

# The Daily Star WEEKEND MAGAZINE

**T**HIS part of the world, now called Bangladesh, is a land of historic civilisations and cultures. It has the beauty of its own found in its changing seasons, its enchanting flora and fauna, lakes, rivers and forests. There are also the majestic historical buildings and graceful archaeological sites spread over the length and breadth of the country. All this has a unique charm, all of its own, to offer to visitors.

The winter and spring are the ideal seasons of the year for visiting Bangladesh. At this time parts of the countryside are magnificently adorned with breathtaking beauty of mustard fields ablaze with golden yellow blossoms. At places the flora with rainbow hues and the fauna in the Sundarbans or hill districts would surely enchant any visitor.

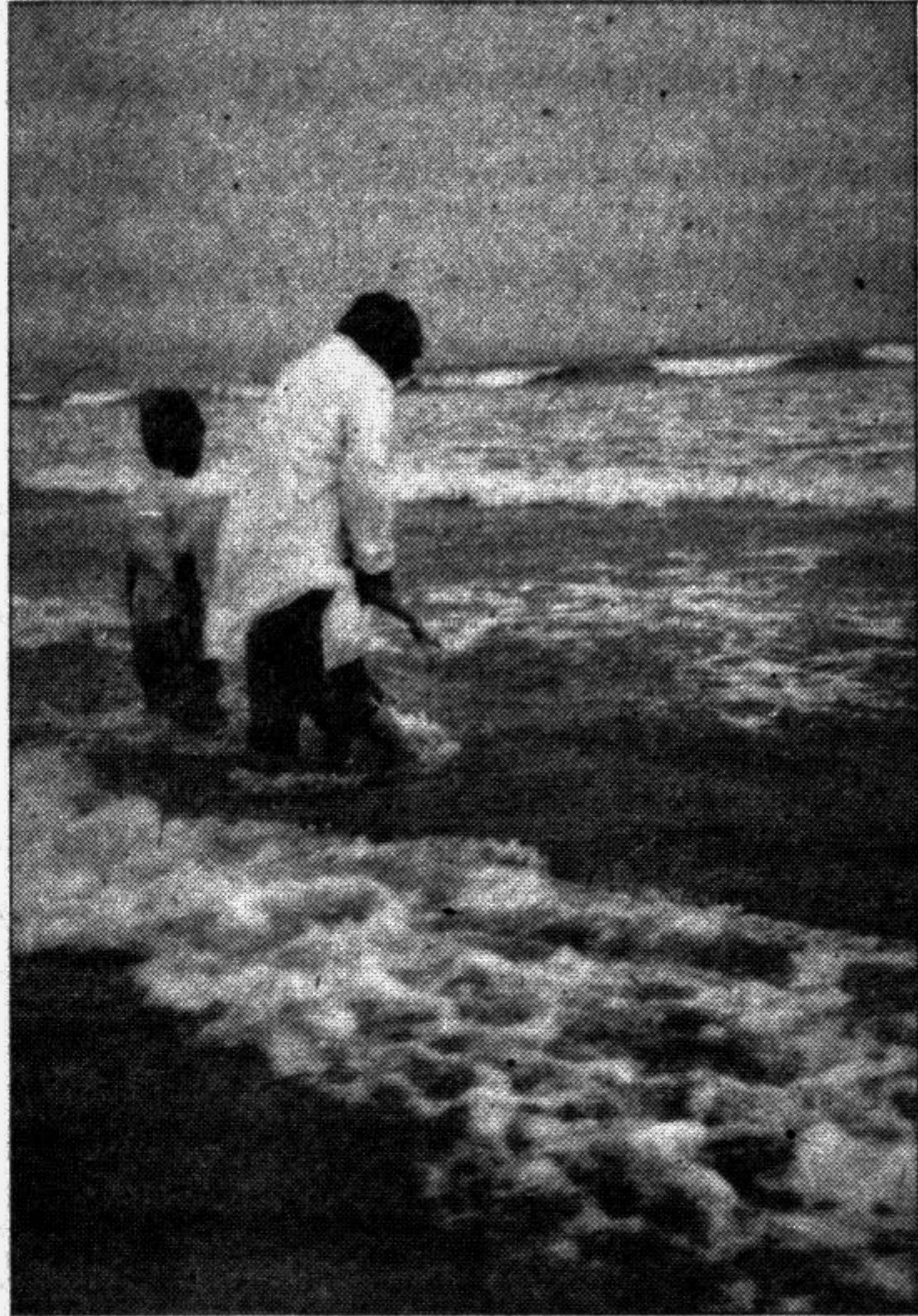
A particularly enchanting spot is Chimbuk in the hill district of Bandarban on the peak of a lofty hill graced with exquisite patches of luscious green frequented by hues of wild flowers. A journey through this virtually garden landscape to the lofty hill and staying overnight to enjoy the panoramic view, inhaling flower-fragrant air or watching tribal dance at night shall be a memorable experience to a tourist. While returning from the high plateau to the dazzling sandy beach of Cox's Bazar, a short journey to the lake Kaptai is worthwhile. A journey through the serpentine road to Kaptai along the river Karnaphuli flowing majestically between the cliffs of natural forest is worth enjoying. A cruise across the man made vast Kaptai lake dotted with small green hills in the middle, and where also its nature's glory all abound, is one of the greatest pleasure a tourist must derive. On way back, a short while after lake Kaptai, one comes across another spectacular site — an old Buddhist temple built entirely of hard wood is perched on the side of a cliff overlooking the splendid natural forest and blue waters of the gently flowing Karnaphuli.

