



The Telegraph

calcutta, india



Today's Edition

| Wednesday, December 29, 2004 |

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- [Bengal](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [International](#)
- [Business](#) [Stocks Live](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [At Leisure](#)
- [Crossword](#)
- [Jumble](#)
- [Gallery](#)
- [Horse Racing](#)

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- [Etc](#)
- [Weekend](#)
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Style wrap in winter wows

TIP TO TOE

From heavily-embroidered traditional pieces to casual ones in solid colours — stores around town offer various options in shawls this season, discovers **Zeeshan Jawed**



Now that the chill in the Calcutta air is finally being felt, it's time you flaunted your winter wardrobe to full effect. After all, it's only a few days in the year you get to do so and before you can say 'winter's tale', it'll be time again to shove the woollens back into the cupboard.

While the pullovers and jackets do make the desired impact on formal occasions, it's the universal shawl that comes handy, anytime and anywhere.

Women can pair it with anything from saris and salwars to jeans. The men can team it up in style with ethnic wear for any occasion.

The two-and-a-half-metre drape not only takes care of the fashion factor, it's also just right for the polite Calcutta winter.

Till a few years back, the Kashmiri shawl *wallaahs* who used to drop in with their bundle of warm clothes were the only window of winter opportunity. But things have changed, and how. This year, stores around town have stocked up a huge collection.

The trend in shawl shopping this season shows a tilt towards non-woollen varieties, with silk and *tussar* emerging favourites for occasion wear.

In Calcutta, one doesn't require heavy woollen shawls. The silk and tussar versions are good enough to keep people warm and they are fashionable, too, says Raju Dugar, proprietor of **Gatha**, in Forum.

Casual chic

Drop the teeny-bopper look and display class this winter. Unisex wraps in solid colours can be teamed with any attire, you just have to match the shade with your outfit. While this is the most common variety to hunt down, for some quality stuff you can drop in at Fabindia.

The shawls at the Hindustan Road outlet are sourced from co-operatives in Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal. Pure wool dominates, with limited lines in silk and *tussar*. The colours on offer are bronze, grey, black, maroon and off-white, and the shawls are mostly reversible.

The focus here is on the textures; you won't find any prints or embroidery. These are very light and just right for Calcutta winters, says Pallabi Basu of Fabindia. Some of the varieties available here are *Chomoli*, *Himachali*, *Kungao* and *Chashm-e-bulbul*, named after the kinds of weaves.



Ethnic elegance

If you are gearing up to attend a close friend's wedding, do shop for some traditional drapes. While Pashmina is the ultimate luxury in this range, these days there are many other options available in terms of fabrics.

Twill, *jamevar*, brocade, pure silk, blends of silk and wool and silk and linen look gorgeous and are ideal for special occasions. The heavily-embroidered ones, with traditional Kashmiri motifs and paisleys, are the classics in this segment.

Gatha outlets in Forum and City Centre are good stops for ethnic shawls. We specialise in shawls for occasional wear, at weddings and other special functions. And we even co-ordinate these with the *sherwanis*, says Dugar, of Gatha. The price tag ranges between Rs 1,200 and Rs 20,000.

Men's wear store Orly has a premium range of Pashmina shawls, priced between Rs 8,000 and Rs 15,000. The other line available here is one with a silk and wool blend which comes in vibrant colours. The price range for that is around Rs 4,000-Rs 5,000.

Wool worth

If it's the real thing you want, go for Angora wool shawls available in stores across the city. These come with embroidery and prints and the range is really wide.

Orly has a range of Angora wool shawls with vegetable dyes in colours blue, brown, maroon and black. The prices start from Rs 1,000.

Fashion factor

For those unfazed by the chill factor, a shawl might be too hot to handle. But if you want to flaunt one to up the style quotient, sporting a stole would not be a bad idea.

Stoles are moving the fastest in our store this season. These don't serve the purpose of keeping you warm, but are very fashionable. We have a line of embroidered stoles that are very dressy, says Avinash Jain of Orly.

These come mostly in silks and chiffon. At Gatha, stoles for men are available in different textures like *tanchoi*, tissue and pure silk. *Bandhni* and *leheriya* are the common prints for these. The stoles are priced at Rs 500 onwards.

*Pictures by Rashbehari Das
Models: Priyanka Kohli, Amitabha
Courtesy: Fashion Folk and Orly*



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