 14th century, artists were freed from the restrictions of the narrow palm leaves used as manuscripts, and, encouraged by the Moghul rulers, were influenced by a Persian format of album painting.

Unhampered by caste restrictions, the aesthetically enlightened rulers developed the brilliant **School of Moghul Miniature** painting which considered and assimilated elements of Chinese and eventually western art to produce an art which was totally of the Moghul era. Each ruler added some quality uniquely his own to the Imperial studios.

Akbar, young, imaginative and fond of adventure and fantasy stories, had his artists and scribes write and illustrate epic adventures. **Jehangir** the lover of nature, had his master artist Mansur illustrate the unusual flowers, birds and animals that interested him.

The leisurely, aristocratic lives of the nobles and their families were reflected in the

contents of the paintings. The appreciation of the sophisticated court style, spread to the provincial courts of the Hindu rulers. The great Emperor Akbar's generous and tolerant cultural outlook led to the production by court artists of two ancient Sanskrit epics, the **Mahabharata** and the **Ramayana**, which Akbar had translated into Persian.

Raja Man Singh of Amber commanded Akbar's armies when they conquered Orissa and Assam. He was the Governor of Kabul, Bengal, Bihar and the Deccan and the brother-in-law of Akbar's son Salim. From this Rajput-Moghul alliance was born **Shah Jahan**.

A fascinating style of miniature art were the **Ragmala** (garland of Ragas) paintings, visual interpretations of classical music. All known surviving examples of this art were painted between the 16th and the 19th centuries in Rajasthan, the Deccan, the Ganges-Jamuna plains or the Pahari regions. Of the hundreds of ragas known in music, only

The artistic traditions of the subcontinent are among the oldest and most richly varied in history. Perhaps the most prized are the various schools of miniature paintings, from the 11th century continuing up to the 19th century.

MARJORIE HUSSAIN

SHE APRIL 29

a fraction were used in Ragmala painting.

The most frequently used were illustrated in albums throughout the centuries. Devotional ragas to be played in the mornings or the seasons were often painted according to the patron's personal preference.

Interpretations popularly fell into three categories. They portrayed the divinities and their consorts or the nobles and their ladies, either devotedly together or separated and lovesick. Subtle and symbolic, the

paintings hold none of the overtly erotic qualities often found in the early art of the subcontinent. The third group portrays the activities of the patron's lives.

Ragmala paintings ceased to be a living art with the decay of the feudal system and its culture and the growing influence of the west in the 19th century.

About this time artists began to emulate miniature paintings on ivory. Imaginary portraits of the famed consorts of royal rulers and the beautiful court ladies, found a ready market among the British residents.

With the emergence of Pakistan, miniature relationships in the world she finds surrounding her. Powerful, uncluttered and painfully candid, the paintings evoke an atmosphere of unspoken desperation. Painters including the distinguished artists **Shaikh Sugullah** and **Haji Sheriff** reproduced masterpieces of the past in their effort to keep the art alive. The enchantment of the art of miniature painting still prevails.

Recently at the **National Exhibition of Paintings** held in Islamabad, extraordinary paintings were produced by the students of the **National College of Art, Lahore** using a miniature style.

One, a vertical map of Lahore, another showing the workings and layout of a palace consisted of numerous miniature compositions combined.



In Karachi, a recent exhibition by **Mariam Saeedullah** focused on the Moghul rulers and their love of pageantry. Painting on a large scale, Mariam portrayed hunting scenes, feasts, and royal ladies at their leisure.

The artist has studied the period in great depth and attempted to bring authentic elements into her work. The costumes, even the colours favoured by the nobles, jewellery architecture, utensils, and costumes are all part of Mariam's collections. Painting on silk, she uses a

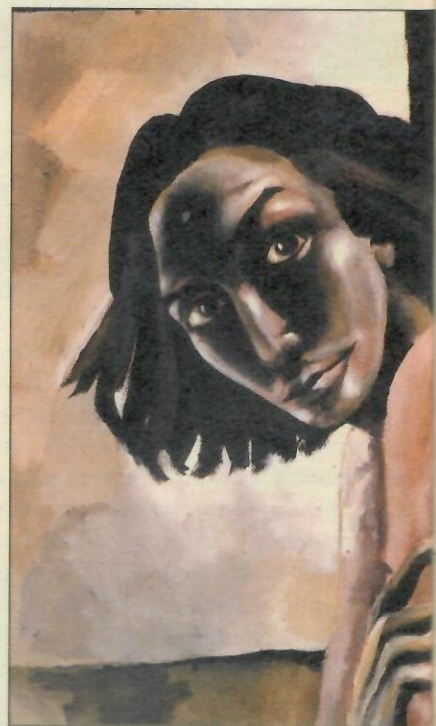
method she was taught at the Oto Shute School of Art, Japan from where she graduated in 1960. Working under the guidance of the renowned Japanese artist **Aria Shorie San**, Mariam won awards for her brush work of the Sumi-e tradition. The artist paints on silk using a method of steaming the organic colours into the material which ensures the durability of the painting.

In complete contrast was the painting debut of **Rooha Ghaznavi** recently held at the **Indus Gallery**. Known in Karachi circles for her talent as a photographer, Rooha reverted to her earlier love of painting, showing a collection of approximately thirty-five paintings.

The results of years of observation and conclusion, Rooha journeyed far beyond the camera to portray women's lives and their Without the comfort of a Feminist ethos, they depict the anguish of the psyche in isolation.

Using acrylic paints on paper as her medium, Rooha uses a disciplined palette of tonal contrasts. Startling areas of white add to the drama of her approach. In the traditions of Frida Kahlo and Paula Mandherson-Becker, Rooha offers a revealing and moving glimpse of a woman's world without the gloves on. ♦

Above : Haji Sheriff at work
Below : Painting by Rooha Ghaznavi at the Indus Gallery



☆☆☆☆ SCHINDLER'S LIST

*Liam Neeson, Ralph Fiennes, Ben Kingsley

Made in black and white, Steven Spielberg's documentary-style *Schindler's List* is a powerful comment on the tragedy of the Holocaust and a man who made a conscientious effort to save Jews. The German Oskar Schindler, a hard drinker, womaniser, black marketeer and member of the Nazi Party is an unlikely and accidental hero. Played by Liam Neeson, he is an opportunist with a heart, who never set out to save Jews-rather recruit them in his metal work factory. Gradually his factory became a symbol of non-production, existing only to provide protection to 1200 Jews (their descendants now number 6000) from Auschwitz and Amon Goeth (Ralph Fiennes), the vicious commandant at Cracow. Ben Kingsley plays Itzhak Stern, Schindler's Jewish accountant and co-compiler of the list. A compelling film, it provides a haunting lesson in history. Nominated for twelve Oscars, it finally won one for Spielberg for Best Director.

☆☆☆☆ THE PIANO

*Holly Hunter, Sam Neill, Harvey Keitel

One of the most unique love stories to emerge on celluloid, *The Piano* is the tale of an inexplicably mute woman Ada McGrath (Hunter) who is married off to a stranger, Sam Neill living in a yet undiscovered New Zealand.

The two things she holds dearest are her precocious daughter and her beloved

piano, and when the latter is bartered for land to Keitel by her husband, she is furious. Keitel on the other hand agrees to give back the piano, each key in exchange for sexual favours. Physical manoeuvring give way to deeper emotions but not before Neill's discovery of their affair and Ada's terrible punishment. Sensual and visually beautiful, it provides an opportunity for previously underrated actors to prove their talents.

