

# Bangladeshi Fashion Week launched in London

British Bangladeshis have been making huge contributions to UK society for many decades with hundreds of success stories within national politics, law, medicine, science, corporate business and of course the restaurant and catering sector.

However, fashion was an industry yet to be infused with our culture and thinking. Indeed, over the past 30 years, British born Bangladeshi women were reliant on Indian and Pakistani designers to get their dose of feeling 'deshi' or celebrate weddings, parties and family functions.

That changed in the last few days with the successful completion of the 'Bangladeshi Fashion Week in London' – an exhibition showing off UK's most successful British Bangladeshi fashion designers, models, make-up artists and stylists.

The event was the culmination of a 4-year dream for the organiser - Fokrul Haque. Overcoming many obstacles and with much persistence, he gathered 8 leading designers with Bangladeshi influences, models, make-up artists and hair stylists and presented a stunning show worthy of the 1000+ people who attended.

## THE DESIGNERS

Bibi Russell, a former international model for the likes of Yves Saint Laurent, Kenzo, Hugo Boss and many such big labels, set-up her own fashion label in Bangladesh, employing over 35,000 rural artisans. Her collections have been featured in Vogue, Le' Official, Cosmo, and Libas, and her shows have been written about in countless international newspapers.

Rina Latif is a coveted label, and is carried in boutiques in Calcutta and Delhi. Her collections have been featured in Vogue, Le' Official, Cosmo, Libas and her shows have been written about in countless international newspapers. Rina Latif is the only Bangladeshi designer to have had a solo feature on Fashion TV.

Rukia Ullah is a British Bangladeshi, graduating from the London College of Communications (UAL). Her specialty is print and pattern design along with fashion



design- her explorations through design now include understanding her cultural roots in Bangladesh and she aspires to engage further with this by drawing her

inspiration from Bengal's rich cultural heritage.

Nadia and Ayesha, comprising the efforts of BBC Asian Network's Nadia Ali and her

business partner, Ayesha Khan, are both British Bangladeshis renowned for their talent and creativity in designing fashion that blends beautiful designs with real world applicability. The uniqueness of this debuting brand is the intention to create a range of clothing exuding traditional modernity and fashion that is on trend, stylish as well as effortless to carry.

PRITY is a boutique fashion label specialising in traditional designer wear from Bangladesh. PRITY aims to provide casual, formal and party wear combining fashion with a statement of cultural identification. They offer fashionistas an enviable range of exclusive hand-picked collections of affordable yet luxury attire.

Islamic Design House is an international modest wear fashion house based in London, and has an exclusive collection called The Silk Route. The house has the sole aspiration to serve the clothing needs of Muslim women who want to fuse modesty with fashion to suit their contemporary lifestyle needs. Their designs start with modest silhouettes, then push fashion boundaries with the exploration of fresh patterns, fabrics, colours and prints.

Zarkan of London, an exclusive boutique which specialises in unique, designer and exclusive saris and custom made bridal outfits, brings the most glamorous, sophisticated and elegant collections each season. They provide their customers with the latest designer wear, party wear and trendy everyday wear as well.

Afsana Ferdousi, is an award winning fashion designer from Bangladesh RMG sector for 4 years. She is a council member of the Fashion Design Council of Bangladesh and is the Bangladesh Country Coordinator of the prestigious SDC council in London.

Fokrul Haque has many future plans for Bangladeshi Fashion Week in London, including touring other UK cities as well as taking the concept to Bangladesh.

**By Toffael Rashid**

**Photo: Toffael Rashid**

