

TO AND BEYOND

Lora Khan, owner and head designer of 6 Yards Story, shared a similar perspective. Sales for ornaments online dropped significantly after 22 March; the trinket shop was unable to attend any exhibition, including 'Jhalmuri,' their very own signature exhibition. The production had to be abruptly stopped and the workers released with full pay.

"People think the market is now online, but that's not how it works! Even online companies have their factories and a formal physical office somewhere where many works, including artisans to white collar employees. My losses have been immense, I have to pay monthly wages to all my employees, including the exorbitant rent, utilities bill, VAT, etc., while sales have slumped down to one third of the usual. However, since ornaments, especially trinkets like ours, are affordable and not a high-end luxury item, there's still some movement with stock. So, there's still some cash flow, but this will not continue for long because stocks will run out sometime in the future and then there will be nothing new! How will I manage after that?

"Plus, the delivery system is a whole different issue. In these difficult times, it's extremely hard to deliver regularly," said a concerned Khan.

While contemplating on future plans of sustenance, she sounded panicked and glum, saying, "I have lost faith in the banking system. A week earlier, I went to the bank to cash-in my DPS account in order to pay my employees monthly salary and they denied me the service, saying Bangladesh Bank has forbidden any such activity during the pandemic.

"I am not interested in taking any soft loan; I just wanted to cash-in my own money and I couldn't. With the amount of sales that is currently going on, my company can sustain in the short term. What I am scared of is the long term, as there seems to be no end to the calamity."

management, makeup, light, sound, modeling, etc. If one dies, the others die with it.

It's about time the government took a separate initiative to save them, otherwise, when the country bounces back on the economy bandwagon, there would be so many unemployed mouths to feed and no fashion industry to call our own at all!

What we can personally do for the country is to inject the cash back into the economy as much as possible. We can purchase via online services during the lockdown and after that, when everything is back to normal, we should only be patrons of deshi designers, materials, and craftsmanship.

Rather than going to the neighbouring countries for all our fashion needs, why not make the permanent pledge to buy only deshi? This is the time our nation needs us the most. If we cannot contribute to the welfare of our countrymen now, then when will the right time ever come...?

If not today, then when?

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury

Photo Courtesy: 6 Yards Story

Online Pages:

Gootipa: <https://www.facebook.com/gootipa/>

Anokhi by Humaira Khan: <https://www.facebook.com/ANOKHI.BD/>

6 Yards Story: https://www.facebook.com/6ystory/?ref=br_tf&pa=SEARCH_



EPILOGUE

Baishakh and Eid have always been the hub of festivities in Bangladesh. And shopping for fashion items remain as one of the primary ways of taking part in the celebrations. Perhaps, there's not a single family in the country that haven't dreamt of buying at least one set of fresh new outfit in the Bengali New Year or Eid. This year, fate had other plans; Covid-19 snatched away Baishakh, Eid, and many other celebrations from the residents of the world, leaving the economy in disarray.

According to a report in a popular Bengali daily, FEB (Fashion Entrepreneurs Association of Bangladesh) has announced a Tk 125crore loss by the fashion industry of Bangladesh.

In a small country like ours, this is a huge blow, which the uncountable fashion entrepreneurs of Bangladesh many not be able to bear. And the fashion industry does not stand alone. There are so many other businesses indirectly related to this industry, like photography, digital content

Polka Drops: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Product-Service/Polka-Drops-1816803381965872/>

Powder Room: <https://www.facebook.com/thepowderroom04/>

Cape Town: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/532330826932848/>

Panache Hub: <https://www.facebook.com/panachehub/>

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