RASHNA ABDI

38 SHE APRIL



☆☆☆☆ IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER

*Daniel Day-Lewis, Emma Thompson, Pete Postlewaite

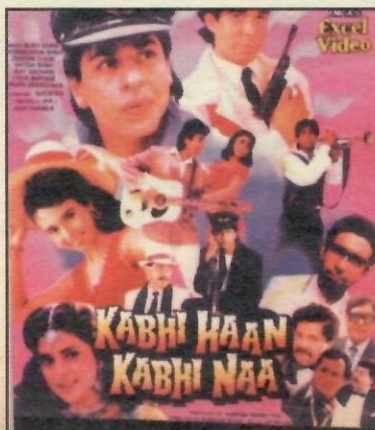
In 1974, a bomb exploded in a pub in Guildford, England, killing five people. Gerry Conlon, an Irish hippie was arrested on trumped up charges along with three friends (who came to be known as the Guildford Four) and seven of his relatives, including his father (the Maguire Seven). Conlon was arrested solely because he was Irish and at the wrong place at the wrong time. He was beaten in custody and indicted in a kangaroo court. Fifteen years later Conlon and his friends and relatives were finally released-except for his father who died in prison. In the film, artistic licence taken with the original story is excused by Jim Sheridan (the director) who claims it's more about the relationship between a father (Postlewaite) and his son (Day-Lewis). Rapidly-paced with brilliant portrayals by the leads and a star-studded soundtrack (title track is by Bono), it was up for top Oscars.

☆☆☆ KABHI HANN, KABHI NAAN

*Shahrukh Khan, Suchitra, Deepak Tijori

A surprisingly original and fresh film starring Shahrukh Khan as a bumbling, but talented musician vying for the affections of his childhood friend (Suchitra), along with his best friend (Deepak Tijori). Reminiscent of a fifties Hollywood musical, the film is funny and devoid of any violence, and able to charm the sternest of critics. Though Khan's Chaplinesque turn may be unusual after all those thrillers, he considers it to be his best role to date and was so confident about it that he bought the Bombay distribution rights to the film. Hopefully it will set the trend for more

light-hearted comedies coming our way from across the border.



VIDEO TOP TEN

1. THE GETAWAY (Thriller : Alec Baldwin, Kim Basinger, James Woods)

Surprise and suspense with the Bonnie and Clyde of the nineties.

2. BLINK (Suspense/Thriller: Madeleine Stowe, Aidan Quinn)

Intense and terrifying, Blink has hit written all over it.

3. FLESH AND BONE (Thriller : Dennis Quaid, Meg Ryan, James Caan)

Catch your breath and hold on to your seat.

4. A DANGEROUS WOMAN (Love Story: Barbara Hershey, Debra Winger, Gabriel Byrne)

Winger gives a wonderful in-depth performance.

5. ACE VENTURA PET DETECTIVE

(Action/ Comedy : Jim Carrey, Sean Young)
An outrageous american comedy.

6. ON DEADLY GROUND (Thriller : Steven Seagal, Michael Caine)

He battles to save the Alaskan wilderness and protect its people.

7. THE SAINT OF FORT WASHINGTON (Thriller : Matt Dillon, Danny Glover, Rick Aviles)

It reaches out and touches your heart and soul.

8. COOL RUNNINGS

(Comedy : John Candy, Leon Douge, Malik Yoba)
Comedy inspired by the first Jamaican bobsled team.

9. DEAD FALL (Thriller : Michael Biehn, Sarah Trigger, Nicolas Cage, Charlie Sheen)

Danger and excitement with a great cast.

10. DOUBLE SUSPICION (Thriller : Gary Busey, Kim Cattrall)

Two cops, two killers, too many lies.



Anjuman pulling her weight with Sultan Rahi in *Khandaan*

With the deterioration of Pakistan's film industry and the subsequent popularity of the video and satellite, it's going to be a long time before Pakistani cinema can regain its lost glory

UROOJ SAMDANI

LOLLYWOOD'S METAMORPHOSIS

Punjabi films have now taken over Pakistani cinema. Urdu films, to the dismay of genuine film lovers and critics have been relegated to the number two slot, but far behind in the lead. And the Punjabi cinema over the past few years has become synonymous with an over dose of violence, bloodshed, vengeance-seeking and hair raising yells of the

enigma called Sultan Rahi, the invincible man of Pakistani cinema. Ironically, the number one star doesn't seem to enjoy what he does. "I am bored with the same roles, the same dialogues, the same actors. I mix my lines at times and it doesn't matter. And I am tired of the constant screaming, horse-riding and fighting."

another medium-television. "There is no place for art in contemporary cinema. It is more like a circus. Sometimes I get so frustrated that I start thinking it would be better to ban cinema altogether."

Then came the sixties introducing the sex syndrome in the shape of none other than Neelo. She came as a dancer but established herself as a front-line actress, as she got the opportunity to appear in such unforgettable films as *Nagin*, *Badnaam* and *Zerqa* by husband Riaz Shahid. It was also the day of Shamim Ara, the star of heroine- dominating films like *Saheli*, *Aag Ka Dariya*, *Lakhon Mein Aik* etc. They were actresses who demanded and got performance-oriented roles. They were followed by the likes of Rani, Zeba, Mumtaz and Shabana, all superstars in their own rights, but more importantly artistes who played only forceful, meaningful characters to enhance their status as good actresses.

Even the seventies and the early eighties saw female artistes being provided with solid roles. Shabnam and Babra distinguished themselves, displaying a wide range of their acting capabilities. Whereas Shabnam starred in more serious ventures, the diminutive Babra was just perfect as a fun-loving, mischievous sort in light, comedy films. They played their part in keeping intact the image of the Pakistani heroine. *Lazawaal*, *Palkon Ki Chaon Mein*, *Shadi Magar Aaadhi*, *Doorian*, *Aangan*, *Aik Din Baho Ka*, *Sangdil*, *Qurbani*, *Bandish* and *Yeh Zamana Aur Hai*. In those days the late Nazarul Islam was the director all stars vied to work with. He too was known to comment, "I used to be a leader once. I had producers, stars, distributors following me. Now I search them out. I compromise on my quality because the money-man backing me doesn't understand my talent." His last release, a sophisticated film like *Khawahish* flopped at the box-office. Writer/director Syed Noor is taking a similar risk with his Zeba Bakhtiar starrer *Sargam*, "The word in the industry is that I've flipped my lid because I am spending so much time and money on *Sargam* which is totally different from the regular 'formula'." In the past such 'different' films have not been successful. e.g. the love story *Nazdikiyan* directed by Usman Peerzada and starring both himself and wife Samina."

Amongst the current lot, very few names come to mind



Sabiha and Santosh Kumar

who can boast of demanding and getting roles of their liking. Anjuman is at the top with unforgettable films like *Mela*, *Dhee Rani*, *Sala Sahib*, *Chan Waryam*, *Maula Tey Makho* and many more. Another is Neeli with films like *Zamana*, *Madam Bovary*, *Hasina 420*, *Kalay Chore* and *Bakhtawar* to her credit. Newcomers like Reema, Madiha, Nargis, Chandni, Hina Shaheen and others are yet to persuade the producers to give them strong roles.

