

HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APRIL 20)

You can make progress professionally. Keep your temper in check at home. Uncertainty regarding your partner may emerge. Your lucky day this week is Saturday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Keep your finances in check. Take care of minor ailments. Sort out your thoughts. Your lucky day this week is Wednesday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUNE 21)

Upgrading is not a bad idea. Counteract the damage that adversaries are about to create. Avoid lending belongings to friends. Your lucky day this week is Monday.



CANCER
(JUNE 22-JULY 22)

Take a hard look at your personal situation. You might be emotional when dealing with your partner. Don't be phony. Your lucky day this week is Friday.



LEO
(JULY 23-AUG 22)

Deception and overindulgence might be a problem. Think things through. Your loved ones could set you off. Your lucky day this week is Monday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEPT. 23)

Pamper yourself. Try to relax. Trying to stay in one spot could be asking too much. Your lucky day this week is Tuesday.



LIBRA
(SEPT. 24-OCT. 23)

You need a change of pace. Competitive games will be your forte. Do something constructive outside. Your lucky day this week is Sunday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Best to stick to yourself. Make changes regarding your status in society. Make financial gains through investments. Your lucky day this week is Saturday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Invest in romance. Try controlling your emotions. Engage in intellectually stimulating conversations. Your lucky day this week is Sunday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Do what's best for the people you love most. You may get some opposition. Personal changes will benefit you. Your lucky day this week is Wednesday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Plan to visit friends. You will face problems with co-workers. Eliminate situations that are no longer to your advantage. Your lucky day this week is Wednesday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MARCH. 20)

Travelling will benefit you mentally. You could be attracting the wrong kind of attention. Don't overspend on your lover. Your lucky day this week is Monday.

LS EDITOR'S NOTE

Simply 'deshi'

Crossing the Meghna Bridge is a hurdle; the Gomti is another feat in itself, but once these obstacles are left behind, you are greeted by the fields full of green paddy and canary yellow mustard, swaying in the mid-morning breeze. It's an overwhelming sight. The early morning fog has just been dissipating and the golden rays from the sun shine over the lush fields in their majestic diagonal slants. It's bliss on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway leading towards Chandina, Cumilla.

The road carries you over bridges and over passes, and under-construction sites, and by-pass alleys and quaint villages. A little short of Cumilla, you take a left turn for Chandina. A narrow muddy lane snakes through tea stalls, 'khadi gaddis' or showrooms, and men playing carom, and takes you right in front of Chintaharan Debnath's front yard.

A small pond layered by moss and weeds; steep bamboo steps make the downward pier, from where, villagers are diving in without fear. Beautiful women, half immersed in the water, are either bathing or washing clothes, and having a quick morning chit-chat in this typical village sight. This, however, is a sideshow to our main purpose of the visit — to see the famous handlooms of Chandina.

This lively pond is the view you get from Chintaharan babu's front yard, and in fact, the pond is separating Ranjit Debnath's homestead from his. These two partners are now two of the few khadi dealers still in business.

His spick and span house is divided into bedrooms, kitchen, the puja ghor and the loom-room. The open space between two rooms is where cotton balls are spun into coarse threads. Sitting in Chintaharan babu's yard, women used to work the charka to spin khadi yarns. But that's in the distant past; now in the empty space sits a lone charka and a thread separator.

His loom-room is also empty, and has a desolate feel to it. As if the dusty looms are trying to scream 'let us weave again.'

The era of power looms has most certainly pushed the

handlooms to near extinction, but a few people like Ranjit Debnath and Chintaharan Debnath are trying to keep the charka spinning for the khadi trade in Bangladesh.

Chintaharan is sceptical about the future, and expresses his disappointment as he walks us through his coconut grove towards Ranjit's house, where yarn is laid for weaving women's shawls. All things that are now used are different, devoid of the rustic feel of khadi.

The hand-spun yarn is replaced by fine mill-spun thread, the combs are replaced by steel rods and weaving rooms without working men. In fact, the entire village is quiet and eerily barren of the clucking sound of weaving.

We are not naysayers of the power looms as they help the ultra-poor earn better wages, but we want handlooms to survive, if not flourish. There is romance in that coarse fabric that speaks equally of revolution and haute couture. The yards coming out of such remote villages definitely deserve the fair-trade patronage, and we as consumers must acknowledge them as exclusive textile and wear them with pride.

Being 'deshi' should be the tagline this year, and in the years to come till we see all our heritage textile producers working in a buoyant market. Perhaps, there is a need for a second Swadeshi Andolon after all.

For more on khadi and loads of other interesting reads that the Star Lifestyle team has so diligently put up for our esteemed readers, please ask your hawker for the 28th The Daily Star Anniversary Special Supplements hitting the stands on 23 February and 24 February.

On a different note, on this 21st February vow to patronise 'deshi' garbs. Happy read!

— RBR

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

