



# THE COTTON SAREE

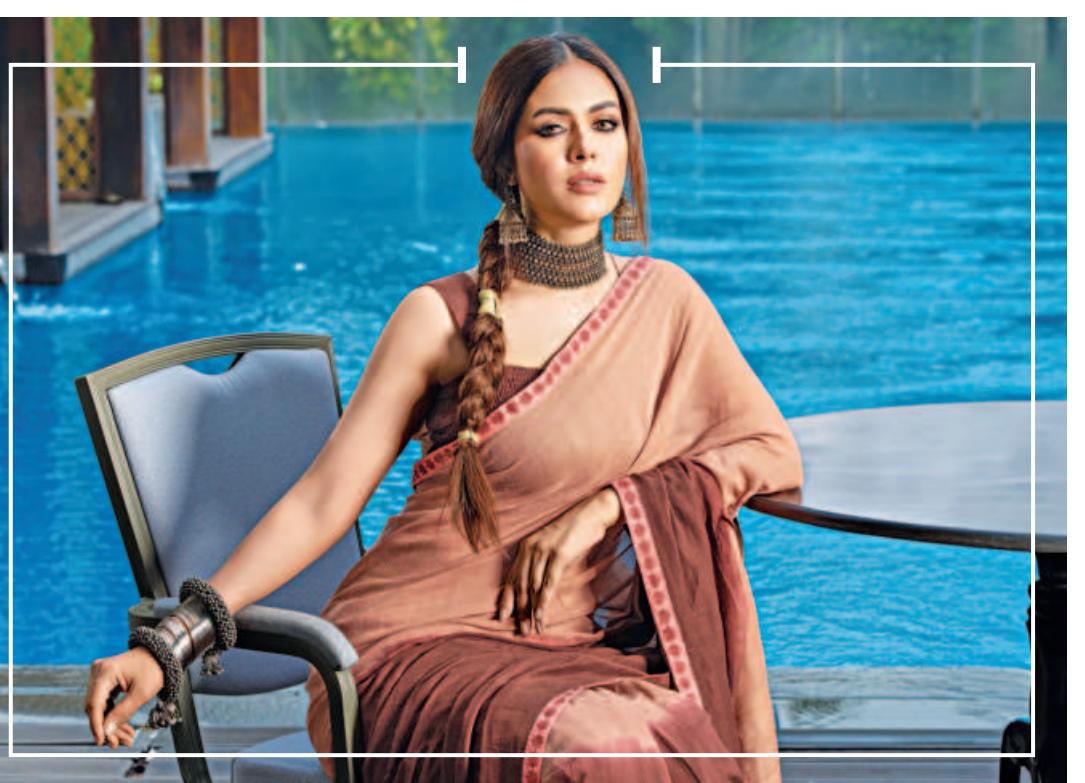
## The quintessential summer wear

Combining comfort with style, the cotton saree is breathable, versatile, and traditional. Natural fibre allows air to circulate efficiently, helping to keep the body refreshed during hotter days. Unlike synthetic fabrics that can trap heat, cotton keeps one cool and comfortable. Moreover, the ease with which they can be draped makes them all the more appealing to women, irrespective of age.

"I don't know why people think sarees are a hassle," shares Moumita Choudhury, a 30-something school teacher. "Honestly, give me a saree over a kameez any day! It spares me the annoyance of keeping my ornaments in place, it's a skirt that provides ventilation — to me, a saree is a blessing!"

Purchasing cotton sarees in Dhaka is a breeze. From smaller shops in good old New Market to bigger malls such as Jamuna Future Park and Bashundhara City,

"Deshi Dosh at Bashundhara City has had my heart, ever since it came into existence," mentions Dr Onora Khan. "I know it is a little on the pricey end, but I pay



one can find a wide variety of sarees in a multitude of colours, virtually anywhere.

Price points vary in terms of quality and location, with smaller shops offering wares at more reasonable, negotiable prices than malls. Traditionally, prices for cotton sarees start from Tk 300 and go up to a few thousand.

Deshi stores such as Aarong, Jatra, Aranya, etc. are

for quality and for uniqueness." Even a few years ago, draping a saree was a simple, two-minute job, with front pleats and a pleated or loose anchal. Some wearers also went for anchals in front, down one shoulder. Now, however, styling a cotton saree has become a creative process that varies according to personal preference and occasion.

For daily wear, for instance, pairing a plain or



printed cotton saree with minimal jewellery creates a comfortable and effortless look. Officegoers are regularly seen donning the saree this way.

One can also give the traditional saree a modern glow-up by choosing contemporary blouses: off-shoulder, sleeveless, loose tops, crop tops or cape styles, and pairing them with traditional sarees for a fusion appearance.

Others interpret the most common Nivi style of saree draping in their own way.

Farah Somi, a social worker, for instance, loves to play around with accessories.

"I add belts, you'll see me pulling the anchal through bangles; I sometimes even wrap it around the neck, scarf style!"

The Gujarati style, with pleats tucked at the front and the anchal draped over the right shoulder, offers another elegant option, especially for sarees with more intricate work around the anchal. For a more contemporary appeal, some wearers opt for the fishtail style, which involves pleating the saree tightly around the legs for a sleek and modern look.

A saree drape that is gaining increasing popularity is the "dhobi style." Worn over tights rather than petticoats, this style of draping mimics the traditional dhobi garment, covering both legs in the saree separately. This style is hassle-free, comfortable and a great choice for semi-formal parties.

Very close to the dhobi style is the "pants style" of draping a saree. In this method, the saree is pleated and tucked into the waistband of the pants, with the anchal draped over the shoulders or across the body, creating a sleek look that fuses tradition and Western style.

With all its evolution, the cotton saree continues to be an irreplaceable and empowering choice for women, especially in the heat of Dhaka. Gracefully combining cultural heritage with modern aesthetics, it continues to validate its status as a timeless and trendy summer essential for Bengali saree lovers.

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