**"There is no place
for art in contemporary cinema.
It is more like a circus.
Sometimes I get so frustrated
that I start thinking it would be
better to ban cinema altogether."**

- Sabiha Khanum

The change, which, however, had been lurking around the corner was too strong to be resisted against or stopped. It came in shape of girls from the legendary Heera Mandi. Seeds of vulgarity have been sown, and it has taken them no time to grow. It was the turning point for the Pakistan film industry and especially the image of a heroine. This is not to say that in the earlier days, girls from different bazaar-e-husns did not enter the film industry. They did, but the atmosphere remained unchanged because the good, decent sort was in the majority and those girls learnt or at least tried to behave accordingly. Today's girls don't even try to bother with such trivialities, and though they deny belonging to the said area, their personality and mannerisms betray them. This change, one feels has been instrumental in tarnishing the image of the heroine in the Pakistani film.

The image of a Pakistani film heroine has suffered basically due to the increase in Punjabi films which concentrate more on action than anything else. Urdu films have been bundled out of business to a great extent, and with that, has diminished the role of a heroine. Umar Sharif did give the first Urdu hit in years with *Mr. 420*. He claims, "All of a sudden social comedies were back in vogue, and Urdu films which had become obsolete, saw a complete renaissance." Well, perhaps that is a bit of an exaggeration, but does it signal a revival in cinema for distributors like Satish Anand? "Revival? You must be joking. Our problem is that of survival." And unless and until Urdu films are able to climb back into the mainstream once again, the chance for female artistes getting solid characters to play, with no wild gyrations, senseless jumping and killing, looks remote. ♦

A CHAT WITH MADEEHA GAUHAR

An accomplished director and actress, and a tireless crusader for women's rights, Madeeha Gauhar talks about her experiences with television, theatre and her future plans



Madeeha
relaxing at home

RUQAIYYEH DEHDUSHTY

ON THEATRE

“I have been with Ajoka for ten years and we have been concentrating on mostly women-oriented issues. Unfortunately, theatre has never received any official patronage so as a non-profit organisation there is a limited amount that we can do. I even gave up my regular teaching job to devote time to Ajoka because I am so involved in theatre productions. A couple of months ago we had taken Ajoka to Dhaka to participate in the South Asia Theatre Festival and we were amazed to see that while its another Muslim Country, there are about 200 independent theatre groups in Bangladesh, 60 of which function in Dhaka. Every day there are plays put up. And they have fewer resources than us. In Pakistan today, there are just a few groups still functioning. There's Ajoka, Tehreek-e-Niswan, and perhaps a couple of others which do regular street theatre. And its a crying shame that metropolitan cities like Karachi and Lahore have hardly any theatre activity. In our experience, we have discovered that theatre has a far stronger and more immediate effect, as there isn't much of a distance between the audience and the actors, particularly in the style in which we perform. Our plays range from women's issues to political commentary to religious

Poetic Licence

*N*ilofer Shahid Aziz of Meeras draws inspiration for her designs from the world around her.

Her passion for historical detail drew her to dig deep into the lifestyles of the Moghuls. There she found a myriad of possibilities- Ornamentation on elephants could, for example, translate into spectacular design motifs.

The old havelis and museums, which she often haunts, allows her to relive that era once again.

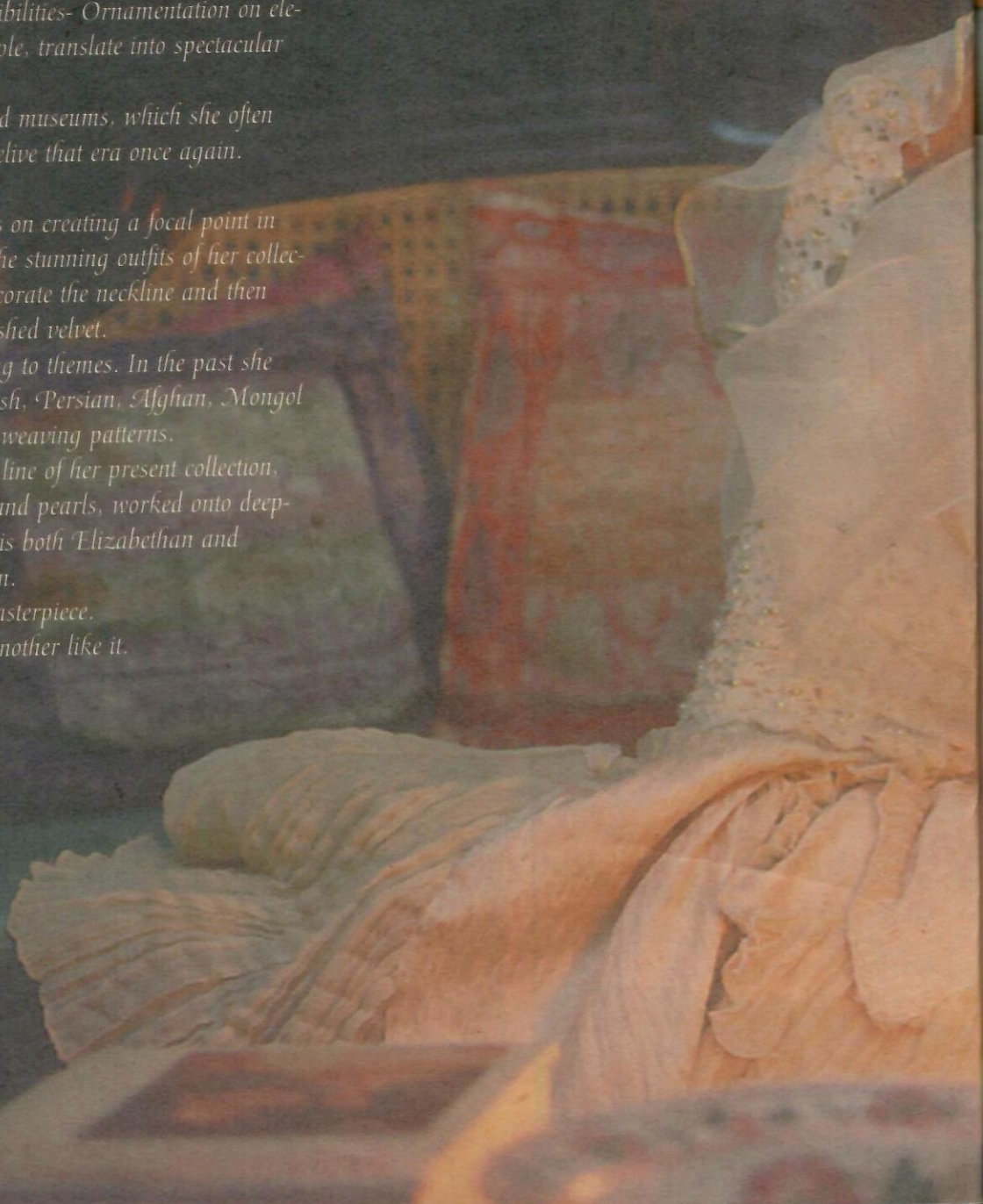
Nilofer concentrates on creating a focal point in any design- In one of the stunning outfits of her collection, autumn leaves decorate the neckline and then melt into a twirl of crushed velvet.