The silver line of sandy beaches at Cox's Bazar is magnificently adorned with green trees along the coast. One can drive mile after mile along the beach and enjoy the scenic beauty of the green hills on one side and the coast line on

## TOURISM IN BANGLADESH

# Season to Come to Sites of Joy

by GMF Abdur Rob



Cox's Bazar beach

the other. The setting sun on the horizon majestically dipping into the blue of the sea is simply enchanting to any visitor. It's an ideal site for both the sun-bathers and sea-bathers. One can bath and swim with the dancing waves breaking the surf into the clear water in the appropriate winter warmth. And can idly relax on the golden sandy beach fringed by the swaying trees with supple branches that abound only few yards from the beach.

Further down thirty miles

from the bordering town of Teknaf, in the midst of the sea is the coral island of St Martin with exquisite patches of nature's bounty of lush green trees mingling all around with sandy layout of the beach. The panorama of nature in the middle of the Bay of Bengal gives a tourist a feeling of joy the moment he catches a glimpse of the island from the boat.

Having enough of sun bath in the sandy beaches, the environmentalist and nature lover would certainly enjoy an en-

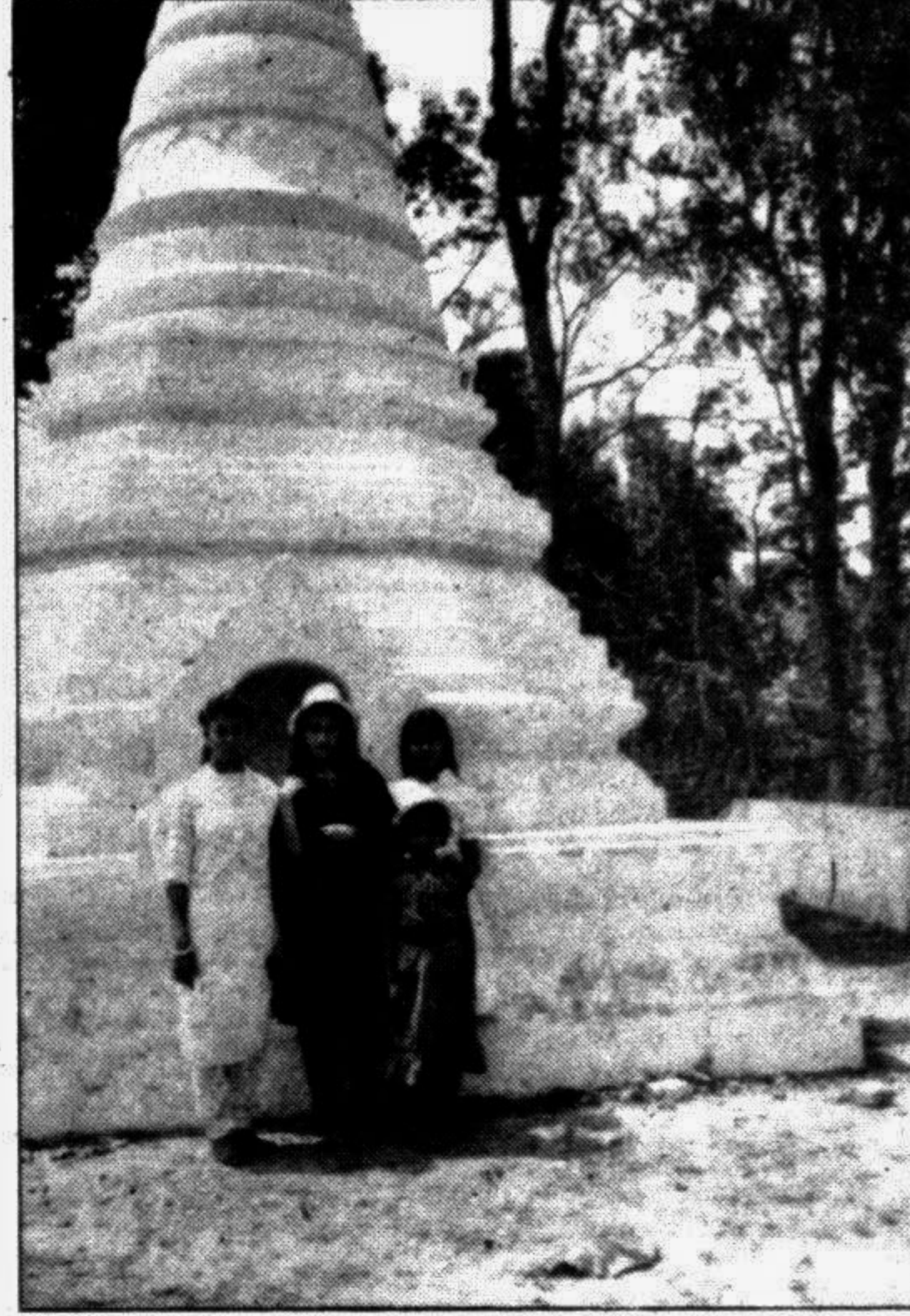


Madhabkunda waterfalls

chanting boat ride in the river along Sundarban. The tourists can indulge in their passion for endless shots with their cameras — of crocodiles, sambar and spotted deer, leopard and the dwellers of the mangrove forest, not found elsewhere. And if the star favours one may come across the Royal Bengal Tigers wandering majestically the moment to remember forever. An overnight stay in the forest bungalow will be a memorable experience of 'wild' life watching in the moonlit night.

A journey to a high plateau

for cool refreshing air and a taste of fresh aroma of tea in the tea valleys of Sylhet and Sreemangal will be another lasting memory worth recollecting ever afterwards. A tourist shall certainly enjoy the endless beauty of the tea plantations on the small hills. The beds of budding the fresh green leaves awakened from their winter dressing appear as if a lush green carpet spread over those hills. A foreign tourist may have the warmth of hospitality from the garden managers inviting to stay at



