

MEDIA RELEASE

INDIA'S BIGGEST SUSTAINABILITY AWARD – THE CIRCULAR DESIGN CHALLENGE (CDC) GOES INTERNATIONAL

**ORGANISED BY RELIANCE INDUSTRIES LIMITED'S - R|ELAN™ IN ASSOCIATION WITH
THE UNITED NATIONS IN INDIA, CDC'S GLOBAL EXPANSION JURY MEET CONVENES
ACROSS THE UK, EU, AND APAC REGIONS**

ANNOUNCES FINALISTS FROM THE REGIONS

National, 18th September 2023: With the aim to give a global platform to fashion design talent across the world, **Circular Design Challenge (CDC)** has announced its worldwide expansion that culminates at the upcoming season of **Lakmé Fashion Week x FDCI**. Presented by **R|Elan™**, the next-gen fabric brand of India's largest conglomerate -**Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)**, in association with the **United Nations in India**, CDC aims towards a greener and more sustainable future globally by promoting the eco-conscious creatives of the fashion industry.

Five years ago, RIL pioneered the concept of the Circular Design Challenge, driven by a vision to raise consciousness for sustainability and circular practices across every facet of the fashion industry. This endeavour saw a dynamic partnership between RIL, the UN in India, and Lakmé Fashion Week which strive to champion transformative ideals within the realm of fashion.

Since then, Circular Design Challenge has been pivotal in driving India's fashion industry towards eco-consciousness. Now, it aims to be a beacon of change on an international scale, promoting circularity and sustainability in the global fashion ecosystem.

This year, CDC aims to be a global phenomenon with the competition spanning across the UK, EU, and APAC regions, extending invitations to designers around the world.

Mr Hemant D. Sharma, Sector Head – Polyester, Reliance Industries Limited, said, *“CDC is one of the most remarkable concepts adopted by Reliance Industries. The CDC has nurtured, mentored, and promoted environmental champions leading circular and innovative collections using sustainable and recycled materials. The Challenge has established itself as the largest sustainable fashion award in India. The initiative has played a crucial role in promoting circularity and sustainability in the Indian fashion industry, and after four editions in India, we are now going international to promote sustainability, and circular economy adoption globally”*.

Mr Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator, India, said, *“The UN in India is proud to be a founding partner of the Circular Design Challenge since its beginning five years ago. The UN and CDC are united in our belief that fashion can and must be both a source of joy, celebrating culture, human expression, and innovation, and a force for greening our world. Weaving together so many different threads of society and the economy, a more sustainable fashion industry can help drive the achievement of the global SDGs across a rich fabric of value chains and social connections. We look forward to unlocking circular solutions on a global scale with CDC.”*

The design challenge focuses on crucial parameters of sustainability for evaluation such as biodegradability, durability & multi-functionality of products. The jury aims to monitor factors like energy efficiency, closed-loop systems, materials used in ethical production and focuses that their social and environmental impact should meet one or more of the United Nations standards of Sustainable Development Goals.

CDC partners across borders include **British Council for the UK, Redress for Hong Kong/Asia Pacific, and Istituto Marangoni for The European Union.**

Pei-Wen Jin from Taiwan was announced finalist from **APAC region** whereas **‘Studio Medium’** by Riddhi Jain & Dhruv Satija, **‘Banofi’ + ‘Studio Beej’** (Consortium) by Jinali Mody & Arundhati Kumar and **‘Without’** by Anish Malpani were announced as the 3 finalists from **India edition.**

From the **UK Jury meet**, it was **Amesh Wijesekera, Sri Lankan designer based in London** that made it to the finals and **Felipe Fiallo** was the finalist from the **EU jury meet.**

The finalists from APAC, UK and EU jury will be flown to New Delhi, India in October where together with India finalists, will pitch their work to an esteemed jury at Lakmé Fashion Week x FDCI. The CDC winner will receive funding worth INR 15 Lakhs, CDC Trophy, and a six-month mentorship program, along with a stand-alone showcase at Lakmé Fashion Week x FDCI in March 2024. The runner up will receive funding worth INR 5 Lakhs and mentorship.

The winner and runner-up will be mentored by **Orsola de Castro, Co-founder of Fashion Revolution & Creative Director of Estethica**; this influential partnership will provide invaluable guidance to the designers. She will also conduct a masterclass for all the finalists.

Jaspreet Chandok, Group Vice President, Reliance Brands that organizes Lakme Fashion Week in partnership with Fashion Design Council of India, said, *“After witnessing the growing participation and appreciation for CDC over the last five years, taking CDC to the global stage aligns perfectly with our vision of promoting sustainable fashion worldwide. Together with R|Elan™ and the United Nations in India, we have elevated the Circular Design Challenge to become the biggest sustainability platform within the country. As we move forward, our focus is on making this platform an even greater success on an international scale, alongside our global partners and welcome creative minds from around the world join us in our mission to promote sustainable fashion.”*

For half a decade CDC has identified and supported remarkable winners who combine fashion with environmentally friendly innovations. Some past winners include I Was A Sari, which upcycles discarded saris while empowering women artisans, Malai Biomaterials Design, which creates sustainable alternatives to leather, Bandit, which masters the art of upcycling various materials into eco-cool products, and Pieux, which focuses on recycled materials and modular garment construction. Moreover, the platform has supported 25 alumni through workshops and networks to gradually transform the fashion ecosystem.

