

Reaching for Relief

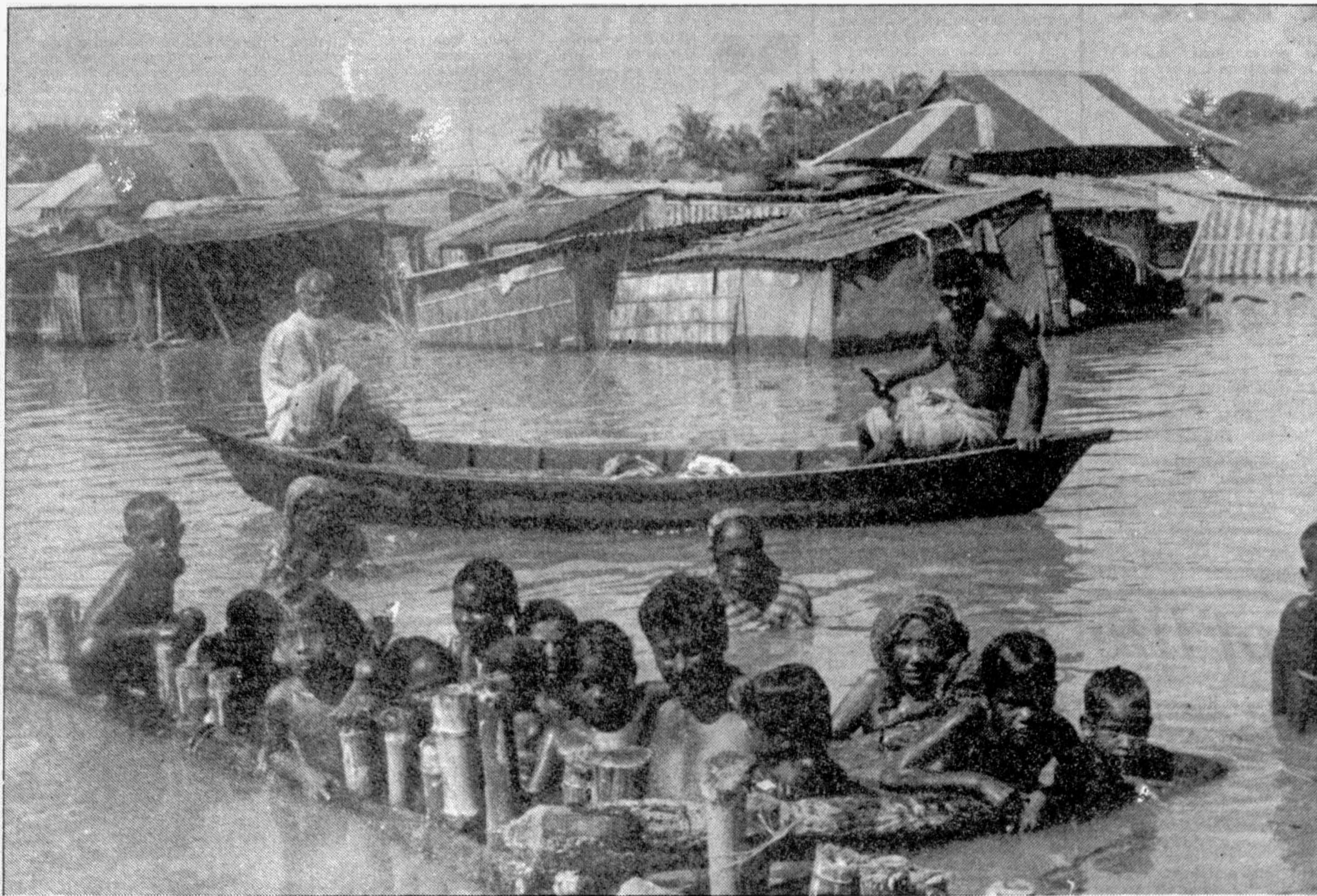
