



SERIES REVIEW

An astounding interpretation of BANGLA FOLKLORE

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ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

A shakchunni (hag) with twisted feet, a rather jolly djinn looking for sweets in the ebony of night, long strands of loose hair calling upon an entity, and the night-voice calling children from their sleep—this is what Nuhash Humayun's horror web series "Pett Kata Shaw" has in store for its spectators. Re-narrating famous Bangladeshi folklores, Nuhash's "Pett Kata Shaw" comprises of four episodes, each running between 25-35 minutes. Starting with its first episode, "Ei Building e Meye Nished", the Chorki original was slow to take off. Starring Shohel Mondol and Shirin Akter Shela, this episode revolves around the long-known ghost story of how petris (spectres) feel invited when one decides to bring fish home at night.

Shohel's soliloquy, which was supposed to incorporate an essence of light humour in the production, seems off. However, Shela performed brilliantly, making the character believable to her viewers. Nevertheless, the cliff-hanger ending compels the audience to keep waiting for the second episode "Mishir Kichu".

Picking up its pace with the Chanchal Chowdhury and Afzal Hussain starrer

"Mishir Kichu", the anthology series gains back its ground. With Chanchal's brilliance and Afzal Hussain's charm, the story not just echoes the fate expected to suffer by individuals who sneak in favours from djinns, but also puts forward the message—forgetfulness, though often assumed to be a curse, is a bliss.

Matching up to the veterans, Nawshaba also pulls off her scenes with ease, projecting simplicity and naturally toned facial expressions. Paired with a remarkable setting (a very general local sweetshop), an undistorted scene flow, and fit-to-local characterisation, "Mishir Kichu" is a sweet treat for fans of the horror genre.

The third episode, "Loke Bole", pins the strongest hook in the minds of its viewers. Its amazingly crafted narrative style, incorporating the 'lost' culture of puppeteering, is just as delightful as the grandma's *golper ashor* would be to kids. Diving back to old memories, this episode has the potential to travel back in time, teleporting its audience to their childhood when stories had the power to instigate emotions, especially fear, anxiety and thrill.

Despite being his first, Morshed Mishu's performance on screen is a pleasant surprise, while the production's reverse-gender role play looks to deconstruct the

proverb mostly used for women, "Raat E Chul Khule Bahire Jaito Nai" (Don't step out with loose hair at night). Syeda Taslima Hassan Nodi and Pronoy Dab Ucchas compliments Mishu's screen presence radiantly, leaving very little space for criticisms.

After "Loke Bole", the final episode "Nishir Daak", manages to keep up with the expectations. Hallowing the myth behind sleepwalking, Pritom Hasan steals the show, projecting a harmonious depiction of contradicting emotions, such as grief, depression, and curiosity, intensely.

The colour-grading in the series deserves a special mention, especially for the final episode, as it carefully looks to archive the beauty of darkness in layers, paired with fright and anonymity that follows through the bleak blemishes in "Nishir Daak".

The season finale finally ties down all the stories, diluting the line between fiction and reality. As it draws deep into an angle that reinforces the idea of these tales being actually true, "Pett Kata Shaw" leaves the viewer in a dilemma, unable to overcome their own inner voices that scream otherwise.

With the final landing, the whole series is now available for streaming on Chorki, yet another home run on the platform.

Mosharraf Karim's 'Dour' to run on Hoichoi this Eid

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

After garnering wide appreciation for his powerful performance in Hoichoi's "Mohanagar", National Film Award winning actor Mosharraf Karim is set to star in the web series, "Dour", for the streaming platform.

The intriguing trailer of the series shows a mysterious car. "Dour" also stars Intekhab Dinar, Robena Reza, Tariq Anam Khan and Tasnuva Tisha among others. This is the first time that Mosharraf Karim will be sharing screen space with his wife, Robena Reza, in a web series. "Dour" is slated for release on May 2.



Yash Rohan and Tasnia Farin pair up for 'Sorry Amit'

On the fifth day of Eid, Abu Mahmud Hayat directorial tele fiction "Sorry Amit" will air on Deepto Television. The production features Tasnia Farin and Yash Rohan in lead roles.

According to the director, the plot is set in the 80s. "Two people who belong to different religions fall in love with each other, however, when their families learn about their relationship, they create complications and the lovers are driven apart. The title is an apology to one's beloved," he shares.



I have every right to return to my country

Taslima Nasrin

STAR SPECIAL REPORT

Ever so outspoken, ever so controversial – Taslima Nasrin has continued to advocate for free speech over the years, even after she was forced to leave Bangladesh in 1994.

Owing to her thoughts and ideas, the now exiled author is unable to enter both Bangladesh and West Bengal. However, the indomitable spirit continues her brand of activism through pen and paper, and social media.

Hashibur Reza Kallol, Editor of The Daily Star Multimedia, talks to Taslima Nasrin about her past, her thoughts on the state of Bangladesh, and her desire to return, in an exclusive interview – taken at the Press Club of India.

"I can't help but protest against injustice – It feels wrong not to," she says. "28 years ago, I was forced to leave my country. Still, no government in Bangladesh has let me return." Taslima Nasrin asserts that the many wrongdoings, coupled with the lack of free speech and democracy in Bangladesh, has made her a defiant author. "Maybe I will not be able to live in Bangladesh. Maybe I will be killed once I go there. But I have every right to return to my country."

The "Lajja" author comments that even if one person feels inspired or enlightened by her work, she will consider herself successful in her mission to propagate free speech.

She continues to courageously speak up against wars, Hindu-Muslim clashes and attacks on women, among other issues on social media.

"When I started writing in the 70s, I wanted to write beautiful novels about love and nature and the complexities of human relationships," says the author, reminiscing her start in the industry. "However, I could not turn my back on whatever was happening in my country – I feel like it is my job to speak up against bigotry and

oppression," she explains.

"I still enjoy poetry. In the 70s, I wrote a lot of poems. Around 12 to 14 of my poetry books were published before I took to activism," she says, denoting that she has started to write poetry again.

The author is glad to see that many women have picked up the pen to voice out against oppression. "It was not like this before; I was quite alone. As a result, I became the target of unfair treatments and torments. Nobody spoke up the way I did," she explains.

Nasrin was banned from Facebook for one week because of one of her posts, but she asserts that at times, such bans can last for months.

"Facebook used to be the place of expression for people like me, whose books or other works of art have been banned or censored. We could express our opinions freely on the platform. But now, Facebook bans people like us because of reports from bigots, misogynists, and conservatives. This is unfortunate. Where is our place then?" she questions.

"I have not been allowed in my own country for 28 years. What does that tell you? It tells you that this government does not believe in freedom of speech. All governments are against free speech, just like fundamentalists. They try to silence us."

What does the author miss the most about her homeland? "Well, it is certainly not the trees, rivers, or my residence – these are merely material things. I miss the people. I miss my family, my friends."

Taslima Nasrin continues to live defiantly, refusing to keep silent in the face of bigotry: "Where there is any injustice, I protest in my own way through my writing. I am a writer. I don't take to the streets."

Read the unabridged feature online. Keep your eyes on The Daily Star's YouTube channel for the exclusive video interview.



PHOTO: HASHIBUR REZA KALLOL

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