#PROFILE

The story behind Tanha Sheikh's fashion journey

In the quiet corners of the local fashion industry, some designers choose a different presence. They move away from the loud, fast-moving trends to build something personal. Tanha Sheikh, fashion designer and the founder of the label TAAN, is one such individual.

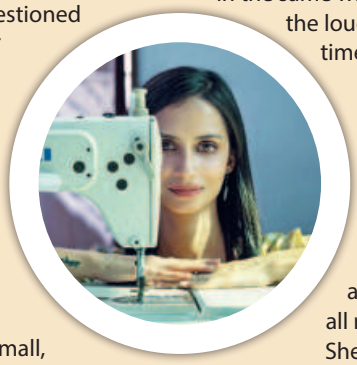


Her earliest connection to fabric happened at home. She spent hours sitting beside her grandmother as a young girl. Together, they would watch simple scraps of fabric transform into tiny, handmade sarees for her dolls.

The little girl was fascinated by how a simple piece of cloth could be draped into something beautiful. Those moments stayed with her. They sparked a curiosity about textures and the stories that handwoven textiles carry.

As she got older, Sheikh looked for clothing that felt rooted in her own heritage. Finding something contemporary for everyday life was a constant struggle, as those specific pieces were rarely to be found. This gap eventually pushed her to act. After stopping to wait for someone else to create it for her, she decided to build TAAN herself.

Committing to fashion was not an easy choice. Many people view the industry as glamorous but not always serious. A lot of people had questioned her about whether this was a career or simply a hobby; the harder resistance came from within.



"I constantly disputed whether I was good enough or if people would understand my vision."

What eased that, over time, was simply doing the work.

"Confidence comes because you keep going despite the doubts," she reflects.

Her sense of style is influenced by small, natural things. More often, inspiration is drawn from the texture of a sky right before the rain or the way paint peels off an old, forgotten wall.

There is a beauty in silence that seems to dictate the rhythm of the work. While traditional Bangladeshi textiles are a constant reference point, the goal is never to produce a carbon copy of the past.

Now, she finds herself thinking about how a garment makes someone feel, where the fabric came from, and who made it.

"Purpose matters," she opines, "just as much as beauty does."

There were moments when collections did not perform as expected. Production became increasingly complicated. These setbacks were often painful, but they taught her resilience. This is what began to teach her to treat every difficulty as a lesson.

This journey fundamentally transformed the perception of her personal attire. Earlier, the focus rested solely on beauty. Today, the priority lies in creating meaningful pieces. Trends no longer dictate what is worn. Instead, the origin of the fabric and the artisans behind the skill carry the most weight. The goal is to craft pieces destined to be cherished for a lifetime!

Off the clock, she is much quieter than most people assume. Sheikh values slow mornings and time spent with family alongside spending time with her cat and quiet stretches of reading. Sometimes, she enjoys travelling and observing how different cultures express themselves.

"I started learning Bharatanatyam dance, and it has become something very special to me. It helps me stay connected to art while expressing emotions in a way words sometimes can't," she expressed cheerfully.

These small rituals keep her grounded in a fast-paced environment.

The name of her label refers to the "taan" of a tanpura. This is a note that quietly supports an entire melody. Sheikh believes that fashion should function in the same way. It should not be the loudest statement, but a timeless resonance.

She said, "TAAN is probably the most honest version of me. It is where her love for craftsmanship, sustainability, and storytelling all meet."

Sheikh is candid about the extra scrutiny that comes with being a young woman entrepreneur. People see the fashion shows but miss the daily struggle. There are sleepless nights spent solving production crises. Success is hundreds of invisible days where she chooses not to quit.

She is no longer embarrassed by her mistakes. "They have taught me more than success ever has," she remarked earnestly. And that is where the work is finally beginning to speak for itself. After all, legacy is not built on the runway. It is built in the quiet, persistent days of doing the work truthfully.

By Tagabun Taharim Titun
Photo: Courtesy