

# Stolen Forests

Photo exhibition at Drik Gallery

KARIM WAHEED

In the last few decades our forest landscapes have changed radically. Apart from the Sundarbans, other major woodlands in the country have faced unplanned and often illegal logging, invasive mass plantation of trees that are not indigenous to the region -- solely for commercial purposes, and other adversities. The once lush highlands of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) are bare today. *Sal* forests, a part of the local identity, are on the verge of becoming extinct.

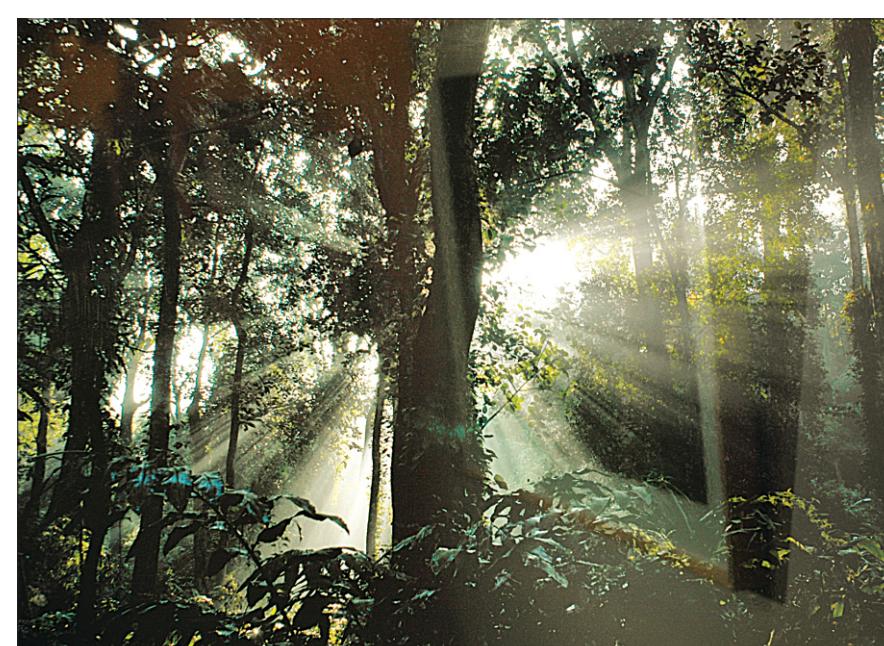
The ongoing photo exhibition titled *Stolen Forests*, organised by Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD), at Drik Gallery highlights what Bangladesh has lost from its unique forest patches. Photographs by Philip Gain and Ronald Halder also reflect the wildlife and lifestyle of the indigenous communities living in the woodlands.

Deforestation is not unique in Bangladesh. But what's happening in our country needs a little explanation. A brochure published by SEHD reads: "The introduction of plantations -- monoculture of teak, rubber, eucalyptus and

acacia -- has horrendous consequences on native forests. In Modhupur, invasive species have made their way into the forestland under the guise of 'social forestry' that is plantation is essence. Here 'social forestry' that was initiated in 1889-90 was preceded by rubber monoculture that destroyed a significant part of the *sal* forests.

"Except for the Sundarbans, monoculture plantations have rapidly expanded in recent times in all forest regions of Bangladesh...We have very disturbing statistics here -- the country's official eighteen percent public forestland has shrunk to approximately six percent that includes the mangrove forests and the plantations.

"In many countries including Bangladesh 'less productive' forestlands are targeted for plantations. However, what is often branded as 'less productive' is actually native forest that has immense social, cultural, traditional, educational, medicinal and environmental value. In Bangladesh while the plantation projects are implemented by the government, they are financed mostly by international financial institutions -- Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank. The promotion of plantation



Photos (top and bottom-right) at the exhibition

economy, officially sanctioned logging, reservation, settlement of Bengalis in the CHT etc are some of the major factors that underlie the destruction of the forests and the misery of the forest-dwelling ethnic minorities."

While Ronald Halder's photos highlight our unique forests and the life forms they support, Philip Gain focuses on how the forests of Bangladesh have been robbed of their native species.