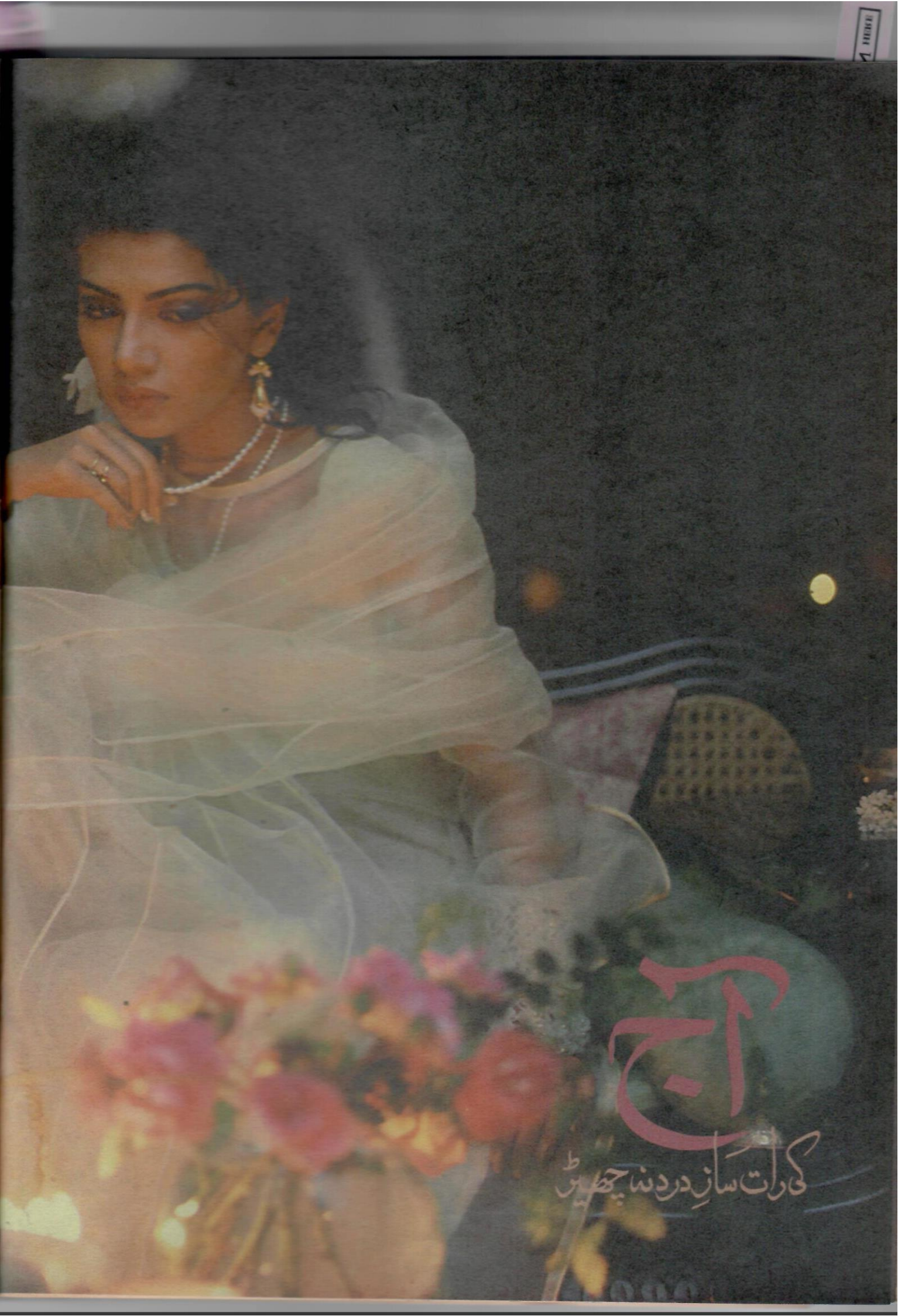
She works according to themes. In the past she drew ideas from Turkish, Persian, Afghan, Mongol and Arab textiles and weaving patterns.

The crushed velvet line of her present collection, with its braids, laces and pearls, worked onto deep-toned opulent colours, is both Elizabethian and Victorian in inspiration.

Each dress is a masterpiece.

You will not find another like it.

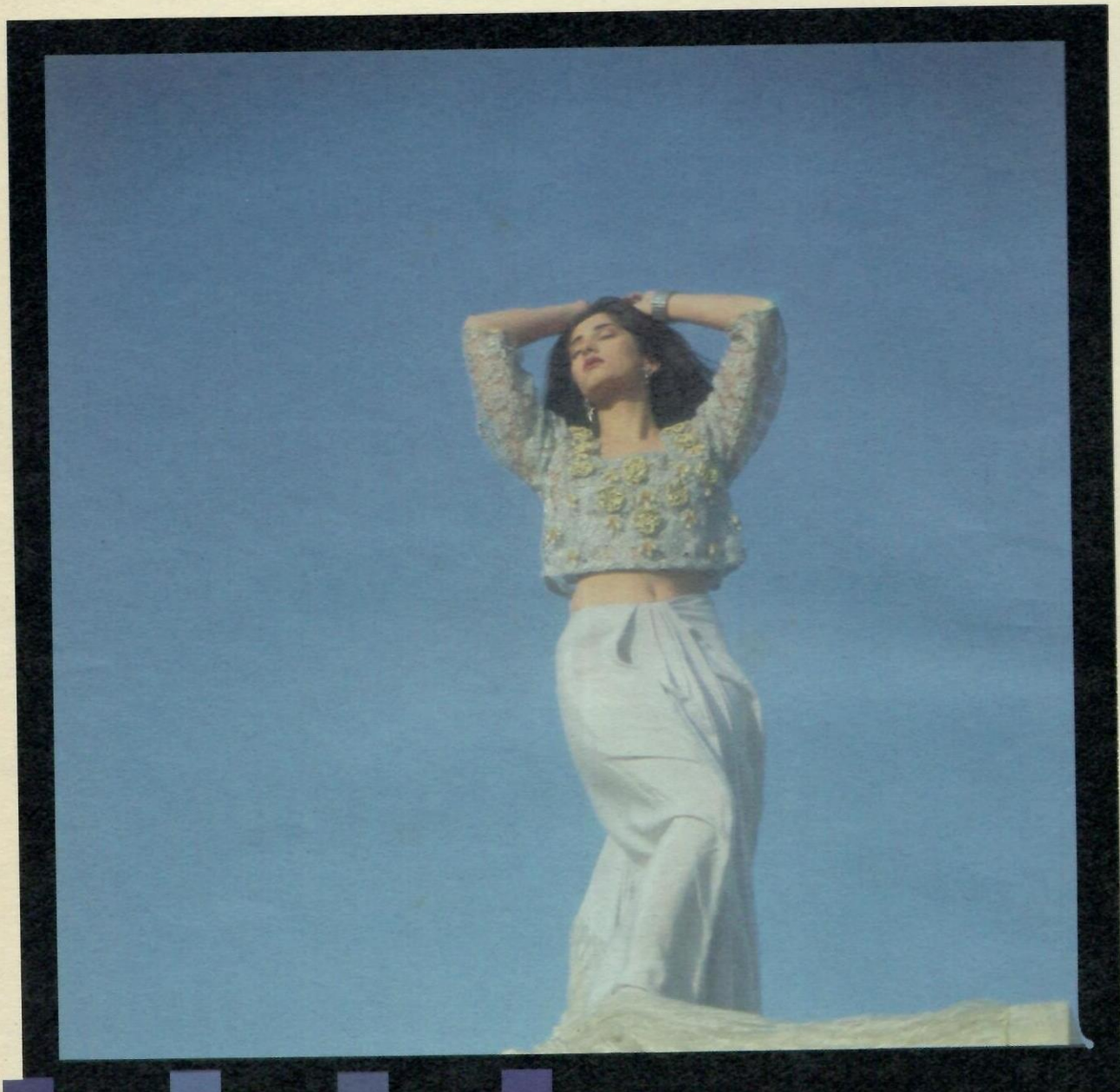




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کرات سازِ دردِ دنیا چھپیٹ

LEAVE A CERTAIN



hidden
Awkwardness.