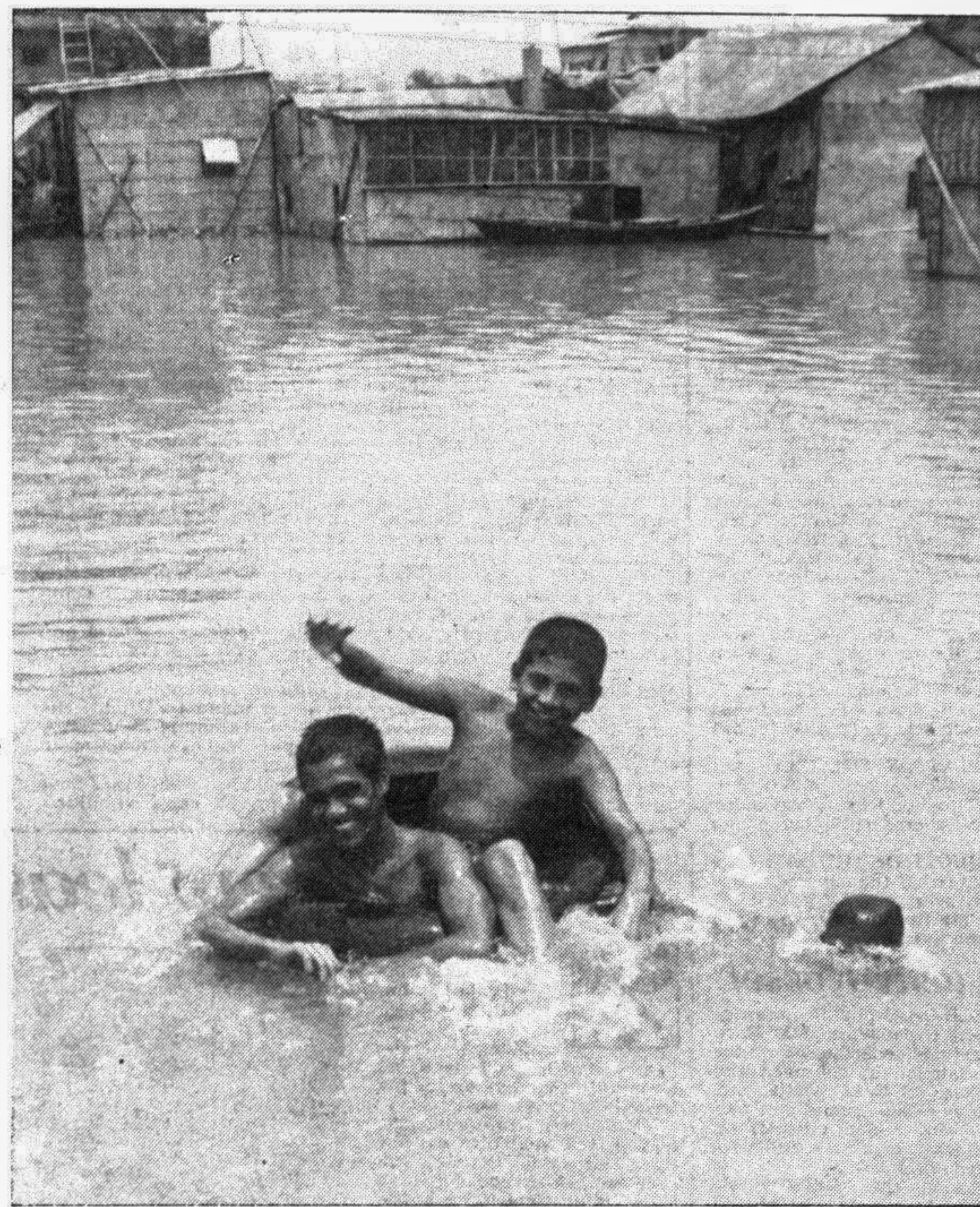


