

AV Birla Group's fashion division ties up with textile ministry

By Radhika Bhalla
in New Delhi

FOLLOWING Textile Minister Smriti Irani's initiative towards reviving handloom fabrics in Varanasi in August earlier this year, menswear brand Peter England rolled out their first capsule collection in handloom fabric on Monday in the Capital.

The launch is a part of a strategic collaboration between Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd.'s (ABFRL) and the Government of India's 'India Handloom Brand' to work together to promote the Indian handloom industry. The announcement was made in the presence of Irani and Manish Singhai, Brand Head, Peter England.

Speaking to MAIL TODAY, Singhai explained, "The government of India is taking many initiatives on handlooms. They had called for a big conclave in Varanasi a few months ago, where they invited massive brands to do partnerships for India Handloom brand. Based on this, Peter England was asked to work with 2 clusters in Andhra Pradesh of which one is in Mangalagiri. Within 90 days we have launched this small collection in 50 stores across India."

The range of shirts for men come in 17 designs that have been designed by the in-house design team at Peter England. While most are drill based fabrics, some are dobbies. The shirts are priced between Rs 1,500 and Rs 1,700.

Unveiling the new collection, Irani said, "Authentic handloom products have always found resonance with Indian consumer. Our partnership with Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail's well known brand - Peter England will allow weavers to satiate this demand by making their products available in the market. Weavers will also get the right value and visibility in the men's fashion garments market for



Textiles Minister Smriti Zubin Irani with Peter England brand head Manish Singhai at the announcement of partnership with 'India Handloom Brand' in New Delhi on Monday.

Smriti weaves big brand magic into handlooms

their quality fabrics, through this partnership with Peter England and their direct sales channel."

Singhai adds, "The USP is that the fabric is more sustainable because it is made by hand, with no power used. The artisans and weavers benefit from this. Also, the dyes used to process these fabrics are safe for the environment without any harmful chemicals."

Commenting on upcoming collections in this segment, he adds, "Now that we are working with the India Handloom brand, they are suggesting another cluster

in Kerala and another one in Andhra Pradesh. We plan to make it big in 6 months or so, and are evaluating fabrics for Nehru jackets and some trousers for our next collection."

The "India Handloom Brand" was launched by the Prime Minister August 7, 2015, in order to promote the branding of high quality handloom products, with zero defects and zero impact on the environment.

"We plan to expand our collection to 75 stores from current 15 across the country in the

coming financial year. We intend to procure 1 lakh metres of fabric from various clusters being developed and nurtured by India Handloom Brand," Singhai disclosed.

"These garments are crafted using 100% handloom fabric which is unique in style and comfort, making this line of fashion attire truly Indian and authentic."

"Ministry of Textiles had done research about marketing of India Handloom Brand products. One of the major findings was that the product range has a very big gap for branded mens-formals," Alok Kumar, Development Commissioner, Handlooms said.

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