CAN PARENTING BE A ONE WOMAN JOB?

It takes a man and a woman to create a child. It also takes a father and a mother for the child's balanced upbringing. In a single parent family where mostly the mother, and rarely the father, is left to assume a dual role, who bears the brunt of the absence of one parent? The children or the remaining parent? Fate, circumstances and self-made decisions can all lead to single parent families. Here a widow, two divorcees and two single-most-of-the-time mothers talk about their roles as a single parent

AMBREEN SALIM NASIR

WIDOWED 6 YEARS AGO.

CHILDREN AGED 18, 16 AND 12.

I got married to Salim Nasir when I was 16 years old. Being the wife of a much loved actor—a celebrity of sorts and being his widow—a commoner, are two different experiences. I could not step out of the house without him. Every big and small decision regarding the children was made by him. His death was a shock. He was just 42 years old. He died in October '88 and two months later in December, I had started working at the Defence Housing Authority office as a Public Relations Officer. I had never realized my potential, my strength before. When Salim died, there was no one to look after me and my children. My husband had no close relatives and mine live in Africa. Even though my parents offered to get us there, I didn't want my children to feel uprooted. Also I didn't want them to feel they were being brought up by someone other than their mother. It

was very difficult at first. Helpful bosses and colleagues and my children made life easier. My children give me a purpose in life. I am their mother, father, guardian, provider, friend and I feel proud of myself. I've tried my best to retain the lifestyle they were used to. They go to good schools and are into extracurricular activities. I know I can never fill the vacuum left by Salim's death. Our children will always miss their father and I don't intend to make them forget him.

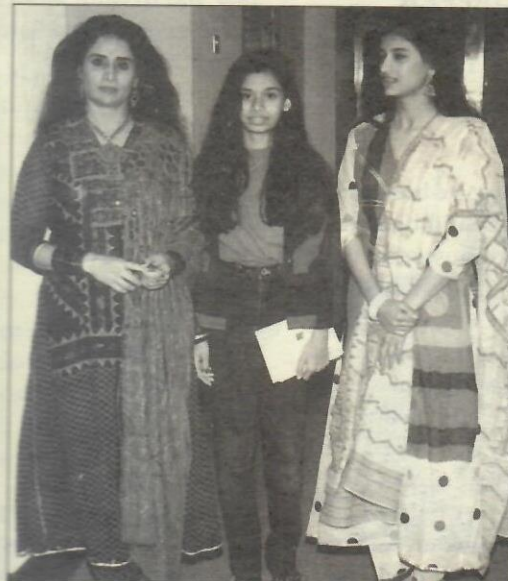
However good a parent is, one can't expect a single person to be a

NAHEED MAALIK

mother and father simultaneously. But in a situation like mine, one can only try. It is the caretaker parent who is under pressure. There are little things that can become big, for example

because of having a young daughter in the house and me being at work during the day, I can't keep a male servant. So after coming home, I cook, clean, do everything. Then there are times when I fall ill, of course the children love and care for me but they are still only children. I do not have any

one I can look up to for protection, on whom I can unload my worries and fears. My daughter keeps suggesting that I remarry, but I am still so much in love with my husband I can't think



BEAUTY HOUR

Shehnaz Herbals concentrate on facepacks and masks ranging from medicated face masks to herbal products. SHE went into Shahnaz Herbals one afternoon to see what kind of new treatments were available.

VEGETABLE PEELING

This treatment is given for problem skin, eg. acne, small pox, injuries, burns, birth marks, pigmentation, open pores, sagging skin, stretch marks, and wrinkles. It is especially good after the condition has subsided. It is excellent for demambrasing premature wrinkles.

Approximate time: 1 hour - Costs Rs. 400/-

SHAWEED-SEAWEED MASK

A re-hydrant skin treatment especially for the eyes. It is an undereye and all purpose revitalizing, refining and refreshing mask with a gentle soothing action. Ideally suited to the delicate skin around the eyes, it has an extremely beneficial action on dull- dehydrated skin. It induces relaxation of the facial muscles and minimises expression lines - it is a total moisture treatment in itself.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS: Seaweed, honey

Approximate time: 20 minutes - Costs : Rs. 150/-

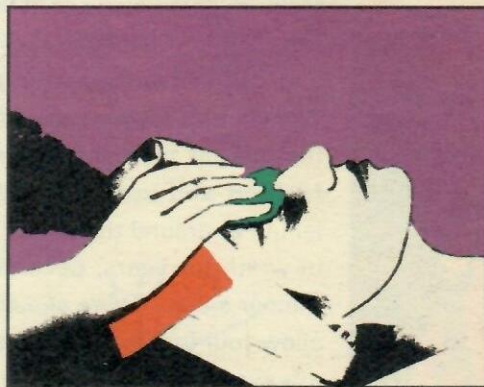
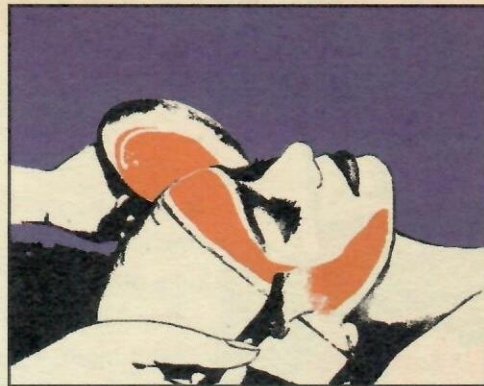
SHACARE HAIR TREATMENT POWDER

A hair treatment which stimulates hair growth, making hair strong and healthy and controls hair loss. It maintains the natural moisture of the hair while it acts as a deep cleanser. Treatments like perming, straightening and dyeing as well as harsh shampoos can remove the natural moisture of the hair. Upsetting the delicate natural acid mantle of the scalp, shampoos often leave an alkaline residue. This can affect the hair's natural elasticity making it dry and brittle. **SHACARE** has been specially made to replenish and recondition the hair through a powerful combination of invaluable herbal ingredients like *Amia, Sandalwood, Brahmi, Lichens* and other precious herbs.

Method of use:

Mix approximately 2 tsp of Shacare with 2 raw eggs, 4tsp of coffee powder, 2tsp of lime juice and 1/2 cup of yoghurt. Apply all over scalp and hair. Leave on for one hour and then wash off. If the hair is oily, avoid the yoghurt. Add more eggs for an ideal paste consistency and don't add water.

Shahnaz Herbal Beauty, Hair and Skin Therapy Clinic
4-C, 1-D, Mezzanine, Sunset Tower, Sunset Boulevard,
Phase II, D.H.A., Karachi. Phone: 5662027



PERIOD DRAMAS

What actually happens when you have a period? What makes you bleed? What body changes occur, before during and after menstruation and the latest on PMS. All your questions answered, facts stated and myths cleared

The key to your fertility and your menstrual cycle lies in the hormones that travel through your blood stream and control your reproductive organ's functions and the various stages of your menstrual cycle. These hormones are controlled by the pituitary gland in your brain. This gland is extremely sensitive to whatever else is going on in your brain, especially your state of mind. This is why, if a woman is stressed, anxious or upset, her periods can skip a month or completely shut down.