PHOTO FEATURE ON FLOOD
by AKM Mohsin



A young girl covered in black is reciting the holy Quran. With the dark background the lighted view of her face and the holy book is just fascinating. Her face is glowing along with the Quran. This effect visualises the pious beauty, the mental peace and satisfaction of the girl. The serene image of religion is expressed through the glowing effect of the holy book.

To catch all this in a photograph demands an expert's vision and hand. Late Manzoor Alam Beg was that kind of an expert.

Manzoor Alam Beg, better known as M A Beg, who recently died of cancer, is undoubtedly the pioneer of photographic institution in Bangladesh. When we talk about photography M A Beg deserves the highest recognition. He was at the same time a photographer, teacher, writer and organiser. It is his individual effort which took photography of this country to a respectable plane.

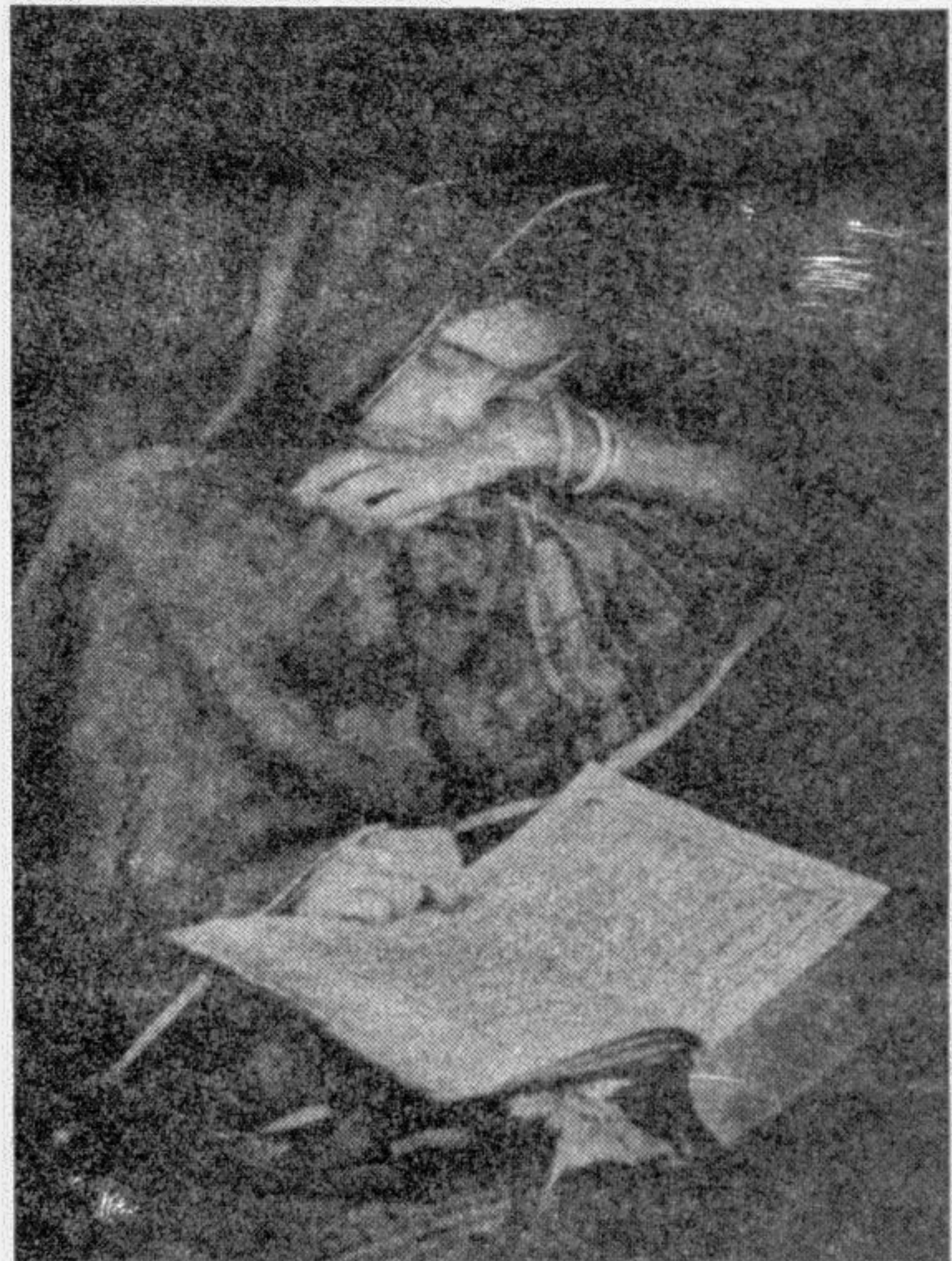
Born in 1931, M A Beg passed SSC (then Matric) examination in 1947. Being whimsical in nature, it took him 25 years to pass HSC examination. He left home with 17 taka (then rupee) in his pocket and struggling throughout his life reached the present standing. In 1949 he joined Pakistan Air Force. At first there he took training on instrumentation. But as he didn't find interest in that subject, he started falling intentionally. He was then shifted to photography. From then he never had to look back. In 1957 he took training on micro-filming in Karachi. In 1968, under British government's scholarship, he took training on Document Reproduction at National Reprographic Centre for Documentation, Hatfield College of Technology in England. M A Beg is the first qualified reprographer of Bangladesh. He got diploma in photography from the British Institute of Incorporated Photographers in 1974. In 1976 he asked for Associate Membership of the Institute of Reprographic Technology, UK. But judging his qualification he was awarded Full Membership MIRT, which is equivalent to MIE awarded by Engineers' Institute.

