

## SPOTLIGHT

# Xmas decor

While Christmas shopping in Bangladesh may not be as much of a rush as those we see in the 'wild west,' paired with the end of year sales and release of winter collections, most stores feature a range of goods to choose from at varying price points, making the shop runs just as excitable.

## FOLK INTERNATIONAL

There are however only just a handful of stores where you can buy Christmas specific products, such as Folk International at House #19, Road #108 of Gulshan. They have everything from embroidered glass coasters for the price of Tk 80, to elaborate quilted wall hangings, which are sure to bring the Christmas vibe home.

Besides these, they have a number of Santa inspired wooden chimes in the colours blue, green and red, and they also have a number of plush soft toys, woollen toys, various streamers, some with knit work and others with strings of miniature Christmas trees and stars attached together, lights and hanging ornaments, table runners, miniature bells, flower wreaths, bags and socks, and decorative pieces of elephant models, and of course, the artificial tree that is decorated as a tradition of getting together and having fun.

## AARONG

This store is a crowd pleaser as they have a wide range of items to choose from, all under one roof. Aarong's candle collection with Christmas tree candles, white angel candles and miniature Christmas flower wreaths in silver and pink are quite the pick. And all of them priced at less than Tk 200. You can find their expansive collection at their outlets.

## JATRA

Other stores such as Jatra on the second floor at 60 Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani is known for their touch of the traditional Bengal in their products, and their handicraft, sourced from local artisans.

## ARANYA

A well-known name in the local handicrafts section is Aranya. Do have a look at their Star streamers that are selling for about Tk 170. It is also present in two locations at House #60 E (1st floor), Kamal Ataturk Avenue, Banani and at House #33, Road #16, Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

## NEW MARKET

Besides these, you may visit the absolute favourite and one-stop shopping experience, New Market. There you can find tinsel streamers, decorative hanging balls, Christmas lights and more, except you will need to haggle over the prices.

## GULSHAN 1 DCC MARKET

You will find a range of items here either for gifts or to add to your own Christmas collection and step up your decoration game. Just look around the many stores there are make your pick.

## IDEAS CRAFTS

For out of the box options this winter, do not forget to check out Ideas Crafts at House #116, #Block-E, Road #11, Banani, Dhaka.

## GIFT SHOPS

The most popular names in this category are Archie's and Hallmark. These two stores never disappoint and Christmas shopping will be no different.

By Ayesha Rahman Chowdhury



# Colours of

# CHRISTMAS

December is an exciting month — long holidays, the not-too-biting chill, and the end of another gruelling year with tonnes of lessons learnt.

Having grown up being exposed to western television channels, I always expected Dhaka to transform itself to welcome Christmas. I felt that there was none

of that,  
at

many prefer not to use natural greens, now opting for artificial ones, the hue is a symbol of the vitality in life.

The colour green is also dominant owing to the use of the evergreen mistletoe, rosemary, and ivy to decorate houses, coming from the idea that these ward off evil and bless the house.

## RED

The colour red is significant because it is associated, not only with the 'paradise apples,' but also with Holly berries whose red colour symbolises Jesus's blood when he was crucified.

And how can we ever forget Santa!

## WHITE

Apart from the reds and greens, white is associated with purity and peace in the western world, and was thus incorporated into Christianity, which flourished in the region. White is also the colour of the mistletoe berries, the plant used as a sign of love and friendship, despite being quite poisonous to human beings!

## BLUE

The colour blue was a late introduction to western traditions and the high price it realised meant that it could only be used for the adornment of the holiest and most sacred symbols of Christianity — the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus.

## GOLD AND SILVER

Traditionally, gold and silver embody the colours of the gifts brought to Jesus by the wise men; the silver being a representation of the star that guided these men. Gold also represents the colour of the sun and fire, each of which bring light and warmth in the dark and cold of winter.

All these colours embody the essence of Christmas, reminding people of the cosy days and the spirit of joy.

By Ayesha Rahman Chowdhury  
Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel

## GREEN

Inspired by the evergreen trees, green is a colour one can easily relate to Christmas. While



least for me, living for the most part of my life in Mohammadpur, and this added to my misery of not having a snowy Christmas!

As I grew up and made friends and learnt about urban geography, rituals and traditions of Bangladesh, I came to accept this absence, albeit with a heavy heart.

Fast forward a couple of years, I realised Christmas celebrations in Dhaka were region specific. The Christian community in Dhaka usually lives in various pockets and these neighbourhoods indeed light up, giving you the Christmas feel.

Although almost all these are novelties in the celebration of a Bengali Christmas, the merriment and the pleasures of a blessed holiday are now popularly observed with colours — red, white, blue, gold, green and silver.