

#FASHION

Aatong: a Mro splendour

As your four-wheeled transporter snakes its way up the verdant mountains of Bandarban, you fail to recognise the difference between heaven and earth—the lines virtually disguised. The outrageous beauty of the surroundings captures your heart, the hospitality of the local people outshines any other, and most amazing of all, when you get to see them, the indigenous peoples of the community at work, creating exquisite jewellery simply out of silver and broken plastic, you realise how lucky you are to have witnessed splendour at its best.

The Mro people, as they love to call themselves, are a hardworking group that were mostly dependent on *jhum chash*— slash and burn method of cultivation, which is infamous for harming the ecology, biodiversity and the fertility of the lands. But living far away from the centre of economic activities, mostly existent in the cities, there was no other way to sustain livelihoods.

This is when Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bengal Craft Society and Creative Conservation Alliance (CCA) have been working together with the indigenous Mro people of Bandarban to form a Community Based Organization (CBO) to create and market their traditional crafts as an alternative income source and also reduce their increased dependency on the hill forests.

Aatong The catchy term, literally meaning 'jewellery' in Mro dialect, consists of exclusive pieces that can be considered 'Wearable Art.' Handcrafted and made from natural and sustainably harvested materials, these works of art empowers both the men and the womenfolk of the community. Alongside promoting the authenticity of the Mro culture, the fashion savvy would get to own jewellery that is avant-garde, exclusive and tied to a rich array of culture and heritage belonging to a particular

community.

Cangbuk

When you imagine a typical woman from the hill tracts, you immediately visualise her as wearing *pinon-hadi* and the *cangbuk*. Dazzling on the sun's rays, a typical Mro bride looks like wildflower on her wedding day. The jewellery hugging her neck area and sometimes her midriff, shines from miles away, disclosing the uniqueness of the indigenous peoples and their culture.

The true love by the Mro people for bright colours is seen time and again in their creations, and Aranya Crafts Ltd, keep the authenticity alive by incorporating semi-precious stones and wooden beads along with their original materials of plastic and silver to create jewellery that is simply extraordinary. The fine amalgamation results into an end product that is worth including as object d'art.

Whatever your plans for the weekend, the exclusive jewellery collection demands that you at least feast your eyes when you are nearby!

By Fashion Police

Photo: Sazzadlbne Sayed

Model: Simmi and Arpita

Make-up: MdHossen

Wardrobe: Bibi Productions

Styling: Zabin Iqbal Jahin

Location: Bengal Carpet Mill,

Ford Nagar, Dhamrai

Aatong Jewellery are available at Aranya Crafts Ltd showrooms



Thanks to Mishael Aziz Ahmad, Creative Director Aranya Crafts Ltd and Nawshin Khair, MD Aranya Crafts Ltd for sharing exclusive information regarding Aatong.