Buddhist monastery

night to enjoy the graceful Khasia, Monipuri or local Coolie dance. From the porch of a hill top bungalow, sipping from the cup of aromatic garden fresh tea, a tourist would surely enjoy the serene beauty of moonlit night that form a splendid backdrop to the delightfully landscaped garden. An unforgettable experience one may carry in memory to tell his/her friends and relations.

Not far away from the tea volleys of Sreemongal a tourist will find a bewitching waterfall

at Madhabkunda in the district of Moulvibazar. Falling unimpeded from high above the hill it will surely provide a tourist with a different feeling of ecstasy to last long after he is back home.

The curious lovers of history and archeology will find interest in the rich heritage and diverse historical past — in the inviting archaeological sites that spread over the whole country. The fort of the Mughal Subedar of Bengal at Lalbagh in the heart of the capital city speaks of the magnifi-

cent architecture and history preserved through centuries. From the majestic gate of the fort one can wonder around on his own down the alleys and buildings, passing in to examine the historical relics and ornate walls of the monumental buildings. And from the din and bustle of the city, a few miles from the capital stands the glorious capital Sonargaon built in the golden days of Bengal in the 13th century by the Deva dynasty. With the passage of time, at one phase it became the seat of Mughal sultanate of Bengal. The graceful architecture of the buildings standing down the alleys no longer shines, the ornate walls no longer glitter and the hoofs of horses no longer tread there ... But the vibrant remains bear eloquent testimony of the pomp and grandeur of the sultanate of Bengal. A tourist's passion will be filled with leisurely wandering about through those buildings and examining relics of the historic past preserved in the Museum. Besides, a visit to the folklore arts and culture presented in the delightfully decorative thatched houses by the gentle lake side is no less worth carrying home a memory.

