

Demystifying Muslin

Historically, handloom's heritage and preeminence is a part of our culture. The tradition of weaving cloth by hand is one of the richest aspects of Bangladeshi culture and heritage. Muslin is produced from a handloom and it is widely considered to be one of the purest, simplest, most fine and most comfortable fabric in the world. It is believed to have originated in Bangladesh during the Middle Ages. The process of making handloom fabrics is intricate and it requires unparalleled and unique level of artistry. The industry has displayed innate resilience to withstand and adapt itself to the changing demand of modern times. Moreover, handloom fabrics are eco-friendly.

Our heritage in handloom has been dignified because of Muslin- a world famous fabric. It was the symbol of majestic aristocracy. Muslin is specially produced from "Carpus Fibre" in special weather yielding a perfect plain, even, thin and transparent material.

Muslin was the chosen brand name of Pre-colonial Bengal Textile, specially of the Dhaka Region. During British rule, skilled weavers of Bengal attained worldwide fame for their Muslin weaves made from locally produced cotton and it was branded as the Dhaka Muslin. It was a favourite of the girls of the Royal Palace, who would love to drape themselves in lovely dresses made from the fabulous fabric.

Once upon a time the emperor of Delhi, Jahangir, was said to have pledged to give some gifts to his mother-in-law. She expressed her preference for Muslin. Jahangir then sent 2200 cavaliers to Bengal to collect the muslin. Two-thirds of the cavalier died during the campaign. The rest of the riders of the party collected a small cup of muslin (the fine fabric could actually be folded into increasingly small spaces) and presented it to the mother-in-law of the emperor of Delhi.

Muslin had enormous goodwill as evident from the documents of European merchants in the 17th and 18th century. Subedar of Bengal selected the Muslin fabric as a gift for the Mughal emperors to draw their attention. Even, Empress Nurjahan had a special fascina-

tion for Muslin fabrics. The famous muslin is preserved at Victoria and Albert museum in United Kingdom (UK).

The finest sort of Muslin was made of "phuti" cotton, which was grown in certain localities on the banks of the river Shitalakshya.

Dhaka's Muslin was considered as the benchmark, though parts of India also produced the Muslin, although of a debatable quality. Dhaka's cotton was special; glossy, feather-light, transparent, (Gossypium arboreum, a la, phuti karpas), its yarn reached thread counts above 1000 and its weavers produced both plain and the much-sought after, flowered and figured Jamdani.

The honourable Prime Minister of The Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh visited the Ministry of Textiles & Jute on 12 October, 2014 and gave directions for the development of the handloom industry of the country. Upon her instructions, a specialised Committee headed by Chairman, Bangladesh Handloom Board (BHB) comprising 7 members was formed and they are working according to the TOR and work plan. Meanwhile, the specialised committee chalked out strategies to implement the aforesaid directives. BHB is frantically looking for Muslin made Angrakha to carry out research work. In this context, BHB is making an effective coordination and rapport with Bangladesh National Museum. BHB is asking technical support and expertise from Rajshahi University Biological Science and the famous research organisation "Drik".

In view of materialising the said directives, BHB has prepared a DPP under the guidance of Ministry of Textiles & Jute. Hopefully our efforts shall be successful in terms of reviving and producing the muslin yarn and muslin fabrics eventually. By turn, this effort will help revive the lost glory of muslin and uphold our heritage and tradition across the country and globe.

By Jashim Uddin Ahmed
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Sixth edition of Denimsandjeans.com

The sixth edition of Denimsandjeans.com Bangladesh is going to be held on October 5-6 at Hotel Radisson, Dhaka. The theme is 'Vintage Recall', where 'Denim Goes Back To Its Roots'. After five successful editions in Dhaka, this international premium denim exhibition raised the level of expectations once again for its sixth edition. This semi-annual denim show provides a platform where the global denim community comes together with an objective to share, interact and to establish future transactions with this very important supplier nation, Bangladesh.

There is a strong trend towards going back to the past and looking for denim

in Bangladesh and their products for the first time on the ramp to an international audience. This year, there will be a couple of seminars by international denim experts and veterans where they will share their ideas on the different prospects of denim.

With their limited number of exhibitors from around the world, Denimsandjeans.com Bangladesh always managed to bring more and more global buyers/brands/retailers/factories to their shows with an objective to highlight the strength of the Bangladeshi denim industry which has a very strong growth rate. It already supplies 50 percent more denim to the EU than China.



characteristics which jeans had in the early 1900s, such as colour, slubs, weave, etc. The current production of denim involves new technology in spinning, weaving and finishing and the industry is looking at possibilities of adding the vintage flair on the outside while using the current technique inside the fabric. This is what is called Vintage Recall!

The show does not limit itself to an exhibition format, but rather it is an event with many activities running on the sidelines. The last show had an exclusive European-styled fashion show which also brought out a very interesting competition among the students of fashion universities

By 2020, it is expected that global market size of denim industries will be \$ 64.1 billion, out of which more than 70 percent could come from Asia. And Bangladesh is becoming the most important nation among the Asian countries. Keeping these statistics in mind, this show really helps to bring the global denim industry to the same platform.

The show is invite-only and to get an invitation, visitors can register online by following this link: www.bdshow.denimsandjeans.com/invite.php. For more information, please call 01711563005, or visit www.denimsandjeans.com

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