

# Tête-à-tête with Maheen Khan

Maheen Khan is a fashion guru and a renowned designer. A legend in her field, she has spent more than two decades in the industry and owns the highly reputed Mayasir where she showcases her latest designs.

This week Maheen Khan sat down with us at Star Lifestyle to talk about her life, fashion and the upcoming Khadi Festival.

## Why did you choose fashion designing as a career?

My mother - who was in the business from the 60s - was my mentor. She was actually quite an interesting person to have as a mother and a mentor, so naturally I always had the affinity to get myself involved in the industry. Initially, it was a professional decision rather than a creative one.

## What do you think of eco-fashion?

The whole world is changing. The idea of marketing products; how a product should be designed, developed and marketed has gone through a transformation. We are much more conscious about the environment now. So naturally, eco-friendly products - whether it's textiles or something else - need to be appropriately put forward before an audience. We are trying to promote Khadi, which is a 'green' textile. So we are definitely doing our part.

**How was the Fashion Design Council of Bangladesh formed?**  
FDCB came along about two years ago. I initiated the association because I believed that we had to

work together. We were very small and we had a Herculean task of producing Bangladeshi products. So we thought if we worked together, we would be much stronger, as an association and act as a platform for designers. We also wanted to promote Bangladeshi heritage.

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## Tell us about the Khadi Festival

We have been working on the Khadi Festival for about a year now. When we looked at Khadi being produced in Bangladesh, we realised that there were some production issues, especially with dyeing, the weak structure, and the low thread count of the fabric. Because of these problems, Khadi is not as popular as it once used to be, which is why I wanted to focus on it.

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The Festival is in two parts, one is the exhibition and the other is

the fashion show. There will be two fashion shows, one on each day. We have six Indian designers as well as many Bangladeshi designers who are working with folk art forms.

Alpona, Shitol Pati and Shokher Hari are a few of the many folk art forms that we are using. We are all using these decorative crafts and elements that have true Bangladeshi flavours. I am doing the 'paper-cutting' art form of Bangladesh. We blended Khadi with our folk art forms and we think that it will work wonderfully.

## Why are you focusing on Khadi?

We are focusing on Khadi because it is our heritage textile. We were making very good Khadi materials about 150 years ago. We used to actually export Khadi from Comilla to other parts of India. Unfortunately, because of lack of patronage, Khadi is a dying craft. Naturally we felt like this was something we needed to focus on. We felt that if we had a proper strategy of how to develop and revive Khadi, maybe there will come a day when we will find much better quality Khadi being produced in Bangladesh.

## What new and innovative designs can we expect to see at the Khadi Festival?

We decided to use the elements from our folk traditions as value additions to our collection. Since this is not something we do normally, it was initially a hard concept to get around. We needed to make it funky, trendy, prêt and wearable. We also did not want the

collections to look too South Asian. We want the designs to be global, happening and light and that is what you can expect to see at the Khadi Festival.

## How much work went into organising the event?

We actually started working with the idea a while ago. It took about a full year's work, from the concept, to actually motivating the designers, to developing the specific collections for the show, to finally bringing the right sponsors on board.

## Are you adapting to the computer technology for designing? What kinds of software do you use while designing?

As a designer, I still do a lot of things manually. All my manual drawings are then scanned, engineered and put into software such as the Illustrator where they are cleaned and refined. Personally, I think that we should always be open to change. We should also be looking at ways to adapt to the current available technology.

## What advice do you have for other aspiring fashion designers?

You must really research any project you are working on before you dive in. Also remember to always document your ideas. You need to be dedicated and you must constantly be practicing your form of art, whether it is the design or something else. Finally, keep yourself under constant pressure and always be hungry to achieve!

**By Naveed Naushad**

## Aarong's year end sale

Starting Friday, 4 December, 2015, Aarong will be hosting its year-end sale at all outlets nationwide and at aarong.com. The Aarong Gulshan (Tejgaon Link Road) outlet will showcase the largest variety of products and all will be made available at the premises.

The much awaited sale promises great offers, the best deals and discounts on selected clothes, shoes, bags and home décor products. The sale will continue till Saturday, 19 December, 2015. The sale will also be hosted for the same duration on aarong.com.

## Ferari's Winter offer

Fashion house Ferari have launched their latest winter line with a promise of having something for everyone. The line features full-sleeved T-shirts, full-sleeved polos, full-sleeved hoodies, full-sleeved shirts, casual polos and hoodies, as well. All the garb promises Ferari's own unique designs. For wholesale or retail, check out Ferari's Old Dhaka showroom.



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