The lovers of archeology and history will again be enchanted by the beautiful archaeological site dating back to 8th century AD on the outskirts of Comilla. The ruins speak of the culture, quest for knowledge and devotion to study of the students at the Buddhist monastery that remained buried into oblivion till the excavation of the site. Adjacent to the archaeological site stands the magnificent building of the museum with rich and varied collection of copper plates, gold and silver coins, bronze statues and other objects of historical interest that date back to 8th-12th century.

Away in the extreme north of the country stands the 7th century archaeological finds at Paharpur, south of Himalayas in the district of Rajshahi. The magnificent monastery covers an area of twentyseven acres with elaborate majestic gateway complex. The museum at the site is filled with antiquities — exciting objects from statues to coins and inscriptions recovered from the excavation site. And not far from

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## Intrinsic Beauty of Objects Perceived through the Lens

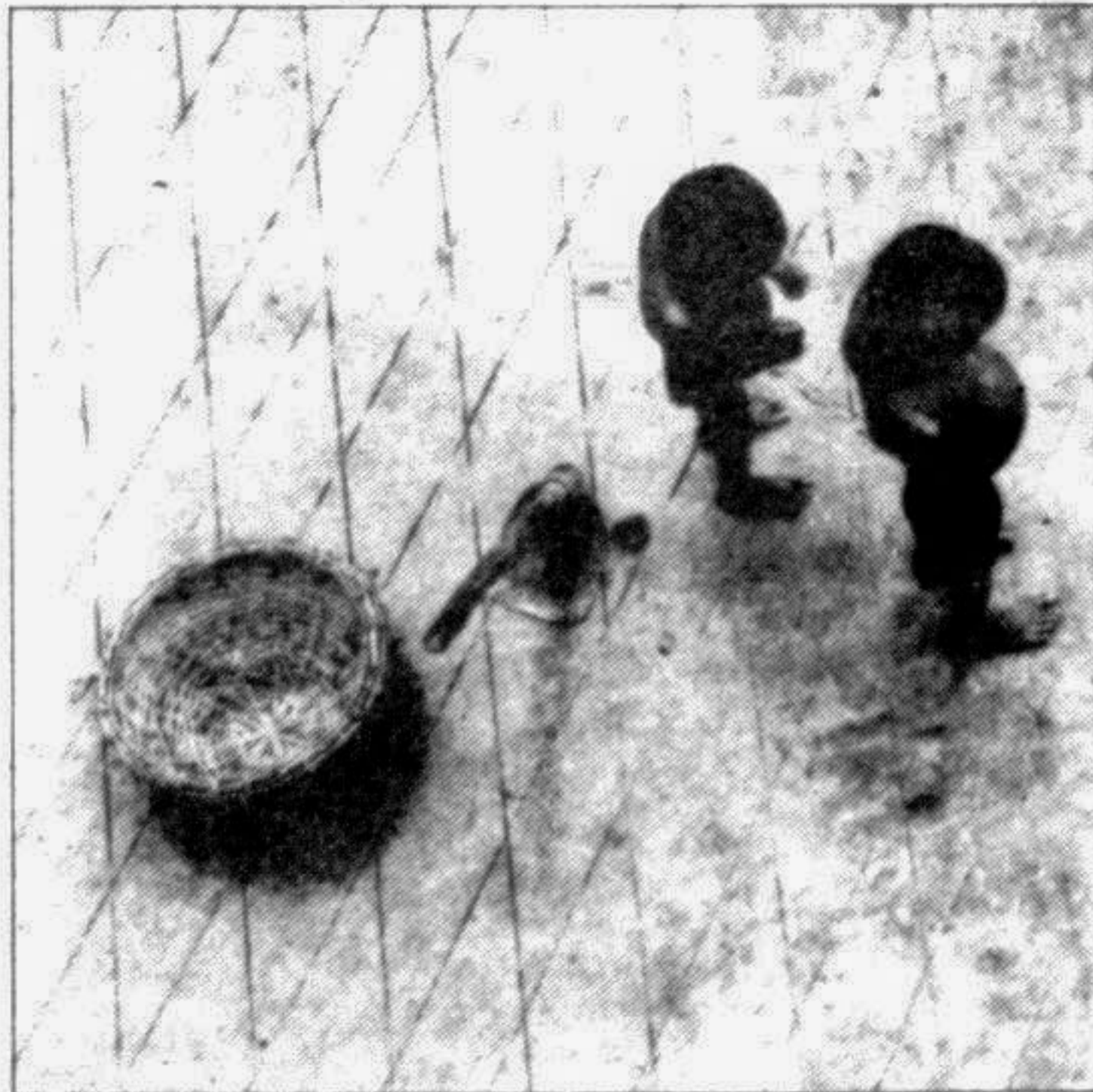
**I**T is truly bewitching — his domain. When you step into his world you experience a spell you don't want to break. It is as if you've walked straight into that little heaven (on earth) you have been seeking for ages. Especially when Mozart, in the background carries you to his harmonious world of striking beauty and gorgeous colour, you are most certainly and almost unconsciously pulled into his intricate web of superb imagination. His camera and his ideas, mixed with his extraordinary zeal for life and youth, by dint of his passion, makes a potion that without fail brings out a romantic in

incites in you.