As your period begins, a new menstrual cycle is already commencing. The pituitary gland secretes its own hormones, gonadotropins, which stimulate our ovaries to arouse around 100 egg-containing follicles into life. Each ovary is the size of a small walnut-tough on the outside, spongy on the inside. And when we're born, they each contain over 100,000 microscopic eggs. (Unlike men, who produce sperm throughout their lives, we use up our eggs at the rate of about one a month all through our child-bearing years.)

As these follicles grow, our ovaries begin producing another hormone, oestrogen, which prompts the lining of the uterus or womb to grow in preparation for nourishing a possible pregnancy.

The ripest of these follicles rises to the surface of the ovary like a giant bubble and continues growing until it

is the size of a pea. Meanwhile, the other follicles, which failed to reach maturity, sink back into the ovary and dissolve.

After about 14 days-the middle of your menstrual cycle-this large follicle bursts, releasing a minuscule egg, so tiny it's barely the size of a pin head. This stage is called ovulation. Though most of us are unaware of this process going on, about one in ten women report feeling a pain or slight discomfort when they ovulate.

When the egg is released from its follicle, the fringed ends of the Fallopian tube sweep the egg right up into the tube, a tunnel as narrow as a strand of spaghetti. Most of us imagine that an egg is fertilised in the uterus or womb, but in fact it's here in the Fallopian tube that conception actually takes place. (In fact, once in the Fallopian tube, a sperm can lie in wait for an egg for up to three days!) Once inside the Fallopian tube, feathery fronds lining the walls buffet the egg along the canal towards any sperm, and on towards the uterus.

Meanwhile, the burst follicle in the ovary begins secreting a hormone called progesterone, which prompts the uterus lining, called the endometrium, to become thick, spongy and filled with a rich supply of blood and nutrients.

The uterus look remarkably like a small, upside-down pear and when

the egg arrives, it nestles into the thick walls whose surface, under the effects of oestrogen and progesterone, ripple with tiny sacs full of nutrients and become engorged with blood vessels.

If the egg has been fertilised, it implants itself into these walls. Otherwise the egg is broken down and the valuable hormones it contains are absorbed into the body, it is not shed during menstruation.

When your brain receives the message that there is no fertilised egg, your body stops producing oestrogen and progesterone and the thick lining of the uterus walls begins to shrink and buckle. As it does so, it kinks and breaks the tiny blood vessels that have been nourishing it. These begin to bleed and the lining starts to crumble and shed.

Although in pregnancy the astonishingly muscular walls of the uterus easily expand to contain a baby, the uterus can normally barely hold a teaspoon of liquid! This isn't surprising since the uterus measures just 7.5cm long, 5cm wide and 2cm thick-the size of a pear. In pregnancy it expands to the size of a large watermelon.

Within hours of the walls beginning to break down, the amount of blood and tissue in the cavity causes the uterus to contract, expelling the blood through the cervix and into the vagina. Menstruation begins.

FIGHT THAT FLAB

Standing in the sun won't melt your fat, but doing these aerobic exercises will!

Thigh Slaps

(for inner thighs and buttocks)

Lie on your abdomen, hands tucked under the pelvis (to protect lower back). Raise your legs up, feet placed together. Tighten buttocks and slap the thighs together. Repeat 10 times.



right leg straight back. Lift that leg and inhale, cross over the left leg and exhale. Bring the leg back to the original position. Repeat with the other leg.



Pelvic Tilt

(for buttocks, hips and thighs)

Kneel on the ground, sit on your heels and inhale. Rise to kneeling position and squeeze buttocks together, then exhale. Do not arch your back and keep your body in a straight line.



Knee Benders

(for the thighs)

Lie on your back, lift your right leg and hold the knee. Stretch out the left leg on the floor and inhale. Exhale as you raise the left leg high up.

Back Lift

(for the buttocks)

Lie on your side, roll forward slightly, with the toe touching the floor and heel pointing towards the ceiling. Lift your right leg straight up, tighten the buttocks. Inhale at the starting position, exhale as you raise the leg.



One Leg Bounce

(for the thighs)

Sit on the floor with both legs stretched out. Bend one knee. Hold your knee, keeping the back straight. Pull in your stomach, lift the stretched leg off the floor and bounce the leg five times.



Four Count Leg Lift

(for the buttocks)

Kneel on all fours with palms on the floor. Stretch your



SHORT STORY

After the defeat and collapse of the Government of Hindustan, my grandfather had to become a Munshi to Ming Saheb, Member Council, Camp, Cawnpore.

Ming Saheb was a nephew of the celebrated General Coote. He often travelled to Calcutta on official business. Once when he returned to Cawnpore from Bengal, he became friendly with the fun-loving Col. Helmeddy, Commanding Officer, Cawnpore Cantonment. Consequently he gave up his studies (of Persian and Urdu) for which he had engaged my grandfather. Ming also began to neglect his commercial activities. Once a tidy sum disappeared from his box. He mentioned the theft to Grandpa and said that he found no time to look after his private enterprises, and a lot of money was



miss his domestic servants at will.

Ming's current mistress was a woman he had picked up when he was stationed in Farrukhabad. One day she said to him, "Your clerk has been pilfering your goods, Saheb. If you like, I can get my brother to work for you as manager. It would save you further loss."

He strode out of the Bibikhana and came directly to my office. "My bibi says that you are squandering my money, young man", he growled.

"Maybe she is right, Sir," I replied. "I am your well-wisher. Save your business interests in any way you like." I placed the keys on the table, and added, "I cannot stay in your service and go on being victimised by my enemies."

Ming remained silent for some moments and said, "Keep the keys, I will take them from you

THE NAUTCH GIRL

Extract from *Nashtar* by Hasan Shah and translated by Qurratulain Hyder

being lost. "Why don't you become my manager, since you have nothing else to do in my household?" he asked his tutor.

Grandpa declined the offer and suggested my name. So Ming Saheb called me and insisted that I join his staff. I accepted on some conditions. No salary was fixed. Ming was a generous, noble and kindly Englishman. He treated me with respect and courtesy, and also gave me valuable presents. His pay was not much, but he had inherited a lot of wealth from his father and his own flourishing business yielded him much profit. He belonged to the breed of large-hearted, bold, and adventurous Englishmen. He made me sole incharge of his business and trusted me implicitly. Consequently, some people became jealous and tried to turn him against me. He did not take any notice of their allegations. Instead of taking any action against me, he gave me the run of the house. Now, I could even engage and dis-

later."

I was happy that I would leave the job and get rid of the petty rivalries, but the very next day Saheb turned the woman out.

I spoke to him on her behalf and asked him to take her back. He refused.

I said, "In that case, Sir, I, too, must tender my resignation."

"I don't mind her really because nobody can hurt me, if you are on my side."

The Saheb took her back. After a few days he discovered that she was having an affair with the butler. Ming sacked her for good.

