

# Banarasi Pashmina

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**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.