'Charu Patra' — the 20 minute television programme, on his still shots and moving shots, broadcast on March 23, 1971, very effectively pioneered the idea of an independent Bangladesh. His 'Action Bangladesh' slide show, on the then ongoing liberation war, helped the West recognise his land.

The ideas brought to life in his photograph have a tremendous impact on people and make them restless as if they have to do something worthwhile in response to his thought provoking calls. His first photography album published in '74 was the outcome

by Raffat Binte Rashid



since his school days in Manikganj, and high school years in Calcutta. Monthlies like *Haicha*, *Nutan* and *Shahitya* published his short stories in the fifties and late forties.

But an important turning point in his photographic career came in the year 1958, when he was completing his thesis for his Ph.D degree,

which he obtained in 1960 from the University of Wisconsin.

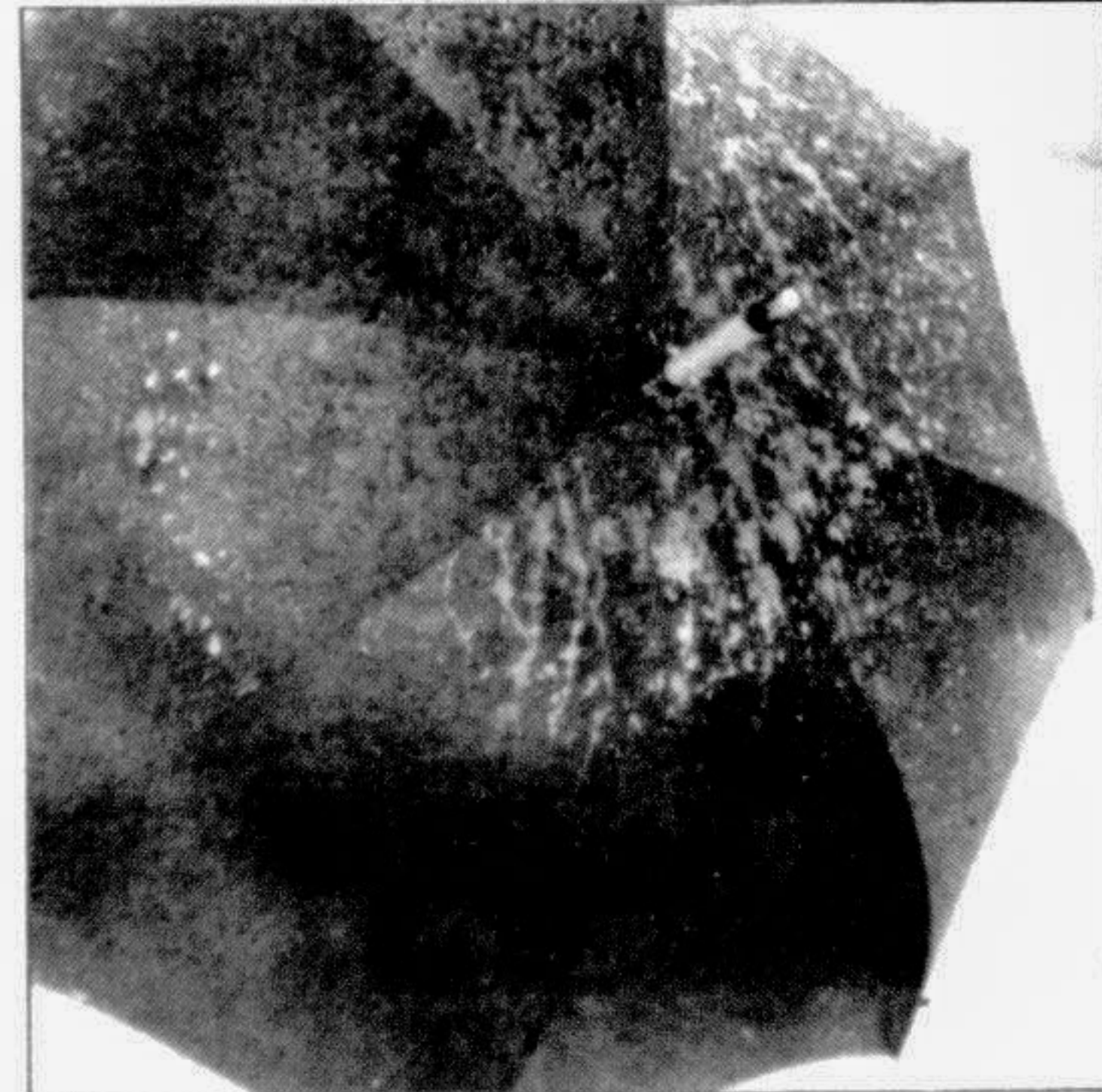
An exhibition called 'Portrait of America' was arranged where 10 Americans and 10 foreigners were selected to participate and I was the only student participant," he recalls proudly and nostalgically, adding "My picture was