At the time I was a greenhorn. My grandfather had brought his family from Bareilly and had settled in a lovely river-side place called Jajman, a few miles to the east of Cawnpore. Myself, my brother, Hussain Shah, and my

HOLDING COURT

Established earlier this year, **Ming Court** may not be a miracle but it is definitely a God send for non couch potato-ised Karachiites.

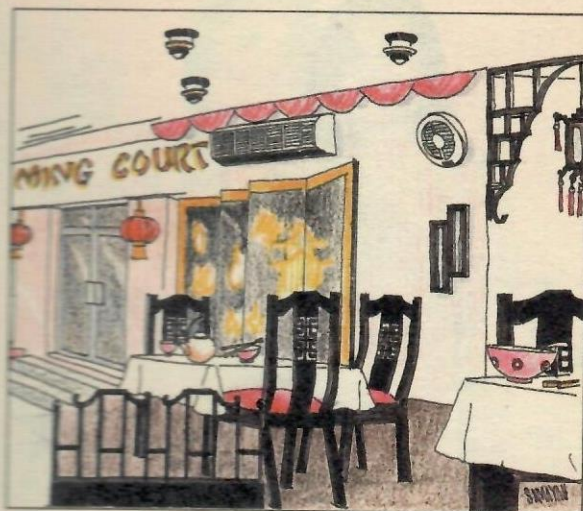
Ming Court is the brain-child of professional chef Kenneth Chu, who served the rich and famous as chief chef of the Karachi Marriott for over twenty five years. His claim to fame, however, is that he is the Aga Khan's personal chef when he visits Karachi (with photographs at the entrance to prove as much).

Just Behind Deltons, in Defence Ming Court is ideally located to catch it's target audience. The service is quiet and efficient as long as you are lucky enough to be seated upstairs. Downstairs, a relaxing evening could be ruined by waiters charging up and down the stairs. Similarly, Chu's forte is not his interior decoration. He has been successful because he understands the psychology of his customers. He is progressive and sensitive of changing trends and lifestyles.

The selection of vegetarian dishes, for example, are on the cutting edge of modern, healthy eating. Dishes such as braised broccoli, fried eggplant Szechuan style and braised spinach with mushrooms, feature prominently on the menu. Now that he is running his own show, he has a freer hand to recommend, explain and educate the eating-out elite of this city. He still feels, though, that he has to tone down his offerings to conform to expected tastes. But judging by the menu so far, the time is not far when he will be able to exercise his full artistic licence.

The beauty of Chu's food lies in it's simplicity. He does not give in to the usual Pakistani tendency of over cooking, over spicing and generally over complicating a dish to the hilt. The range of authentic ingredients used by Chu were proudly displayed in front of us. From fragrant sesame oil and homemade 5 spice powder (with star aniseed) to oyster sauce and black bean sauce. The Szechuan sauce and hoisin sauce (made with fermented black beans), mind you, are also homemade. While these ingredients may seem banal to even amateur cooks in the west, hardly any of Chu's contemporaries in Karachi use them.

Being the resourceful man that he is, Chu has set up a regular source of supply in Dubai for most of



his imported "raw materials". The meats and vegetables are brought daily from the market. Chu's wife is responsible for procuring the seafood and one might add that she does a super job. The sheer succulence of the prawns and shrimps removed any lingering doubts about their freshness. So, do try Szechuan prawns.

We made a great start with the Tom Yam soup which (even though still called Thai soup on the menu) was reminiscent of what I had seen just the other day

on *Far Flung Floyd*. It was a touch more sophisticated than the Thai soup other restaurants dish out. Perhaps it was the discernable taste of fresh lemon grass. The soup that really won a permanent abode in my palate, though, was the spicy prawn soup with crispy rice. Aromatic, delicately spiced (with 5 spice powder) and tangy, this soup is akin to the Tom Yam, but I would venture to say that it is a refined version. Not a very bright idea to order both of them though.

A sumptuous main course followed. The beef with oyster sauce was slightly pungent and full of flavour. I loved the wonderful salty taste of whole black beans in the spiced beef with spicy black bean sauce. The oregano flavoured chicken may have been more appropriate for "La Mamma" but it was appetising and original none the less.

The menu is bewilderingly extensive with 15 soups, 81 main dishes and 32 side dishes. Go with a big crowd to get maximum choice. The presentation of food is simple but delectable. A word of advice—ask for the food to be served on plates rather than sizzling platters.

My sister's father-in-law has been going regularly to the same Chinese restaurant for the last thirty years. Ming Court is well placed to evoke that kind of customer support. Kenneth Chu claims that he is already developing a cult following, with some customers logging up to 10 visits since the restaurant opened.

In a word, one could describe Ming Court as radical. It is a welcome departure from the formula "Sea Breeze" breed of Chinese restaurant with plastic flavoured food. We're talking real, honest food here. ♦

FAHIM RASOOL

Rating ★★★★★

Ming Court Chinese Restaurant: 16C Stadium Lane, off Khayaban-e- Shamsheer, D.H.A, Phase 5, Karachi

Approx Rs. 150 per head

A CELEBRATION OF WOMEN

(March 21st to 25th, Lahore)

The day was as lovely as only Nature can offer in its limited time called Spring. All too fleeting-but the celebration had its share, as it well deserved.

The ASR Centre for Research, Lahore, in collaboration with Lahore Arts Council and Faiz Foundation organized five days of true festival. Nothing was lacking, plays, films, exhibitions, and the delightful surroundings of the Arts Council. There were serious and rewarding debates and discussions too, all recorded. The Celebration sought to bring together 80 women or more from all over Pakistan who have been active in the promotion of the cause of women by means of activism, scholarship, and creative experience, hence the wide spectrum of cultural events.

Calling the meeting a 'celebration' was an inspired thought, because that was just what it was, certainly celebrating achievements so far in a wide number of fields, and the celebration of bringing so many women together.

Balloons, sailing over the roof of the Arts Council, set off by activists who had worked long in the cause of women signified the start of the five-day non-stop celebration and entertainment, indications of women's progress and continuing enthusiasm.

The art exhibition set up by the students and teachers from the NCA occupied two whole floors of the art gallery, and covered all possible forms of artistic experimentation. The main work came from 1st and 2nd year students-how they run ahead! Other work came from all over Pakistan.

The work in such media as fibre glass, egg tempera, plain glass, plaster of Paris and other media subject wise, illustrated the tedium of women's struggle for human rights, crimes against women, social taboos, oppression, discrimination, rituals and their taxing boredom. One found what strength this creative work can impart. Yes, the most significant presentation was a group depicting the burdens imposed upon women-executed in burlap foundation and plaster of Paris-drooping, reaching up, almost crying out for help. These figures dominated the exhibition, they were life-size and each posture brought to mind the tragic lives of our women. Two suffering figures had most cleverly been draped across the wide staircase banisters. One cannot but congratulate those who conceived and then worked on this

presentation.

Poster, photographs, by women's research centres, and NGOs, proved that one of the most effective avenues of propaganda is through the artist's hands and creative thought. After viewing this exhibition one knew that women had found their way.

Women film makers? Who would have thought? But the celebration has brought them to light, they are going public now, and we have to admit that it is a new profession now open to women who choose-Aurat Foundation with Shirin Pasha who also makes her own films, as consultant, an AGHS production on

women's rights, women at work from Women's Division, Shirkat Gah, the "Dancing Girls of Lahore" written and researched by Samina Rasheed and directed by

Ahmed Jamal, yet another AGHS production, input by Kishwar Naheed and Asma Jehangir. There is Ajoka, fine productions by a woman and husband team Shaheed Nadeem and Madiha Gauhar; Shirin Pasha's 'Before It Is Too Late'-a whole galaxy of talent and enterprise.

