

'I have known the character of Kushum since childhood'

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Celebrated actress Jaya Ahsan has been ruling hearts in Bangladesh and Kolkata for years.

Besides winning the National Film Award in Bangladesh, she has bagged several prestigious awards in India.

Currently, Jaya is shooting for her upcoming film, "Putul Nacher Itikatha", in India.

The film is an adaptation of eminent litterateur Manik Bandyopadhyay's novel of the same name.

Directed by Suman Mukhopadhyay, the film stars Jaya in the role of Kushum, a 23-year-old mysterious woman, who is quirky and inconsistent by nature.

"I read the novel when I was in school, and I fell in love with it" shares the actress. "I have known the character of Kushum since childhood. It feels amazing to play her."

Since "Putul Nacher Itikatha" is a period film, from her get-up to understanding the psyche of her character, Jaya truly underwent a transformation.

"Adaptations of literary works are always challenging, yet exciting. They are not exactly like the books when presented on



PHOTO: COLLECTED FROM JAYA AHSAN'S OFFICIAL FACEBOOK PAGE

screen. The film follows the storyline of the book, but the screenplay is different," she says.

According to her, a good director can always bring out the best in artistes. "I am glad to be working with such a wonderful team," says the actress, who is fully committed to bringing the director's vision for Kushum to life.

The film also stars Parambrata Chattopadhyay and Abir Chatterjee.

50 percent of shooting for "Putul Nacher Itikatha" has been completed. "We have been shooting in a sound environment, at a quick pace," says Jaya. After this project, she will start shooting for "Kalantor-Bongobhonger Biplobi Jug", a film based on the partition of Bengal.

Jaya Ahsan's first look as Kushum in 'Putul Nacher Itikatha'.

PHOTO: COLLECTED FROM INSTAGRAM

Petition to halt 'Gangubai Kathiawadi' release dismissed

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK



The Supreme Court dismissed the petition seeking an injunction on the release of "Gangubai Kathiawadi", yesterday.

The petition was filed by a person who claimed to be Gangubai's adopted son. He sought an injunction against the film's producers, actress Alia Bhatt and authors S Hussain Zaidi and Jane Borges, who wrote the original book on which the director based the film. It will release today in theatres across India.

Mithila's new book now available for pre-order

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Renowned actress Mithila had launched the series, "Ayra ar Maa er Obhijan", highlighting the travels, adventures and friendship that she shares with her daughter, Ayra.

The second instalment to the series, titled "Africay Shingher Khoje", is now available for pre-order from Rokomari, Goofti and ToguMogu.

"I promised myself to release at least one story every book fair", says Mithila, who based it on her safari adventure in Tanzania. "We encountered many wild animals, and this story is about our encounter with a majestic lion".

Published by Light of Hope, the book has been illustrated by

Mohaimenul Rakib Nitol.

"The book is appropriate for kids who are 4-8 years old, and is a great parental read as well," remarks the actress.



COUNTRYWIDE

The legacy of Hajari gur



Production of Hajari gur goes on at the front yard of Ziarat Ali's house in Manikganj's Harirampur upazila.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

SHYKH SERAJ

It was half-past three in the morning when we started for Manikganj a month ago. The vehicle we were travelling was moving slowly as the entire highway to Manikganj was covered with thick fog. You have seen my documentary on Hajari gur, molasses, in 2017. This time I visited Manikganj to see the development in production and market of Hajari gur. Hajari is an asset for the people of Manikganj as it is a legacy carried by locals for centuries. I always thought Hajari gur should be brand-named and former Manikganj municipality mayor Gazi Kamrul Huda Selim took the initiative in this regard.

After five years, I was travelling to Shikderpara in Jhitka, located under Harirampur upazila, to see the current scenario of Hajari gur. It was half-past five when I arrived there and went straight to meet Sohrab Hajari. Sohrab has been involved in producing Hajari molasses for generations. I heard Sohrab's son Mizanur Rahman while he was extracting juice from a date tree. "The juice is not the same as before, probably, due to the climate change," Mizanur said. Unfortunately, the quantity date juice has decreased a lot over the years, he said. There was no time to waste. They started the boiling process as soon as the date juice is poured on the square metal tray. All the family members are involved in making the molasses. They used to boil the juice on earthen pots in the past.