displayed at the Museum of Modern Art, and I automatically became its member. It was at the reception of this event that I met President Eisenhower at the White House."

When he came back, a young 26-year-old doctorate in plant genetics, he joined the Duncan Brothers as a scientific advisor and researcher.

It was here that his knack for photography helped his work immensely. Both in training and communication, his scientific photography worked as his documentation and became an asset. He advised both in India and Pakistan on the quality of tea. This zealous Dr

the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok. It was here in '86 that he started his massive work on the life of monks, a mystical compilation of the spiritual lifestyles of monks in Laos, Kampuchea, Thailand, Burma, India, and Bangladesh. This album which he calls 'Gautama' is still in the press and will be published by Singapore Time Group. "The work I do is at the same time hazardous and adventurous which is why I like it. I stayed about five months in Buddhist temples in Thailand and other countries," he explains his urge to see and feel for himself what he quotes with his lens, the results of which are these



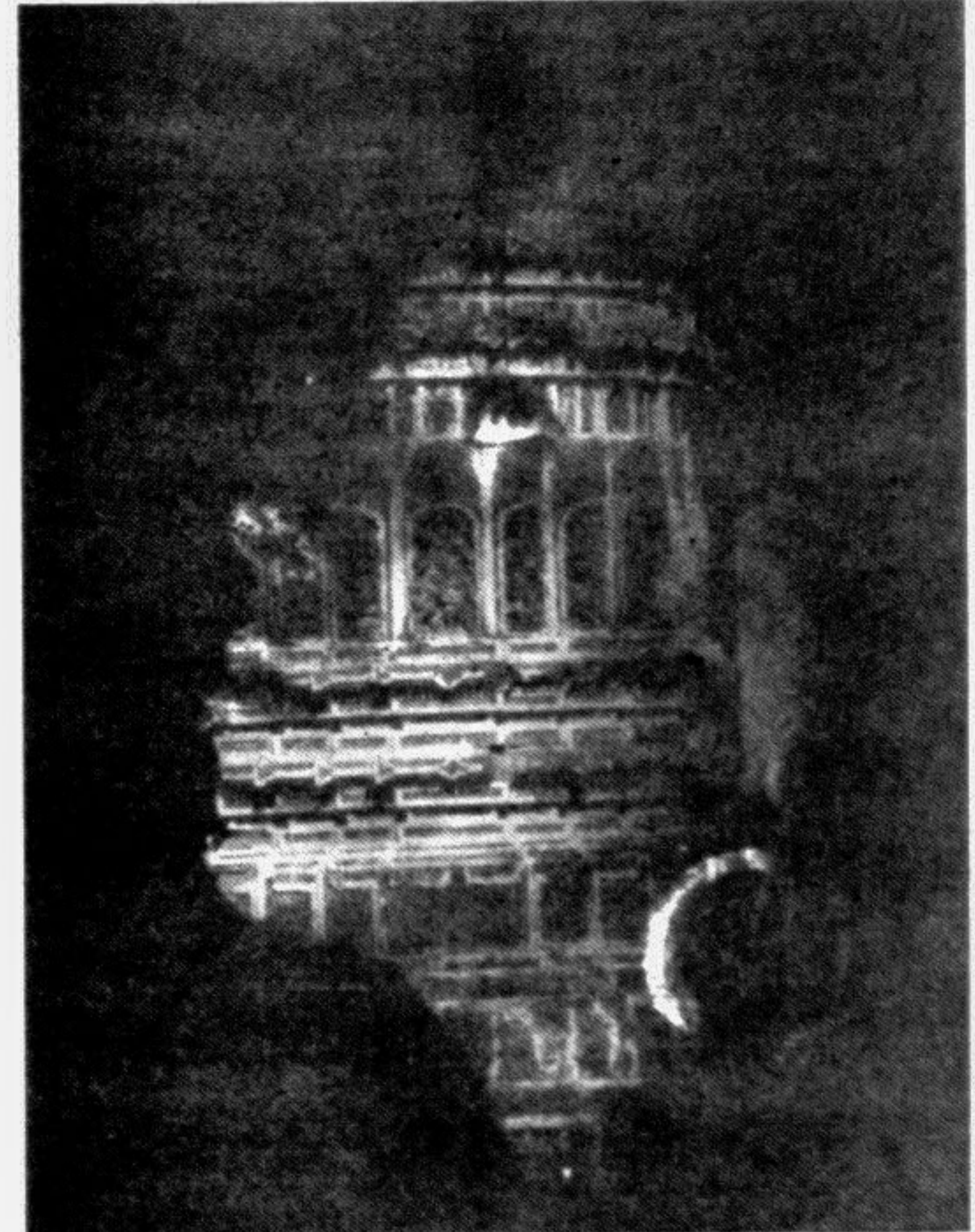
Cha Cha Cha as he was nicknamed then, for his famous Cha Cha Cha, Samba dances, was also a member secretary of the then Pakistan tea board.