In 1955, M A Beg joined Pakistan Armed Forces as an employee, where at different air headquarters and stations he worked on still, movie and aerial photography. As a full time employee he worked in USIS, Dhaka and Mysensing from 1955-57. FANSDOC (National Documentation Centre) Karachi, from 1957-60, as head of Reprographic Division BANSDOC under the Ministry of Science and Technology, 1963-68. As a part-time employee he worked as resource personnel at the Audio-Visual Training Institute of the Government Teachers' Training College, 1963-66; as a teacher of Photography and Graphic Arts at the Department of Architecture in BUET, 1977-79; as medical photo consultant at BIR-

DEM etc.

In his own Begart Institute of Photography Mr Beg had worked from 1960-87 as part-time and from 1988 till the last day of his life as full time principal.

As there was no training centre or institution here to promote photography academically, in the year 1960 Mr beg founded the first photographic training centre in the country (then East Pakistan), named Begart Institute of Photography (BIP) which is still operating very successfully. From this training centre so far around 7000 students have received



Untitled

training. Most of the present day government and private photo departments of Bangladesh are headed by BIP finalists, such as, BTV, BARC, BANSDOC, BPC, CIRDAP, BIRDEM, ICDDR, the Janakantha, the Ittefaq etc. Most of the reputed photographers of Bangladesh like Bijon Sarker (BPC), Mizanur Rahman (BANSDOC), Anwar Hossain, H Saifuddin Chandan, Golam Mustafa (BTV), Almazee and many more have BIP background. Begart Institute initiated to organise photo associations in Bangladesh through its students. Some of these are Bangladesh Photographic Soci-