A photo by Gain shows an illegal banana plantation in Modhupur. The area was cleared of all vegetation a few years back. Overuse of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and hormones have had such an impact on the area that it bears no mark of the *sal* forest that it once was. Another image by Gain frames a picturesque Tanchangya village in a remote area in Rangamati. Other photos by Gain feature an elderly Chak woman at Baishari in Naikongchhori, Bandarban (the Chaks are one of the least known and very small ethnic communities in the region); a Mru mother and her child (also taken in Bandarban) and Ringworm shrubs, locally known as 'Dadmarandani' -- a herb used for medicinal purposes (shot in CHT).

An Indian Pied Hornbill in all its glory is the subject of one of Halder's photos. Another image by him features the swamp forests of Tangar Haor that supports a wide variety of aquatic plants including water lilies. A photo, also by Halder, shows dark caves in Bandarban, that are homes to a large population of bats -- an important component of the local ecosystem.

Everyday objects including musical instru-

ments used by the indigenous communities living in the woodlands are on display at the exhibition. Documentaries -- *Our Sal Forest, Stolen Forests, Teardrops of Karnaphuli, The Story of Baikka Beel, Khumi Lives* and more -- on the forestlands and the local ethnic communities, are also being screened at Drik as part of the exhibit.

The exhibition will end on May 24.



Everyday objects including musical instru-

# 'Matir Moina' aired on Turner Classic Movies

*Matir Moina*, the internationally acclaimed film directed by Tareque Masud and produced by Catherine Masud, was aired on May 17th on the US TV channel Turner Classic Movies, as part of a special film series celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the Cannes Film Festival, says a press release.

*Matir Moina* is one of the 10 selected films, being aired on the TV channel as part of the special programme.

Turner Classic Movies (TCM) is known as a broadcaster of old as well as contemporary classic cinema. Other films being aired as part of the series are: Russian filmmaker Mikhail Kalatozov's *The Cranes are Flying* (Palme d'Or winner, 1957), Spanish filmmaker Luis Bunuel's *Viridiana* (Palme d'Or winner, 1961) and Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (Palme d'Or winner, 1966).

*Matir Moina* was the first Bangladeshi film to be screened at Cannes. It was the opening film at the prestigious Directors' Fortnight section and also won the FIPRESCI International Critics' Prize for best film at Cannes in 2002. The film's broadcast on TCM was preceded by a brief programme introducing the director and Bangladeshi history and culture to the American audience.

*Matir Moina* has also been aired by a number of other major interna-



Jayanto Chattopadhyay and Rokeya Prachy in *Matir Moina*

tional TV channels. Last December the film was shown by UK's Channel 4. The film was also aired by the Australian TV channel SBS, as well as TV channels in Canada, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Hungary, Ukraine, Turkey and Singapore.

The following text is from TCM's web-announcement on the broadcast, which contains more detailed information on the film: "In this intimate portrait, Tareque Masud

shows the diversity and complexity of the Bangladeshi life, including its rich folk and religious traditions."

Tareque told the French newspaper *Le Monde* on the film's portrayal of Bangladesh, "This reality has nothing to do with its image abroad -- that of a poor country riddled with famine, flood and fundamentalism. I wanted to convey my own view of my country, that of a moderate Muslim Bangladesh, and to feature its social, cultural and political diversity."



ATN Bangla will air *Meet the Press*, a show featuring conversation between a renowned personality and journalists on contemporary issues, live at 8:30pm tonight. Hosted by noted journalist Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, tonight's show features the Mayor of Dhaka City, Sadeq Hossain Khoka



Musical instruments and other everyday objects used by indigenous communities on display

## CULTURAL FEAST

### Photography Exhibition

**Title:** Stolen Forests  
**Photographer:** Philip Gain and Ronald Halder  
**Venue:** Drik Gallery, House 58, Road 15A, Dhanmondi  
**Date:** May 18-24  
**Time:** 3pm-8pm

### Solo Art Exhibition

**Title:** Anadi Kumar Boiragi's Quest for Self-Entitled  
**Venue:** Gallery Zoom, Alliance Francaise, 26 Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi  
**Date:** May 18-31  
**Time:** 9am-12pm, 5pm-9pm

### Collage Workshop Exhibition

**Title:** Collagekalpa  
**Venue:** Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, House 275/F, Road 27 (old) Dhanmondi  
**Date:** May 20-26  
**Time:** 12pm-8pm

# International recognition for Rafi Haque

### FAYZA HAQ

Rafi Haque's prints are on display at an ongoing Italian print biennale. The exhibit also includes works of 125 artists from 50 countries. Fifteen artists, including Rafi, have been honoured and their solo exhibitions will also be held in Italy.

