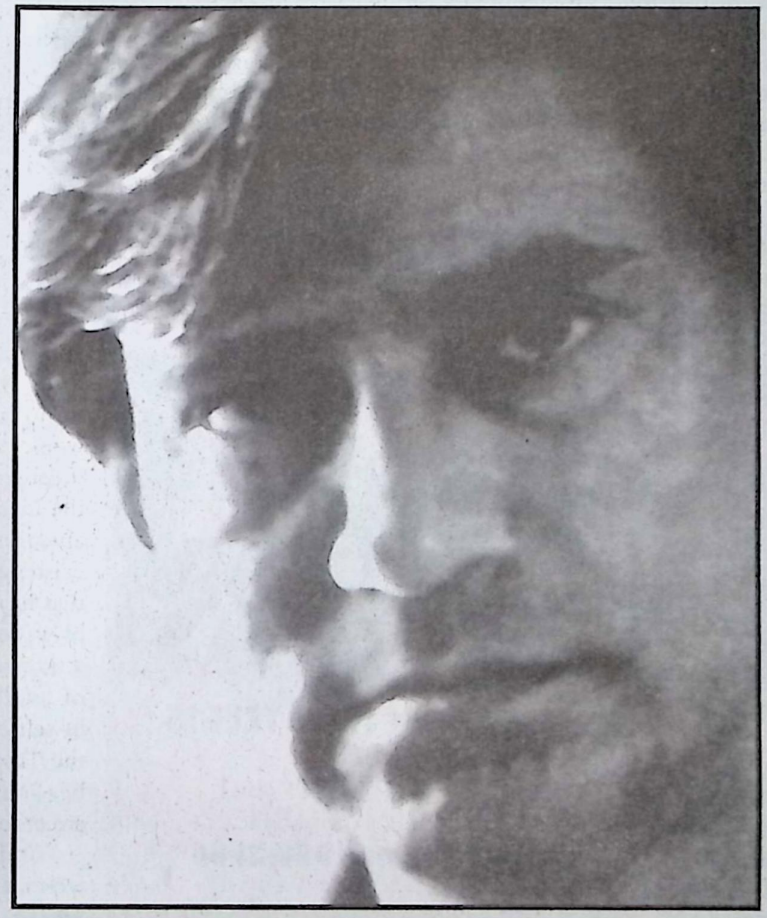
Published (defiantly) in the Streets of Dhaka

Fakrul Alam runs an appreciative eye over the collected works of Bangladesh's finest English language poet



THAT Kaiser Haq is Bangladesh's premier English language poet may not seem like a big deal to the people of his country, or most poetry lovers in the rest of the world. For one thing, there are very few Bangladeshis writing in English on view here. On the other hand, readers outside have had little or no exposure to any sort of Bangladeshi writing -- after all, what do they know of Bangladesh, let alone its poetry and its English language writers?

But that Haq is a very good poet, and capable of holding his own with most poets everywhere, should soon become obvious to any reader of his *Published in the Streets of Dhaka: Collected Poems 1966-2006*. Here, in this modestly sized and produced volume, the still-not-sixty poet who has been writing for over forty years now stakes his claim to be a major poet of his region.

Consider "Windows," the first poem of the first of the collections assembled in the volume, which is titled *New Poems: 2002-2006*. At first glance, this conversation poem seems to be a slight achievement, presenting as it does the exchanges of a couple on their neighbourhood