

HOROSCOPE



ARIES (MAR. 21-APRIL 20)

Don't make promises you can't keep. You might be overindulgent this week. Try not to let family issues get you down. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



TAURUS (APR. 21-MAY 21)

Opportunities for romance will flourish through travel. It might be best to work on your own. Get involved in groups. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



GEMINI (MAY 22-JUNE 21)

Ferret out concerns before they pile up. Find something constructive to do. You will find your loved one taxing this week. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



CANCER (JUNE 22-JULY 22)

Your unique approach to life will interest others. Contracts will not be lucrative. The advice you get this week may false. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



LEO (JULY 23-AUG 22)

Deal with clients or colleagues properly. Keep an open mind when listening to others. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 23)

Financial limitations may add to your depression. Don't get involved in office chatter. Not the best day for business trips. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



LIBRA (SEPT. 24-OCT. 23)

Try not to do anything deceitful. Try to deal with family matters intelligently. Share your intentions with someone. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Uncertainties are probable. Jealousy may contribute to your emotional ups and downs. Don't get upset. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Re-evaluate your motives. Relatives may oppose your intentions. Don't make any rash decisions that may affect friendships. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Invest in something of value. Lowered vitality could affect your work. You may find it difficult to communicate at work. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Expect opposition at work. Don't let the competition get the upper hand. Loved ones may not be too fond of you. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



PISCES (FEB. 20-MARCH. 20)

Focus on your work. Dealings with large institutions should go well. Difficulties with loved ones is likely. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

LS PICK

Charukala ready to embrace Pahela Baishakh

'Anondo loke, mangal aloke, birajo, sotto sundoro' – with these immortal words by Tagore as the underlying theme the Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka, is all set to celebrate the dawning of the Bengali year 1424.

As tradition has it the responsibility of overseeing matters related to the new year celebrations rest on the shoulders of ex-students of the Institute and this year the torch bearers are the 18th and 19th batch of the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from this renowned centre of academic excellence.

"The fact that the Mangal Shobhajatra has recently been included in the list of intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO makes the affair even more

significant this year," said Palash Saha, Convenor, Mangal Shobhajatra, 1424.

Like the years before, a sale of water-colour paintings by teachers and students of the faculty is already underway. This is a once-in-a year opportunity for art enthusiasts to acquire artworks by prominent artists at reasonable prices.

"Not just watercolours, the fund raiser will also see the sale of masks and other traditional crafts until the eve of Pahela Baishakh," said Saha.

The students are already busy in the making of the crafts for sale and also the large figurines, masks and giant structures that are the key elements of the procession.

In this connection Saha said, "Fourteen large structures will be the hallmark of the event this year, along with countless other props that are widely associated with Bengali culture and traditions."

The Mangal Shobhajatra is the parade of colours which has been the focal point of the cultural celebration on 14 April since 1989, and is possibly second only to the soiree arranged by Chhayanaut at the Ramna Batamul.

The procession highlights the Bengali culture and its universal appeal though myriad motifs and other elements.

By Mannan Mashhur Zarif

LS SUGGESTS

Home Décor for Baishakh

Bidding farewell to the previous year and ushering in the New Year's renewed hope festivities of true grandeur and zeal; Pahela Baishakh is surely hailed with great gusto. A flurry of traditional festivities joins forces with the contagious pomp and vigour to convey an unmatched spirit of Baishakh that escapes no Bengali.

And definitely not a Bengali household.

Waking up with early dawn to make way for frenzied preparations and bring out the starched red and white sari, and panjabi, it is a wonderful beginning to a new day and year ahead.

Replacing the bed sheets and curtains and putting out the plethora of traditional Bengali dishes you are well known for, you are almost ready to host your friends, family and neighbours.

Along with attiring yourself with the customary new clothes, opt for a few tweaks to your home décor as well to revive the nostalgia of Boishakh. It is sure to suffice the inner tradition lovers in all of us and make your humble abode scream a joyous 'Shubho Nobobarsho.'

'The more the merrier' is truer than ever on a festival of splendour and joy. So, inviting loved ones over to share the festive occasion with is the way to go. Decorate the house in subtle ways that will eventually come together to amplify the feel of Baishakh and seal the deal on you being the ideal hostess.

Put away those porcelain vases for the day and switch them out for clay pots made of terracotta and display arrangements of local flowers like the feisty joba, togor, or the fragrant and graceful beli for a real rustic feel.

You can even go the extra mile by getting plain clay pots, different colours and paintbrushes and dedicate a corner to painting clay pots. Adorning these mud vessels with designs and colours can be a good activity for kids and a great way to get everyone involved in the fun.

Additionally, 'Nakshi Kantha' stitched fabrics make great bed covers, pillow cases and cushion covers. If an old nakshi sari is fading away in your wardrobe, all the more reason to recycle them in the form of curtains.

You can even choose to co-ordinate the colours of your décor to match the red and white customary combination and up the ante.

The dinner table steals the spotlight at every family 'dawat' and Baishakh is no exception. All eyes go to the spectacular spread of 'paanta bhaat' (rice soaked in water) fried red chillies and shallots. When supplemented with 'alu bharta' and fried fish, the traditional Bengali platter is complete and heartily relished. However, if served on terracotta plates and bowls with banana leaves as placemats, the true essence of a rural Bengali feast can be revived.

After the hearty consumption, a dose of old-fashioned family gossip around the living room makes way. Instead of chairs and

sofas, lay out a 'shitola paati' which is essentially a large mat woven from cave skin. Rejoice in small talk and stories of the past where villagers in rural areas laid down in floors covered in cool shitola paati's to get relief from the scorching heat. You can also throw in fluffy pillows for added comfort.

When all has been said and done, bring out that round of evening snacks hiding in the kitchen. Let your guests relish in pithas served in traditional koolas which our grandmothers always have handy to filter out impurities from rice and lentils. Serve batasha, narikel chira and morobba, along with desserts in 'pora mati' or burnt earthenware. Even throw in the trivia of it being customary to serve desserts on burnt clay pots as to enhance the taste of the sweets.

As dusk falls, relive the Baishakhi spirit again by substituting table lamps for thick pillar candles and clay candle stands. Bring out a round of tamarind or raw mango sherbet, served in brass glasses, standing tall in a wooden tray lined with shitola paati tray mat.

Besides these, brass utensils can be used, hand-crafted haath pakhas or hand-fans can be fluttered close to the skin to provide relief from the heat and brass nutcrackers to slice betel nut can be borrowed from our grandmothers. Fruits and vegetables fresh and original in this season can be munched on and pickles made of raw mango, and boroi can be served on brass plates.

Items for any of these small tweaks to your regular household can be found in all their glory at Aarong, proud shops at Elephant Road and the humble one-stop shop of New Market.

The clay pots will set you back a mere Tk 150–Tk 300 depending on design and size while the utensils range from Tk 30 for singular packs of coasters to Tk 400 for clay glasses or cup sets. Brass utensils are a bit expensive, however, ranging from Tk 500.

Shitola paati are available at bridal shops and stores in New Market while haath pakhas will be easy to come by at Baishakhi fairs for Tk 15 to Tk 30 and at Aarong for a bit more as they guarantee hand-crafted ones.

However, the Nakshi Kantha easily found at Aarong will set you back a good Tk 6000- Tk 16000 depending on design and size of the fabric.

Behind all the lavish and flamboyant celebrations of Baishakh and beating drums of the morning festivals lies hope - a possibility of a better year ahead. The Baishakh fervour consumes every spirited Bengali and certainly every Bengali household.

By Ramisa Haque

SHOP ONLINE



kaykraft.com



+8801922117421