

HOROSCOPE

**ARIES**
(MAR. 21-APRIL 20)

Help your partner get ahead. Make plans for quality time in advance. Don't spend too much on entertainment. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

**TAURUS**
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Social activity will be promising. Groups will connect you to important individuals. Education may be the answer. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

**GEMINI**
(MAY 22-JUNE 21)

Do some odd jobs around the house. Investments are best left alone this week. Avoid pleasing everyone. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

**CANCER**
(JUNE 22-JULY 22)

Distance yourself from troublesome situations. Don't do anything drastic. Think about your budget before booking a trip. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

**LEO**
(JULY 23-AUG 22)

Sudden changes are apparent. Spend time with your lover. Don't take things for granted. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

**VIRGO**
(AUG. 23-SEPT. 23)

Avoid spending too much. Projects will be successful. Emotional deception will cause problems. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

**LIBRA**
(SEPT. 24-OCT. 23)

Try to curb bad habits. Sift any information thoroughly. Put some trust in others. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**SCORPIO**
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Avoid making hasty decisions. Make money through your creative efforts. Don't let anyone influence you. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

**SAGITTARIUS**
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Changes in your home will be positive. Property investments should payoff. Opportunities for romance are high. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

**CAPRICORN**
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Don't let business disrupt your personal life. Your mood swings will be unpredictable. Unexpected bills will leave you broke. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**AQUARIUS**
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Outbursts may cause arguments with your partner. This is a good week to shop. Make money using your creative talent. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**PISCES**
(FEB. 20-MARCH. 20)

Avoid individuals you are unfamiliar with. Your demeanour will be admired. Avoid blaming your partner for everything. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



QURBANI MUSING

My Billy goat gruff Code two three double o!

“Mr. Hunt, this isn't mission difficult, it's mission impossible. 'Difficult' should be a walk in the park for you”
— Commander Swanbeck

Let's start with a disclaimer before we move any further.

I am not at all against sacrifice. It is a sacred duty bestowed on all well-to-do Muslims and I see many social benefits to be reaped from it, along with obvious spiritual cleansing. However, the blood and gore involved does unnerve me. A little!

Like almost every elder sister in town, I leave all the 'dirty work' to my younger brother — from buying the sacrificial cattle, to taking care of it, the slaughter and the messy, messy 'koshai' (butcher) affair.

This year, however, he was missing in action, and there I was, left alone to battle the predicament of Eid-ul-Azha.

A cow was out of the question, so I resorted to the next obvious choice — a goat. Novice that I am, I felt some research was in order, and social media came to the rescue.

Hours upon hours spent on social media and the only enlightenment I came out with was that a sacrificial animal is way beyond my Eid bonus. Calling my chums did not yield any positive results either. “A nice goat will cost you around seven to eight thousand” was almost the unanimous claim.

I had already taken up the challenge,

and intended to wrap the whole affair within a meagre Tk 2,000. Smirk as you may, I did it, and here I am, recounting my tale.

With zero 'haat' experience, I decided to take my entourage — a.k.a darwan, and the able hand-of-the-queen, a.k.a. Parul, before embarking on the mission. One suggestion that I did heed to, I went in the middle of the night, with only one thing in mind — making best of market manipulation. 'It's gambling' you may say, but hello, with a shoestring 2000, gambling it was!

My initial experience was unsettling. Even as a child playing on the playgrounds of Purana Paltan many summers ago, “Bhai, goru koto holo?” has been my pre-Eid chant. This year, I let the cows go and focused on the goats and the lambs. To my dismay, seven did seem like the bottom-line in current situation.

I held my chin high, and with conviction, was ready to squeeze everything within 2000.

When all fails, Gabtoli is the place to go, or so I was told. The stench hit hard even miles before we reached the proverbial haat. Even as the maverick that I was in my childhood, 'the haat' was something I avoided. But this was Mission Impossible and I was Ethan Hunt.

Resting comfortably in the car with the radio turned on, I was a curious bystander to the events unfolding before my very eyes. Being Eid eve, the haat was bustling with activity, and as it seems prices were going down by the minute. Finally, I saw a ray of hope.

Safely positioned at a distance from the madcaps, the handsome, and the rickety cows walking and often running

down the aisles, I could not help but laugh at the misery of the handlers struggling to steer the animals to safety from the loony bus and truck drivers, and their speedy vehicles.

I was anticipating THE CALL from my aides. Two thousand seemed like a low, low budget, but I had all the hope in my heart.

And then came the call.

“Apa, there is a 'chagi' [female goat] and the owner is asking for 3500,” said Parul. I could sense her level of subdued excitement, least the seller get a hint of it!

Obviously, I had to turn down the offer. My honour, and ego was at stake and it had to be all or nothing.

“Keep searching, my able hand,” was my stern reply.

Minutes turned into hours and still no word. Several telephonic conversations later, Parul grew weary as goats were becoming scarce.

Still not willing to budge an inch, “Haggle!”— I commanded.

I cannot say what followed, but after 15 minutes, I had the sight of Parul and my darwan walking towards the car, like victors in a battle with their war booty — a malnourished, female, black Bengal goat all dressed in coloured paper garlands, all for the glorious grand total of Tk 2300 plus 50 for the appropriate garlands. Seven thousand my foot! I could not wait to see the look on the eyes of the 'seven thousand-er' chums.

Mission 2000 (plus 350, but let's not get bogged down with technicalities shall we). Fait accompli!

By Bleating Mama
Photo: Collected