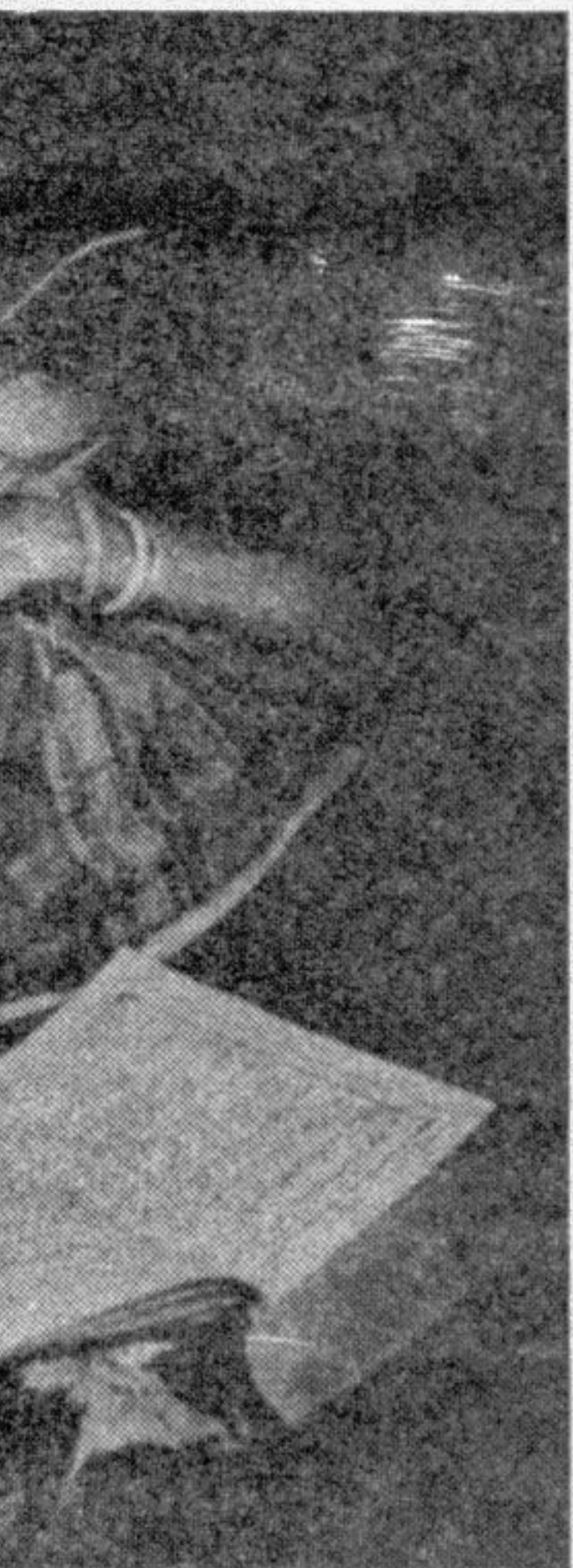
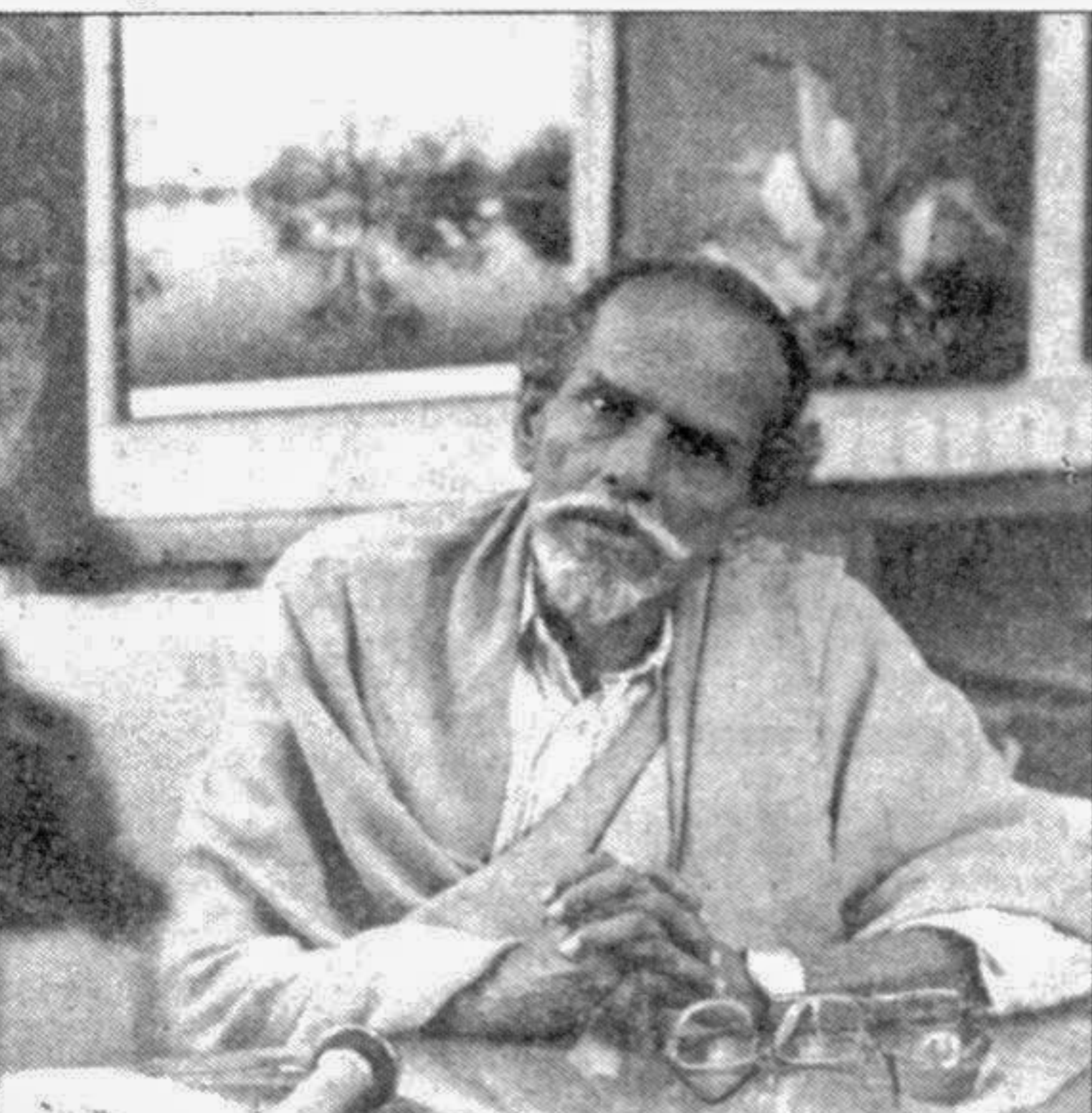


