

#FASHION & HERITAGE

# Taking Bangladeshi craftsmanship to the global stage

If you take a look back into Bangladesh's history, you will find it immensely rich in culture and tradition. Throughout the ages, our ancestors developed a plethora of artforms, most of which have sadly been lost in time. However, many individuals and organisations are tirelessly working to preserve and restore these crafts. Take for example, Revival, an initiative working on renewing thousand-year-old traditions.

A joint venture of Bangladesh and Japan, it seeks to delve into the rich artisanal history of Bangladesh but from the perspective of the aesthetic sense of the Japanese. Truly a unique project, we got to know all about it from the man who started Revival — Huda Mohammed Faisal.

Faisal described himself as a fervent dreamer who is on a mission to carve a society where art, culture, and heritage can coexist harmoniously. He has a background in architecture but found his calling in textile heritage, circulation culture, and sustainable development which saw him pursue a master's degree in Environmental and Heritage Design at Kyushu University in Japan.

He is currently in a PhD programme on Cultural Heritage at Kyushu University and it is in Japan where the seed for Revival was planted. "My adventure in Japan can be attributed as the stepping stone towards the birth of Revival", Fahim said.

During his time in Japan, he collaborated with Meriguwa, a Japanese non-profit organisation focused on Japanese sensibility and circularity that resonated



with Bangladeshi traditional craft and folk art. The intrigue was further fuelled by the tragic Rana Plaza collapse in 2013.

The tragic incident acted as a catalyst to unite Japanese entities with Bangladesh to address social and environmental issues in the fashion industry. Thus, Revival was conceived with the intent to bridge Bangladeshi fashion and Japanese practices.

"We can be narrowed down to some fundamental aims: the revitalisation of traditional crafts with a circulation-oriented approach, job creation for women, the

nurturing of a delightful society, support for children's education, and a staunch advocacy for recyclable materials," Fahim stated.

Revival's cause has gained momentum over the last six years and has created significant impact.

"We have unfurled seven extensive exhibitions in Japan and have launched our collection in Japan, which caught on like wildfire. We have recently penned a deal that will give us access to a network of 3000+ stores of brands such as United Arrows, Beams, Takashimaya, Mitsukoshi Isetan, Iena, Royal Flush, Daimaru, Hankyu,

Urban Research," Fahim added to give us some perspective.

Revival has plans to grace global fashion weeks — Tokyo Fashion Week, Paris Fashion Week, New York Fashion Week, Portland Fashion Week, and scale across Europe and the USA. They also want to expand their portfolio and add items like shoes, natural handmade soap, perfume, and jeans that all symbolise Bangladeshi craftsmanship.

Revival seeks to do much more than just showcase Bangladesh to the world. They want to preserve the heart and soul of what keeps the wheels turning for the industry: the weavers and artisans, especially women. They have several projects that are dedicated to providing artisans with work opportunities and give them a platform to continue perfecting their craft and most importantly empower them.

Revival also wants to champion natural dye practices and ethical business practices to preserve and protect cultural crafts in Bangladesh.

**By Irfan Aziz**  
**Photo: Courtesy**