Locals said a few centuries ago,

a man named Hajari Pramanik of Jhitka first made the exceptional molasses. It became so famous, thus, from then on, locals started calling it Hajari gur, molasses. Mizanur's mother Khadija Begum, who was also helping the process, got involved in making the very special Hajari gur since her marriage. She has been doing it restlessly, with utmost care and purity, for more than 50 years now. While talking, Mizanur narrates the technique of making Hajari molasses. After boiling for 25 minutes, the juice reaches a perfect thickness. White Hajari molasses is prepared in the square metal pot with continuous labour.

I had a walk in the locality and found about 20 specific families of the area are engaged in making Hajari molasses. While walking a little further, I met Ziarat Ali, who is known as a big Hajari molasses producer. There are about 400 date trees under his ownership and he is producing the item at a large scale. The prerequisite of quality juice depends on the health of the date tree. After extracting the juice they have to wait for five days to let the tree get prepared. Besides, they need a clean pot and the boiling process has to be handled by a few workers at a time. The tasks include hard work, dedication and caution. If there is a fall in the rhythm of the work process, they won't get the desired and proper Hajari gur. Ziarat produces 20 to 40 kilograms of Hajari gur. After completing the boiling process labourers pour it on

a fresh cloth to give it a shape. The process has been continuing for the past 250 years or more.

With a dedication to protect the purity of Hajari gur, Shamim Hajari is associated with the tradition. He said, "I am the sixth descendant of Hajari Pramanik. I didn't thought about it much, but after watching one of your reports on Hajari gur in 2017, my eyes opened." Shamim Hajari, who is involved in maintaining the purity of Hajari gur, also has a trademark license. Then, I went to Jhitka Bazar, popularly known as Hajari gur market, to see the molasses price. Shamim regularly monitors the market that has specific wholesalers. However, Hajari molasses is more expensive than the other available molasses. And, if one try to sell adulterated molasses, he gets caught in the monitoring process. Hajari gur cannot be compared with other conventional molasses, because efforts for hundreds of years ensure its unique production process. In the age of globalization and urbanization, many traditions of rural Bangladesh are fading away, but Hajari gur has survived due to the sincerity of some tradition-lovers of the remote villages in Manikganj. It is our responsibility to preserve the heritage of Bengal.

Dear readers, traditional Bengali culture became enriched with taste, pleasure and love. I expect, the government, as well as private entrepreneurs, will extend cooperation to preserve the heritage.

Managing

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this case. Proper diet and exercise also help the body use insulin more efficiently, lower blood glucose levels, and may assist in ovulation.

Medication can help the ovaries to ovulate normally. However, these medications may pose certain risks. Consult your physician for proper dose of medication.

Birth control pills also may help control menstrual cycles, lower androgen levels, and reduce acne.

Diabetes medication is often used to lower insulin resistance in PCOS.

One is at risk of being diagnosed with PCOS in case of irregular periods, excessive hair growth, acne, and weight gain. Seeing a doctor for proper diagnosis and treatment is recommended.

Only 18 percent filed for

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politicians, or politically affiliated people, while law enforcers filed a quarter of them.

The total number of people accused in all these cases is 553, and a third of them were journalists.

Parliamentarian Hasanul Huq Inu, who leads the parliamentary standing committee on the information ministry, said DSA must be reformed and the Official Secrecy Act must be scrapped.

He was addressing a press conference organised by SoMaSHte yesterday at Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

These alarming findings were unveiled on the eve of the death anniversary of writer Mushtaq Ahmed, who died in prison last year, after spending 10 months incarcerated and being rejected bail as many

as six times.

When all the powers that be have investigated and called it a "natural death", what's the use of seeking justice?

This is the question Mushtaq's family is left with, today, a year after his death.

The writer's cousin Nafeesur Rahman recently told this correspondent that following his death, the family had decided that it is futile to protest and seek justice in this country.

Following his death, Ahmed Kabir Kishore, a cartoonist who was arrested and incarcerated with Mushtaq, was released on bail. He told everyone that Mushtaq was tortured in custody.

He added that when he and Mushtaq united at the Rab-3 office, Mushtaq was smelling strongly of urine.

"He was electrocuted in the genitals. There were newspapers on the floor and I asked Mushtaq to use those to clean himself. He took off his underwear and threw it away - I saw that it had excrement in it. He had defecated in his trousers from the torture, he told me."

However, the home ministry, jail authorities and Gazipur district administration had all claimed that Mushtaq died of natural causes.

Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolon, at a protest yesterday said Mushtaq was a victim of personal revenge of a businessman who looted a bank but faced no punishment and used law enforcers as his private force.

"We want to know why Mushtaq was denied bail six times." Saki said.



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