"Print-making is a media of communication and prints are easier to ship overseas than paintings. In my colour compositions I try to bring in my emotions and memories. I believe these feelings are just not exclusively mine but universal. The theme that I've been working on for a while is our progress since the Liberation War. I have elements of both sorrows and joy combined in my work," he says.

Initially sombre browns used to dominate his work, but now he has taken to more cheerful colours. The spontaneous emotions of grieving for his mother, who he says, was like



A print by Rafi Haque

a "sheltering umbrella" to him, were depicted in his works. Now Rafi's mood is more idyllic and joyous. "I've moved away from depression and despair," says Rafi.

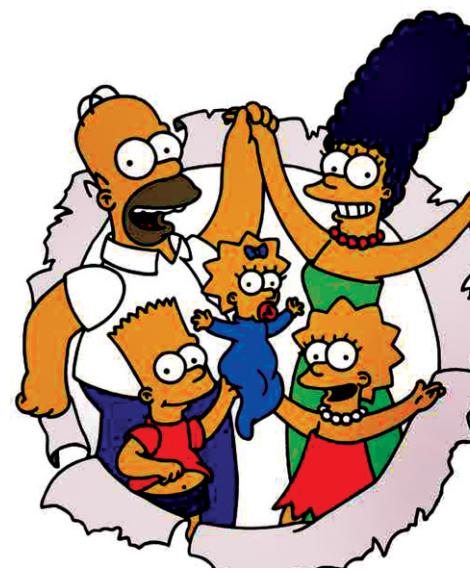
In his recent work *Childhood memories*, the artist has repeatedly brought in the kite motif. "I used to participate in several sports like cricket and football as a child but could never handle kite flying. That childhood craving is apparent in my prints. Apart from that, green fields, ponds and trees are included in my work. When I was a kid, these elements appeared huge to me. I've brought in semi abstract faces of my friends too. My infatuation with a classmate, Shilpi, has been captured in these prints too."

At a Paris triennale, Rafi worked as a commissioner for artists sending their work from Bangladesh. The works at the Paris show were monochrome as they were in dry point.

# 'The Simpsons' celebrates 400th episode

It is the 15-minute doodle that has raked in billions.

Matt Groening drew *The Simpsons* in 15 minutes for *The Tracey Ullman Show* on the then-fledgling Fox network. Twenty years later -- after President George H.W. Bush vilified it, critics hailed it and the industry feted it with



awards -- *The Simpsons* celebrated its milestone 400th episode yesterday.

*The Simpsons Movie* opens July 27, a video game is planned, and Universal Studios Hollywood and Universal Orlando Resort are slated to open Simpsons rides in spring 2008.

This success is far beyond what creator Groening had dared hope. "I thought *The Simpsons* was going to be a hit show," Groening said. "I thought, 'We need to have a prime-time cartoon on the air.' This is what I would have wanted to see on the air when I was a kid."

"That is what I am always thinking on any creative project. My worry was that adults would not give it a chance because it is a cartoon and say, 'Oh, another show for kids.' If I could get adults' attention, then they would like it. I never imagined I would be talking about it 20 years later."

The characters have morphed from their initial harsher look on Ullman's show. Groening continues to work on the show in many capacities. He reflects -- more honestly than most would -- on reaching the 400th episode.

"It's too many episodes," he said and then laughed, realizing no creator should admit such a thing. "I don't see any reason for us to stop," said Groening, "unless there is a feeling we are not having fun anymore."

