



INTERVIEW

# Reviving the Khadi

One on One conversation with the esteemed designer Maheen Khan, discussing the ever classy Khadi and its history and prospects in Bangladesh.

## What is Khadi?

The word Khadi is derived from khaddar which essentially means a fabric developed through weaving handspun yarns on a handloom. The entire process, separation of cotton from the seed, to spinning and weaving of fabric is carried out manually.



Entering her office, I felt quite at ease immediately, reveling in the ambience that exudes traditionalism. It also spoke of Maheen Khan's appreciation towards fine arts, very apparent in her choice of numerous miniature paintings depicting the royal lifestyle of the Mughal era. I was only a few moments into waiting when the gifted 'desi' designer walked in, and I was not just a bit proud, for such a precious part of our local talent.

We decided to carry on with our rendezvous over tea and biscuits. Maheen showed me a few pictures from her successful venture with Khadi last year, all very intriguing. The mesmerising pictures provided a basis for optimistic expectation for this year's event. The talented designer briefed us about her reasons behind focusing on the very 'local' garb. "Khadi, a green product, is also the heritage of Bengal. We have lost the Khadi over the years to yarns from the mills. If you ask me the exact reason behind focusing on lost traditions, such as the Khadi, I'd say the textile has the lowest carbon footprint. It can help mitigate global warming to a certain extent. Weaving the Khadi requires no electricity or burning of fossil fuels. In today's age, when we are most concerned with long term sustainability issues, eco-friendliness and green products, I believe Khadi is the primary solution to major concerns related to global warming."

Shifting our focus on the Khadi Festival for 2016, the fashion maestro had more to add. "Similar to last year, we hope to do an