



LS SPECIAL

Khadi - An eco-friendly product for the soulful

It is surely a proud moment for Bangladesh; we are set on a high tide to reviving our lost heritage. Muslin, Jamdani, Khadi, Nakshi kantha – these very names restore a connection to our very own royal past; rich heritage and the unique talent of our artisan weavers. Yes, once Bengal was renowned all over the world for its fabrics and eminent designers like Maheen Khan are steadfastly keen on setting the tracks straight, by bringing back the past glory.

Along our course of discussion, Maheen Khan narrates the past, recounting on how khadi was lost along with the muslin. "As history depicts, British imperialism is to be exclusively blamed for the loss of the much sought-after, eco-friendly product," she said.

Khan narrates further, "With the introduction of power mills not only did we lose the expensive, fascination of the Mughal Royals – the Muslin, but also the regular wear of the masses – the Khadi. Weavers of Bengal could not simply keep up with the pace of the power looms since handspun yarns took a significant amount of time to maneuver."

"All is not lost though," she continues "... with the help from GOB, private initiatives and continuous efforts of the FDCB, Khadi is slowly but indisputably reviving its lost heritage."

In one of her past interviews with Star Lifestyle, Khan remarked, "Khadi 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, eco-friendliness and green products, I believe Khadi is the prime solution to concerns related to global warming. Additionally, if we decide on dyeing the fabric naturally then it becomes a complete green product."

Discussing further on the Khadi Festival for 2017, the fashion maestro beams, "Similar to last year, we hope to do an exhibition – 'The Khadi Festival' on November 3 and 4. We have an exciting list of designers coming in from different parts of the region besides Bangladesh like Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Malaysia etc. to showcase their unique work on Khadi. This is definitely a source of motivation for our local designers - to be able to exchange ideas and learn from each other. The interesting part of the festival like any year is that we follow a theme and this year's is the traditional crafts like terracotta, wood carving, calligraphy etc."

Every year, the fashion-conscious citizens of the world, wait ardently for the festival and its brilliant execution. Similar to any other year Star Lifestyle will be working closely with the Khadi Festival 2017, providing weekly write-ups on the different designers participating at the festival. We will be doing video stories and coverage of the actual event as well. Do stay with us to keep yourself updated on the legendary initiation by FDCB.

DESIGNER FAIZA AHMED, ON THE KHADI FESTIVAL 2017

Being a student of the Arts Department at the Dhaka University, Faiza Ahmed relished working as an interior designer for a long 17 years. "I loved decorating apartments but also longed-for indulging into other creative branches including fashion designing. My expertise in graphics design helped me a lot in the process." Having said that she reveals being involved in the world of fashion for the last 7 years.

"This is my second year at the Khadi Festival; last year I did an architectural layout of Choto Shona Masjid which received a lot of accolades," she said. "This year the theme has been traditional crafts and I have been assigned with terracotta. I have exciting plans on transforming this form of art into screen print on the khadi."

Asked how the presence of international designers at the festival will affect her creativity, she was more than delighted, "This is definitely a golden opportunity for idea exchange and appreciation of creativity. People have different viewpoints on the same thing and it is very interesting to notice the diversity."

Ahmed has high hopes for the future of khadi, she believes that the festival is an initiation towards a bright future for Khadi. "Currently it is being marketed to a niche segment but only when the momentum is gained and it is brought forward to the masses; will the khadi regain its lost glory."

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury
Photo courtesy: Faiza Ahmed from Khadi Festival 2016

To view the companion video, keep your eyes on 'Star Live'— the official YouTube channel of The Daily Star.