Photo by M A Beg

ety. Brahmanbaria Photographic Society, Rajshahi Photographic Society, and so on. This training centre has a small photo library and photo documentation cell, which preserves the Bangladesh photo/history documents. Some research works have also been carried out at BIP, like multi/ 4-colour printing with B&W enlarger using new process of filtration and emergency film developing for the photo journalists.

As the founder-convenor of Bangladesh Photographic Society (BPS), M A Beg patronised to build the society in its first ten years providing BPS the ac-



M A Beg in his studio

commodation and secretarial staff including the expenditure etc. BPS got the membership of the International Photographic Federation (FIAP) in 1982, as a result of tremendous effort by Mr Beg.

As there was no post for photographers under the government in the officer cadre, it was M A Beg who helped to raise the status of the photographers to the level of Associate Professor.

Another pioneer in Bangladesh photography Golam Kashem "Daddy" (also deceased) towards M A Beg. It was Mr Beg who named Golam Kashem as "Daddy" with which he is mostly known. He regarded Golam Kashem as the daddy of Bangladeshi photographers. It is Daddy's Camera Recreation Club which is the lying-in room of Bangladesh photography. In this Camera Recreation Club along with "Daddy", M A Beg, Golam Mustafa, Bijon Sarker among other photographers, got organised and in 1976 founded BPS - Bangladesh Photographic Society which is now the mother society of photography in Bangladesh.

As a writer Mr Beg's contribution towards photography is also immense. His "Adhunik Photography" - a photography manual - is the first one written in Bengali which is still the only acknowledged comprehensive photography book in this language both in Bangladesh and West Bengal. His other publications on photography are - Photography Formula, Photography Digest, Rangin Photo Printing, Microfilm Ki-O-Kano,

Alokchitra Sada-Kalo-O-Rangin and Dark Room Solution. With his photography there have been published several photobooks like Handicrafts of Bangladesh, Rural Bangladesh etc. He also has written a book of poetry titled "Hoaber Kobita" and a philosophical book "Sroshtar Saathe Songlap". As a photographer Mr Beg received over 200 hundred awards from home and abroad. In 1982 he was honoured with FPAD in India. This highest honour in photography, an honorary fellowship, was awarded to Mr Beg as he was considered one of the best eleven photographers in the world for that year. He was also honoured with FBPS (Bangladesh) - highest honour



Photo by M A Beg

of the Bangladesh Photographic Society - Cine-Seek Padak '86, WIF Life Time Membership, ASIIPC (India) '91, Ekushe Padak by Chittagong Photographic Society in 1996, and so on. He was chosen member of the jury board in several photographic contests like 1st and 2nd SAARC photo contest '85/'87, International Photo Contest in 1988, and couple of others. On July 9, 1998, few days before his death, Bangladesh Photographic Society (BPS) conferred him the "Alokchitracharjo" honour for his life time contribution in photography.

Though M A Beg named BIP as Begart Institute, to him photography was not an art but science - "a science of obtaining images on chemically prepared surface with the help of electro magnetic waves. His field of interest was black and white, more than colour. He always tried to avoid arranged photography or using models which made his photographs very simple and mostly above criticism and at the same time extremely creative and artistic.

This devoted photographer had sacrificed his entire life for the cause of photography and created thousands of talented photographers throughout his life. This talent has also been inherited by his two sons. His elder son Itikhar Alam Beg who was a videographer of World View Foundation, died in a road accident in 1986. His second son Imtiaz Alam Beg, also a promising photographer, now looks after BIP.

Though it is M A Beg's tremendous contribution which took photography of this country to an international standard, unfortunately he never was honoured or awarded nationally. Being very solitary and introvert in nature he never craved for publicity or fame. His only devotion was photography and he believed that any devoted man should not be disturbed. Alokchitra Manzoor Alam Beg through his life-long devotion thus acted instrumental in promoting photography in Bangladesh.