Source: Internet

## TV GUIDE

### PICK OF THE DAY



**Kobi**  
 On ATN Bangla at 9:35pm  
**Drama Serial**  
**Cast:** Apurbo, Roni

**Kath Koylar Chhobi**  
 On ATN Bangla at 8:00pm  
**Drama Serial**  
**Cast:** Tauquir Ahmed, Bipasha Hayat

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

### News Bulletin

**BTW**  
 News Headlines (Bangla) at 8:55 am; 12:10 pm; 2:00 pm; 3:00 pm; 4:00 pm; 7:00 pm.  
 News (Bangla) at 8:00 am; 1:00 pm; 5:00 pm; 8:00 pm.  
 News (English) at 3:00 pm; 10:00 pm.  
 Late Night News (Bangla and English) 11:30 pm. (To be telecast on all Bangla channels).

### CHANNEL-i

News (Bangla) at 7:15 am; 9:00am, 2:00pm; 7:00pm; 9:00pm, 10:30pm, 12:15am.

### ATN BANGLA

News (Bangla) at 7:00 am; 10:00am; 2:00 pm; 7:00 pm; 10:00 pm; 11pm. News (English) 8:20am; 7:00pm. Latest News (Bangla) at 9:00am; 10:00 am; 11:00 am; 1:00pm; 3:00 pm; 4:00pm; 6:00pm and 8:00pm.

### CHANNEL 1

News (Bangla) at 8:00am; 12:00pm; 2:30pm; 6:30pm; 7:30pm; 10:00pm; 12:30am.

### BANGLAVISION

News (Bangla) at 8:00am; 2:00pm; 6:00pm; 7:15pm; 10:30pm. News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00am; 12:00am; 4:00pm. News Headlines (English) at 8:05pm.

### Rtv

News (Bangla) at 10:15pm. and 12:15am.

### CHANNEL-i

Shongbad Potrey Bangladesh 09:30 09:45 Bishwa Bichitra Shompati 09:15 10:00 Test Cricket: Bangladesh Vs India 05:05 06:10 Amader Mukti Juddho 06:40 07:00 Documentary Programme: Musical Programme: Panchyo Kobi Gaan Protidin Bangladeshi 08:30 08:35 Musical Programme: Talkshow 09:00 10:30 Nazrul Song 09:30

09:45 10:00 09:45 11:05 12:30 01:05 01:30 01:30 01:45 02:40 03:05 03:30 04:00 04:50 05:30 06:00 06:20 06:40 07:50 09:35 09:45 10:25 10:40 10:45 10:50 10:55 11:10 11:40 12:20 12:40 12:45 12:50 12:55 13:10 13:40 14:10 14:40 14:50 15:10 15:40 16:10 16:40 17:10 17:40 18:10 18:40 19:10 19:40 19:50 20:20 20:50 21:20 21:50 22:20 22:50 23:20 23:50 24:20 24:50 25:20 25:50 26:20 26:50 27:20 27:50 28:20 28:50 29:20 29:50 30:20 30:50 31:20 31:50 32:20 32:50 33:20 33:50 34:20 34:50 35:20 35:50 36:20 36:50 37:20 37:50 38:20 38:50 39:20 39:50 40:20 40:50 41:20 41:50 42:20 42:50 43:20 43:50 44:20 44:50 45:20 45:50 46:20 46:50 47:20 47:50 48:20 48:50 49:20 49:50 50:20 50:50 51:20 51:50 52:20 52:50 53:20 53:50 54:20 54:50 55:20 55:50 56:20 56:50 57:20 57:50 58:20 58:50 59:20 59:50 60:20 60:50 61:20 61:50 62:20 62:50 63:20 63:50 64:20 64:50 65:20 65:50 66:20 66:50 67:20 67:50 68:20 68:50 69:20 69:50 70:20 70:50 71:20 71:50 72:20 72:50 73:20 73:50 74:20 74:50 75:20 75:50 76:20 76:50 77:20 77:50 78:20 78:50 79:20 79:50 80:20 80:50 81:20 81:50 82:20 82:50 83:20 83:50 84:20 84:50 85:20 85:50 86:20 86:50 87:20 87:50 88:20 88:50 89:20 89:50