

Gujarati apparel makes a splash in the capital

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The collection blends traditional Gujarati embroideries and prints with western cuts for a stunning collection with an international look.

The exclusive pieces range from black Anarkali evening dresses, to corsets in Persian blue, to dresses in indigo-blue, and even to hand painted saris with delicate kalamkari embroidery.

Quite naturally, all this does not come cheap, with prices starting at Rs.11,000 and going as high as Rs.60,000.

'For the premium collection, we have chosen traditional Gujarati designs and given them a completely contemporary look,' said designer Villo Mirza.

'We have used fine cotton and vegetable-dyed thread in every outfit and everything is hand made,' she added.

Asked what made the collection so expensive, Mirza chuckled.

'Beautiful things come for a price. This apart, you have to keep in mind the hard work that goes in since everything is hand made,' she pointed out.

The premium range apart, the 'Varakh' collection also offers saris in bandani, block print and ajarak designs, jackets with heera and rabbari embroidery, and multi-coloured chudidaars, cholis, halter-necked blouses and short kurtis.

These are priced between Rs.100 and Rs.1,000.

Hansiba is the flagship brand of prominent Gujarat women's self-help organisation SEWA's Trade Facilitation Centre (STFC) that identifies talent in the rural areas and promotes their craft.

'The skill is there and needs to be preserved. This we do by giving artisans a platform to refine their skills STFC chairperson Reema Nanavaty said.

'We teach them to use different kinds of thread - like silk or cotton - and advise them on colour coordination to make the product desirable and attractive,' she explained.

While Mirza develops the designs the artisans are given freedom to use their traditional skills and come up with the finished product.

She does this by studying traditional designs and recommending the outfits they would look best on.

Thereafter, the outfits are photographed and shown to the artisans to point out the value addition that has been achieved.

'STFC gave us the opportunity to hone our skills and be independent', said Gauri, a rural artisan.

'We learnt the knack of using colour combinations in our embroidery. This has increased our income and helped a lot in boosting our morale,' she added.

Apart from apparel, the 'Varakh' collection also includes beautiful beaded jewellery, bags, purses and cushion covers that definitely stand apart.

Prices range from Rs.100 to Rs.2,000.

- *Indo Asian News Service*