

TÊTE-À-TÊTE

Bibi Russell and her Gamchha creations

She was never considered the typical Bangladeshi model; with supernatural height almost touching the 6 feet mark, lanky and dark skinned, most of her countrymen turned their backs on her.

The rest of the world, however, was more welcoming – such has always been the irony of Bibi Russell's life.

On the personal front, the rebel inside, never stopped once to prove her worth and we were extremely delighted to be able to enjoy an exclusive rendezvous with the maestro herself.

Even amid her extremely busy schedule, which includes intensive international travel, the eminent 'desi' designer took out some of her valuable time to chat with us over tea.

In our small tête-à-tête, Bibi Russell shared her thoughts on the prospects of modelling,

world that I like more than to work with its people and for its people."

Bibi Russell has led the way for local designers since a really long time. Following her lead, Bangladesh should have been way ahead in the field of fashion by now, but ironically the real scenario is quite on the contrary.

Russell had points to share on this note.

"All designers of the world must have some sort of authenticity to be able to make a mark in the world market. Without authenticity and distinctiveness, no designer in the world would be able to carve a niche for themselves," she explained.

Bibi Russell continued her discussion about Bangladeshi fashion industry by admitting how talented the national weavers and artisans were – "Our country is full of gifted people; our weavers are one of a kind with extreme talent and mastery over their field of work. We also have the abundance of some of the most unique textiles in the world; 'Gamchha' being one of them."

Almost everyone knows about the incredible position the humble gamchha has been brought to by the efforts of Russell alone. Because of Bibi Russell the gamchha has entered the prestigious high fashion market of the western world. Celebrities and international figures like Antonio Banderas and the Queen of Spain endorsed the material extensively.

Bibi Russell enlightened us with further information on the popular and quintessentially Bengali cloth, "Gamchha is like a national symbol for our country. There is not a single video or documentary of freedom



gamchha, and the way forward for the next generation of models and designers.

There are so many people working relentlessly to place Bangladesh on the world map, and one of them surely is Bibi Russell. The designer has experienced an illustrious life with a top-notch modelling career with the likes of great international brands like Issey Miyake and Jean Paul Gaultier etc.

Having had the opportunity to live in an advanced and privileged world with all its luxuries, Bibi Russell chose to come back to her motherland, instead and work directly with the weavers in the rural peripheries of Bangladesh.

She did all this, just out of sheer love for the country and its people.

"Bangladesh is deep rooted in my soul," said the eminent designer. "There is nothing in the