There were plays to be seen, workshops, discussions and debates. Discussions and debates were also held with the filmmakers themselves.

It was, as the ASR handout said, a coming together of concerned women, a sharing of ideas, work, involvements and inspiration. Those of us who have walked the long path in earlier days, can look back, and view a crowded road now, of new faces, new talents, new reachings forth, new eagerness and a new realisation that this is a global struggle not ours alone. There is no loneliness in it, in fact there is a great bustle and vigour in this now women's world. Indeed great celebration too! ♦



Thousands storm to the Faiz Mela held in the poet's ancestral village, Kala Kadar

FAIZ IN VILLAGE AND TOWN

Each year the Faiz Foundation organises music concerts, and has done so for the past nine years.

There has always been a classical vocal concert in the Al Hamra, Lahore, and a concert of folk music in the Open Air Theatre-this has earned the name of the Faiz Aman Mela. The Foundation has always received full cooperation

from the Al Hamra authorities and those of the Open Air Theatre.

In February 1993 the Foundation decided that the Mela, upon demand from the residents of Faiz's ancestral village, Kala Kadar, should take place there, and arrangements went ahead. This year, too, the Mela took place in the village. On both occasions there was full cooperation from the local authorities in Norowal.

The weather was as fine as could be, and the arrangements on the spot were made by the Local Members of the Faiz Foundation, a stage being erected, loud speakers set up, microphones arranged for,

seating accommodation, namely 'durries', and a separate enclosure with chairs for women.

The artists came from Lahore, and the favourite this year was Arif Lohar. Last year, too, he and his troupe came and had a tremendous, spontaneous welcome. He is Punjab's most sought after folk-singer. Clad in traditional dress, in glowing colours, using his gleaming tongs with great effect, his well-known songs

stir the audiences. This year yet another attraction was Inayat Hussain Bhatti, also a Punjabi folk singer of repute.

It is no exaggeration to say that thousands of villagers came from Kala Kadar's surrounding areas, by coach, by tonga, by cycles, motorcycles, walking, and by midday, the time given, every inch of space in the open fields had been taken. Roof tops, too, were crammed, and the boys had clambered onto trees, in clusters. Fifteen hundred women and girls, at least, more than filled the special enclosure.

The audience beat time with every song, and Arif whirled and danced to their delight. His troupe, too, rendered a whole variety of Punjabi songs with orchestral accompaniment.

The road from Narowal to Kala Kadar is in need now of repair and the announcement by a spokesman for the Deputy Commissioner that four lac rupees had been added to the sum necessary to repair the road was uproariously welcomed by the crowd.

Many of the women told us afterwards that they had walked several miles from their villages to hear the music, they told us, too, of other things. Their wish to send their girls to school. The girls' school in Kala Kadar is only a middle school, and they want it upgraded to tenth class, the nearest tenth class school is far too far for them to walk alone. We held out no promises, how could we, such moves are made in the big town, but we said we would try with the powers-that-be.

One thing which shocked us was heard from the women themselves, that a number of them had to find the money to supply their husbands with money for their heroin addiction. In the heart of the rural areas?

By the time we set out for home we realised it had been a long, tiring day but a rewarding one. We had stood watching the crowds thinning and hundreds making their way home through the fields. The wheat crop this year-because of so little rain-is green, and will start to turn golden in just over a month or so. Most of the villagers till their own lands, and rain becomes very important.

We could see the mountains of Kashmir in the distance, their peaks topped with great, white clouds. ❖

ALYS FAIZ



WOMEN AND BABY GIRLS

I don't usually put the satellite on at that time, but I'm glad that I did, I wouldn't have missed the film for worlds. It was geared to women, and little baby girls, born and unborn.

It was all about getting rid of that sad little piece of humanity, so unwanted. Now, it started off with a village scene, poor, dirty, chickens scratching away here and there, a goat or two, and this dejected woman sitting on a stool, telling us all about her sorrow, through another's voice, a good voice-it told so much.



Yes, she was pregnant, and the little one standing beside her, her daughter, was her first born, and the mother, uncertain about what would come next-another girl? That pleasant voice has to tell us unpleasant things. The girl is a drag on the family-no sense in educating her; she takes her education away with her, wherever she goes, with her goods and chattels. But I won't let it come to that, says the voice. Since I cannot afford a safe abortion, she'll have to be done away with without it. How? asks that voice. Well, we women know what to do, unhusked rice is the answer. We feed it the moment she is born, she doesn't survive long, no proof that she didn't die a natural death. Just a handful or two, not even that much, cheap, a way of relieving ourselves of what would be a long drawn out burden.

The father is then seen driving his nag along the road home. No, he didn't marry a woman to produce daughters, one perhaps, but sons are what we need, to bring in, and help, to care for us in our old age, and to give us more heirs.

The little girl by the mother's side had been spared, just one, never again. So the story begins. The women know the 'dhai' of the village is incompetent, what a tragedy if she messed up the birth of a baby boy!

Bombay is the biggest money-making town for doctors with ultra-sound equipment. But there even some girl babies are saved since singing girls are needed, and boys for the household.

The scene shifts to a small town clinic. Door opens, enter a doctor with his arms loaded with his U.S. equipment. Has a word with the doctor, goes into a small room, and we watch as he runs the 'searcher' over the woman's abdomen. He pats her on the shoulder, lucky woman. She has paid Rs. 500 to the woman doctor of the clinic, which is given to the

visitor. Off he goes. He does about six a day at different clinics. So the doctor who owns a U.S. toy can make as much as he cares to! The lady doctor too has a share in the income.

In several, even many, areas in India abortion is illegal, but the police turn the other eye, a really blind one, and money talks. Now here a young bride lies in a small hospital room, a bundle by her side-a girl baby. No one has come to see her or to cater to her needs, except her own mother, who sits, face covered, on a corner of the bed. Both are crying.

Then a happier scene: a middle-class family, father owns a small mill. Three girls already there by the bedside, but today a son has been born-he lies there on the bed beside his mother. All are smiling. The baby is naked from the waist down, to prove his maleness! Now the father has his arms around his three daughters. They have already shed their tears of uncertainty. All is well now.

Yes, the U.N. Year of the Girl Child, came and went. So did the million girl babies in India. The balance in India has now risen to 116 boys to 100 girls. As time passes changes will take place, for the worse. Baby girls will be scarcer, cost more, and made to pay for their so called sins when eventually they are part of their new family.

Well, every cloud is supposed to have a silver lining. This is no exception. Some days later, still with those million little babies in mind, we met up with a brave and outspoken peasant woman from a village in India. She told her story. She was just recovering from a gang rape by five men of her village, who belonged to a richer tribe, one of whom was head of the village. The rape took place on the outskirts of the village in the presence of her husband. She was a simple social worker, working with other women to try to stop child marriage, which means the buying and selling of tiny girls. Well the Government of India has called upon all well-known lawyers and experts in law to formulate a suitable set of laws which may become part of India's legislature to protect women from such violence.

Of course the BBC arrived in the village, and a young woman reporter, 'mike' in hand, told the story. We 'met' the woman and her colleagues and she said she had recovered her dignity.

And here; thus was a simple village woman who had challenged the gods!

ALYS FAIZ

So?