Follow CDC on social media: Instagram: @CircularDesignChallenge

INDIA JURY MEET

Jury Members:

1. Karishma Shahani Khan: Fashion Designer
2. Shweta Shiware: Columnist and Journalist
3. Rakesh Bali: Senior Vice President – Head Marketing, Reliance Industries Limited
4. Pranav Khanna: Business Mentor & Consultant
5. Darshana Gajare: Head of Sustainability, Lakme Fashion Week
6. Aparna Badlani: Creative Director, Aza

Participants:

1. Without (finalist)
2. Banofi + Studio Beej (finalist)
3. Studio Medium (finalist)
4. Aradhita Parasrampuria
5. Bodements
6. Lafaani
7. Janvi Gohel

ASIA-PACIFIC JURY MEET

Jury Members:

1. Christina Dean: Founder, Redress
2. Shaway Yeh: Founder Yehyehyeh & Group style Editorial Director, Modern Media Group
3. Christine Tsui: PhD author of China Fashion
4. Kelvin Wan: Founder Cycle Fashion
5. Bandana Tewari: Sustainability Activist & Journalist

Participants:

1. Pei-wen Jin (finalist)
2. Ngọc Hà Thu Lê
3. Nawoda Bandara
4. Louise Lau
5. CJ Martin

UK JURY MEET

Jury Members:

1. Phoebe English: Fashion Designer
2. Sevra Davis: Director of Architecture Design and Fashion, British Council
3. Sarah Ditty: Senior Programme Manager, Labour Rights at Laudes Foundation
4. Daniel Whitley: Design and Innovation Manager, Ellen MacArthur Foundation
5. Megan Doyle: Sustainable fashion journalist & consultant
6. Wilson Oryema: Lead at Austron Research, Artist, Writer

Participants:

1. Amesh Wijesekera (finalist)
2. Clara Chu
3. Namita Khade
4. Mariah Esa

EU JURY MEET

Jury Members:

1. Francesco Fioretto: Research and Education Director, Istituto Marangoni
2. Francesca Delogu: Fashion & Lifestyle journalist
3. Marina Spadafora: Sustainability Advisor, Professor and Author

Participants:

1. Felipe Fiallo
2. Gian Marco Caggiari
3. Elisa Nencioni
4. Margherita Batelli

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About Reliance Industries Limited:

Reliance is India’s largest private sector company, with a consolidated revenue of INR 9,74,864 crore (US\$118.6 billion), cash profit INR 1,25,951 crore (US\$ 15.3 billion) and net profit of INR 73,670 crore (US\$9.0 billion) for the year ended March 31, 2023. Reliance’s activities span hydrocarbon exploration and production, petroleum refining and marketing, petrochemicals, advanced materials and composites, renewables (solar and hydrogen), retail and digital services.

Currently ranking 88th, Reliance is the largest private sector company from India to feature in Fortune’s Global 500 list of “World’s Largest Companies” for 2023. The company stands 45th in the Forbes Global 2000 rankings of “World’s Largest Public Companies” for 2023 - the top-most among Indian companies. Reliance has been ranked among the world's 20 best companies to work with, and highest amongst Indian companies in Forbes’ World's Best Employers for 2022. It features among LinkedIn’s “Top Companies 2023: The 25 Best Workplaces To Grow Your Career In India”.
 Website: www.ril.com

About R|Elan™:

R|Elan™ is the next-gen fabric, that has been created from specially engineered fibers and yarns using cutting-edge technological expertise, state-of-the-art R&D, and the robust testing systems of Reliance Industries. These smart fabrics have been designed to enhance comfort and aesthetics and it is being increasingly sought-after fabric by renowned domestic and global brands, retailers, and apparel manufacturers. The technologies that power R|Elan™ fabric imparts several attributes such as moisture management, odor-free, and thermal insulation while ensuring that they contribute something back to Mother Earth.

About United Nations in India:

The United Nations system in India includes 26 organisations that have the privilege to serve in India. The Resident Coordinator, the designated representative of the UN Secretary-General to the Government leads the UN Country Team to advocate the mandate of the United Nations, while drawing on the support and guidance of the entire UN family. For more information, please visit: india.un.org

About Lakmé:

Lakmé, is India's no.1 colour cosmetics and leading premium skincare brand from Hindustan Unilever Ltd. Lakmé has been the pioneer of the make-up and colour cosmetics in India since 1952 by launching numerous trends leading and high-performance products. Combining international cosmetic technology with an in-depth understanding of the Indian woman's needs, Lakmé offers women a comprehensive beauty experience through its extensive product portfolio. For Further Information log on to www.Lakméindia.com

About Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI):

A non-profit organisation, the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), is the apex body of fashion design in India, represented by over 400 members. Founded on the premise of promoting, nurturing, and representing the best of fashion and design talent in the country; its prime objective is to propagate the business of fashion. FDCI stays true to its commitment to promote the 'Make in India' label as handlooms take centre stage, in a country, who's heritage is soaked in the flavours of indigenous crafts. For more information, please visit: www.fdc.org