

Finding the glittering gems

There are quite a lot of places around Dhaka City where you can discuss about your zodiac and learn about it in detail. Places like Gems Jewellers & Gems Stone Shop #402, Police Plaza Concord, (3rd Floor), Plot #2, Road #144, Gulshan #1; New al-hasan Jewellers in Gulshan, Rashi Ratno Gemstone in Paltan; Ratno Pathor Diamond Jewellery at Mohammadpur can be some notable spots where you can engrave and make your own jewellery with the birthstones you prefer.

No matter which horoscope you belong to and whichever aura you believe in, there is no greater spirit than the spirit of self-love.

Bengali kirtans

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Upon their visit, the hosts serve them special Christmas dishes, such as pitha, payesh, and so on. After the kirtan is performed, the hosts give the group a donation, mostly in cash, which is usually spent on charity or philanthropic work within the community. Kirtans and pitha are considered essential to Christmas celebrations in Bangladesh.

Other than the kirtans, the most widely sung Bangla songs in the church services in Bangladesh are contained in the book

titled 'Khrishto Sangeet' (Christ Songs), as mentioned by Joyce Das from one of her previous trips to Bangladesh in 2014.

Most of the songs in the book were translated from western Christian songs and come with Bengali folk or Indian semi-classical tunes. Late Priyonath Boiragi was one of these songwriters, whose local Bengali church-songs are popular.

Carols were first sung in Europe thousands of years ago, but these were not Christmas carols. They were pagan songs, sung at the Winter Solstice celebrations as

people danced around stone circles (the word carol originally meant to dance to something). Carols used to be written and sung during all four seasons, but only the tradition of singing them at Christmas has really survived. Saying that, as Christmas is celebrated in Bangladesh with kirtans, the true meaning of the word carol lives on!

By Ayesha Rahman Chowdhury

For a glimpse of Bengali Christmas kirtan performances and customs, you can check out: www.youtube.com/watch?v=F18KMWd0tSo

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