M A Beg : A Tribute Saint of a Man in Photography

by Sonia Kristy

IT Fever Catches on in Indian States

THE Information Technology (IT) bug is catching on in India. Taking the cue from their computer-savvy counterpart in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, the chief ministers of two more Indian states have recognised IT's potential to generate income and streamline administration. While Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi of Tamil Nadu in the south is set to project his state as an ideal destination for IT firms, Jyoti Basu, his Marxist counterpart in West Bengal in the east, is pushing to transfer his government's work on-line. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has succeeded in making his state capital of Hyderabad a base for the IT majors Microsoft and Oracle besides putting his administration on-line. His vision to transform Andhra Pradesh into a social and technological marvel has computerisation as its centrepiece. Naidu is the only Indian politician to figure in the Business Week magazine's list of 50 Asian stars spearheading change.

Karunanidhi is scheduled to meet representatives of major IT companies, including global majors like ALCATEL, Sun Microsystems and Wipro, and convince them of the potential Tamil Nadu, especially its capital city Chennai, holds out as a base for their industry. The Hindu newspaper reported.

Tamil Nadu is currently developing a "golden triangle" with three software technology parks coming up around Chennai. Officials told the paper that the meeting had been scheduled at a time when the infrastructure is falling into place - work on the millennium park TIDEL is in progress, one technology park is coming up in the suburb of Kelambakkam and another is nearing completion in a suburb called Sholinganallur.

The "golden triangle" is to be connected with four-lane roads that would cut travel time between the two parks in the suburbs down to a 20-minute drive and the state-owned Internet service provider, the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL), is installing another earth station in the vicinity for better connectivity, the paper said. State electronic and technical departments as well as the VSNL have formed a committee to sort out Internet connectivity problems.

of the Software Technology park scheme in Chennai. West Bengal, meanwhile, is moving towards networking government departments. Basu, while inaugurating state capital Calcutta's fully-computerised treasury, admitted that there was no other option than bringing the administration on-line to ensure quick redressal and transparency in official functioning.

"Projects get delayed and it has become more like a disease," Basu was quoted as saying by The Telegraph. "I get complaints from all corners on slow movement of files from the finance department. There is absolute lack of information and computerisation is the only solution." Coming from the Marxist leader, the statement was a volte-face as the Left parties in India had staunchly opposed computerisation when the process began in the country more than a decade ago.

Basu said all 73 treasuries in the state would be computerised within a year and all government departments were sought to be linked via satellite with the Writer's Building in Calcutta, the seat of the state administration.

He also stressed that his government would make sure more students were computer-literate by introducing courses in schools and colleges. "Thousands of young people find themselves without jobs after graduation and post-graduation. There is, however, hope for anyone who has a knowledge of modern technology and computers," he observed.

State Finance Minister Asim Dasgupta said all work in his department would be computerised. "Once we are through with computerisation, we can check incoming and outgoing expenditure in all treasuries in a second," he said.

This comes even as Naidu is trying to usurp the title of India's software capital for Hyderabad, challenging the monopoly that Bangalore, the capital of the neighbouring southern state of Karnataka, had established. When Naidu began to promote his pet 'Cyberabad' (Hyderabad), the Karnataka government pulled up its socks and started selling 'Cyberlore' (Bangalore) to the world all over again.

'Cyberlore' is now flaunting figures, claiming that in 1997-98 software export from Karnataka touched the Rs. 20 billion (\$476 million). Hyderabad, they say, is actually a poor third, with Rs 2.7 billion (\$64.3 million); Chennai had a higher figure. But experts say Karnataka will have to address serious infrastructural problems like inefficient power supply, bad roads and water shortage before it could hope to beat emerging competition.

— India Abroad News Service

TOM & JERRY

By Hanna-Barbera

IAN FLEMING'S James Bond
DRAWING BY MORAK

HOW CAN MY CLAY MODEL OF BLACK STORM BE MISUSED BY TERRORISTS? ... I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

NOR DO I, MR CARVER - BUT I CAN GUESS!

IT'S TO BE FLOWN TO THE U.S.A. AND EXHIBITED - TO RAISE MONEY FOR BLACK LIBERATION!

THAT'S NOT THE ONLY THING THEY CAN DO WITH A CLAY STATUE, MR CARVER!

MEANWHILE...
...IT'S BETTER ALERT MISTER RUBY!

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