

International Weavers Festival and the tale of a visionary

Tootli Rahman, an age-old name in the fashion arena, has made many a mark in the field as a visionary and it was with Star Lifestyle that she decided to share her life's achievement and future prospects.

The weather, unyielding; it was one of those days that anyone would wish they had stayed at home devouring khichuri and dim bhuna, instead of going outside.

The dampness almost seeped in, puddling around the toes right before stepping inside a massive, two storey building and there she was smiling, from a distance. The house, well-maintained, had a regal touch of the years long gone; everything had a timeless feel attached to it instantly transporting a guest to the prolific days of Zamindars and Nawabs.

Tootli Rahman didn't waste a moment to offer a cup of tea and off we were on our tête-à-tête in an earshot. "I have been involved with the weavers of Bangladesh for the last 35 years; working with them has always been my passion. Ten years ago, I was fortunate enough to initiate my own brand titled 'By Deshi'. This year I am so happy to acknowledge that the International Weavers Festival will have a similar slogan, 'Wear Deshi, By Deshi,'" remarked the fashion guru.

Enquiring a bit into what encouraged her to be involved with such a massive scale event; her face beamed. "Three years ago, I got an offer from Square to manage the Folk Festival; a very challenging programme, helping me gain the appropriate experience and encouraging me to do a similar mega scale event in my line of labour – that is 'deshi' fashion," remarked Rahman and then she continued to inform us the story of conception. "... That's also how the creative idea behind International Weavers Festival had been apprehended," revealed Rahman.

From last year's response we already know that the show has been a success, so

we wanted to know more from the fashion pundit about this year's content. "I want to include the declining crafts of Bangladesh; jute, pottery, jewellery, silk, gamcha, lungi etc. and acknowledge people who are making a difference with these products. Top designers of Bangladesh will be showcasing their products along with the emerging designers from the various fashion institutes of our country. This initiative, I believe will provide the students encouragement and a proper platform with significant publicity. They are, after all, the future of our country and this initiative will surely encourage them and their

prolonged efforts," remarked Rahman.

Naturally, we wanted to know what Tootli Rahman's revelation was for the upcoming festival; to this question she was more than happy to announce. "I am especially looking forward to this year's event because we'd be paying a special tribute to all the female characters of Rabindranath Tagore. I have named it 'Robi Anuragi,'" revealed the designer.

Just as we were contemplating the exquisiteness of the parade; Rahman added "That's not all, we will also showcase the panel of international artists from India, Pakistan,

Bhutan and Portugal. There will be brand ambassadors at the festival, who are also renowned singers of Bangladesh, advocating for the traditional crafts of our country and inspiring the crowd."

It was at this moment that we felt the show was complete with all kinds of entertainment and intensity.

International Weavers Festival cannot be the ultimate story of such a massive scale visionary.

Star Lifestyle wanted to know more and hence the designer revealed. "Beyond the festival, I want to build a heritage crafts village near the capital showcasing the unique artistry of our country, permanently. Foreigners can come to this village and enjoy authentic experiences and gaining an in-depth understanding of the rich heritage and culture of our beautiful country," concluded the designer.

That was surely a beautiful idea from the legendary patron of heritage and crafts.

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury
Photo Courtesy: Tootli Rahman



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