"After '71, I was offered the position of chairman of the Bangladesh Tea Board. I didn't want to become a bureaucrat overnight, so joined the World Bank (WB) for three years as a consultant," he continues "I did consultancy for WB, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and FAO." At present he is a freelance senior Agriculture Consultant to FAO, working in South and South East Asia.

This adventurist who has visited almost three-fourth of the globe, was also a teacher at

priceless works. He stayed on boats for weeks on the river Mekong to capture the beautiful turns it takes, the twists it makes, he compiled these exclusive shots, at dusk, dawn or twilight, for yet another series called 'The Mighty Mekong'.

Among his ongoing works are 'Mahavanaspati Padaboli' — the story of a banyan tree which, over past three years he has been developing. His work is never monotonous, neither is he bored with nature. The themes and motifs are around especially when nature is the main feature of his art work. It never fails to surprise him and the tempta-



tion lingers on, for years at a stretch. 'Wild flowers of Bangladesh,' a photographic cum scientific investigation of his, is another series of works, still in the reels.

Noazesh Ahmed has to his credit a total of seven books (technical) and two albums (till now) and thousands of hypnotic snapshots. 'Observer's Sunday Magazine' always used my photographs on their cover story and during those times they even bought out five colour pictures," he says. Bangkok Post ran Sunday specials on his Gautama and Mekong series. Moreover, he was the photographer assigned for three books on Burma, Laos and Nepal published by Time Group from Singapore, besides his contributions to National Geographic and many exhibition so.

