

Banarasi Pashmina

April 10, 2022

In news—Recently, the Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has launched “Banarasi Pashmina” to boost self-sustainability & Artisanal Creativity.

About Banarasi Pashmina-

- From the Himalayan highlands of Leh-Ladakh to the banks of River Ganges in Varanasi – the heritage handicraft of **Pashmina has got a brand new identity.**
- **This is for the first time that Pashmina products are being produced outside the region of Leh-Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir.**
- **KVIC will be selling the “Made-in-Varanasi” Pashmina products** through its showrooms, outlets and through its online portal.
- **Pashmina is famed as an essential Kashmiri art form** but rediscovery of Pashmina in Varanasi, the spiritual and cultural Capital of India, is unique in many ways.
- The production of Pashmina prepared in Varanasi liberates this heritage art from the regional confines and creates a fusion of diverse artistry from Leh-Ladakh, Delhi and Varanasi.
- **The journey of Pashmina production in Varanasi begins with collection of raw Pashmina wool** from Ladakh and which is brought to Delhi for de-hairing, cleaning and processing.
- The processed wool, in the form of roving, is brought back to Leh where it is handspun into yarn by women Khadi artisans on modern Charkhas provided by KVIC.
- The finished yarn is then sent to Varanasi where it is woven by trained Khadi weavers into final Pashmina products.
- As a mark of authenticity and belongingness, the name of

the weavers and the name of the city Varanasi will also be subtly marked on the Pashmina products made by Varanasi's weavers.

Pashmina of Leh-Ladakh-

- **Pashmina refers to a fine variant of spun cashmere, the animal-hair fibre forming the downy undercoat** of the Changthangi goat.
- **The word pashm means “wool” in Persian, but in Kashmir,** pashm referred to the raw unspun wool of domesticated Changthangi goats.
- In common parlance today, *pashmina* may refer either to the material or to the variant of the Kashmir shawl that is made from it.
- Goats used for pashmina shed their winter coat every spring. One goat sheds approximately 80–170 grams (3–6 oz) of the fibre.
- **In the spring (the moulting season), the goats naturally shed their undercoat,** which regrows in winter. This undercoat is collected by combing the goat, not by shearing, as in other fine wools.
- **A traditional producer of pashmina wool in the Ladakh region of the Himalayas are a people known as the Changpa.** These are a nomadic people and inhabit the Changthang plateau of Tibet.