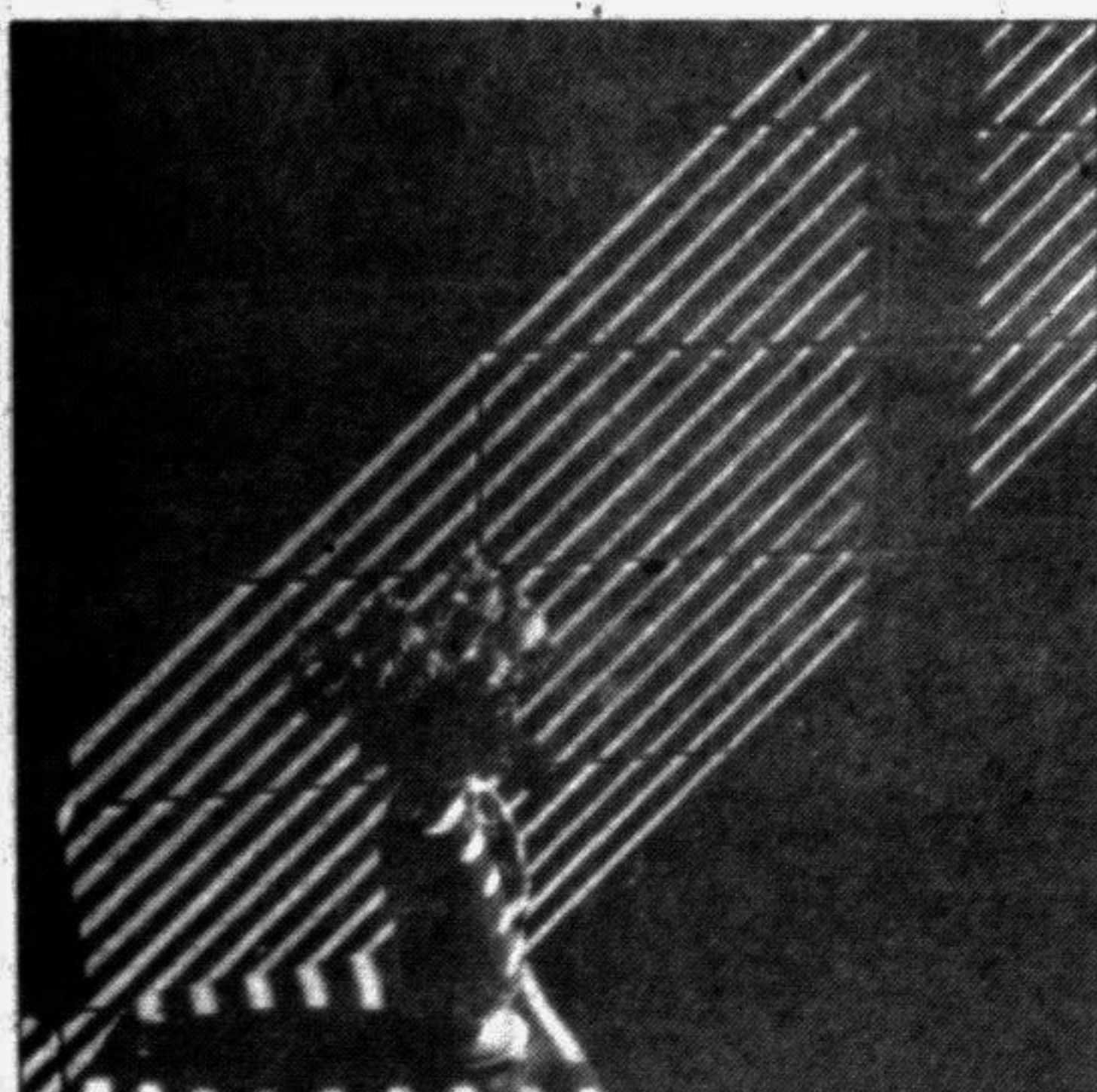
"For my work and also for my irresistible urge for adventure I have visited quite a number of countries to me Laos seems genuinely romantic, but still *amar desh* is rich and colourful," he talks about his own land, though in a sad tone.

"Because of the lack of political commitments and policies the country is getting

worse day by day. Religious revivalism strikes me very much, Bangladesh with such a high density of population and minimum natural resources will remain poor for a long time. But with proper planning we could at best ensure slightly better food, clothing and shelter for all the citizens and close the gap between the have and have-nots," he suggests.

Noazesh Ahmed who craves perfection, loves light and shade works and double exposed fossilised expressions. His numerous works in this line has mesmerising effects. A connoisseur of music, paintings and literature, he delicately brings out the artistic essence in all his themes.

A face behind leaves — a very simple subject — through his masterful touch holds you still until you remember *Pakhr Nirer Moto Chok*. This man seems to be someone out of the ordinary. His rich yet simple taste is displayed in almost every aspect about him. He makes music in whatever he does and his works are like poems you want to read over and over again. A magnetic tug pulls you to his unique form of beauty and creation.



you, a longing for everything perfect and beautiful. A simple grassflower — never really noticed until his lens discovers that passionate mauve, becomes a flower you wish you gave your beloved. A mundane face, under his vision, becomes exactly like the poet described — *Mukhtar sra-bosteer karukarjo*.

Noazesh Ahmed, the famous freelance photographer or Dr Noazesh Ahmed a plant geneticist whichever identity you give him, he will forever be the epitome of vitality, youth and love, and forever represent perfection. It is very hard to forget his work — and overlook the passion, the excitement it

of his promise to himself — to show the world how his beloved motherland differed from its neighbours or any other country on earth. Portrait of Bangladesh's his second such breathtaking photography album is only milestone in his long career as a freelance photographer.

"I am a nature lover and fond of total harmony in all living beings. My photographic inspiration comes out of these creative components and basically from the drama and harmony of nature, environment," says Noazesh Ahmed.

Ahmed, who was a member of *Mukul Fauj*, was interested in photography and writing