

EID-E-MILADUNNABI

# Prophet of Islam: Model for Mankind

by Kazi Aulad Hossain

*One day when the holy Prophet saw an old exhausted tired Jewess straining her every nerve to carry her load, he (the Prophet) was pleased to take the load on his shoulder and carried it to her house.*

THIS is the lunar month of Rabul Awal in which the greatest of all men of all times and the leader of one lakh 24 thousand Prophets Allah had sent to this world Hazrat Muhammad (peace be on him) was born in the city of Mecca, and the date of his birth was 12th Rabul Awal 570 AD. Although it appears paradoxical as to how an 'Ummi Nabi' (unlettered prophet) could be the greatest of all men of all times and leader of all prophets, the paradox is true and unhesitatingly accepted by all and sundry. Not only that, every aspect of our holy Prophet's life was so successful and worthy of emulation that Almighty Allah says he (our Prophet) is the best model 'Uswatul Hasana' for all people of this world. Our Prophet might not have any institutional education or training so what? Benign Allah was not only his Inimitable Inspirer and Teacher. He was his unrivalled poet, philosopher and guide. So, when Almighty Allah became the guide and teacher of a fortunate unlettered person like our holy Prophet, obviously nothing else was required to teach, train and guide him who lost his dear father before his birth and his affectionate mother when he was only six years old.

Our Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was undoubtedly a gifted person. He was not only a man, he was a super man. Besides founding a new religion — Islam — he also established an Islamic state. It goes to his great credit that he was able to lay the foundation of the said state after thoroughly organising and unifying the disorganised and indisciplined Arab Beduins divided into a number of warring tribes. In this connection the renowned historian P K Hitti says: 'Within a brief span of mortal life Muhammad called forth out of a unpromising material a nation never united before in a country that was hitherto but a geographical expression' (P K Hitti, History of the Arabs). Unlike other founders of religion

and spiritual leaders our holy Prophet was not only the spiritual head of his country, he was also the administrative head of the Islamic state he established 14 centuries ago from now. He divided his country Arabia into 10 provinces and appointed a governor for each one of them and the governors were directly responsible to him for their actions. He introduced a system for proper collection of revenues under five different heads for meeting the state expenditures. He was also the Commander-in-Chief of the country's armed forces. And the Masjid which was the focal point of all his religious activities, was also his secretariate, the pivot round which all administrative machinery of the country revolved. In short the holy Prophet was the country's spiritual and temporal head.

It is not without reason that a celebrated person and writer of the western world like Michale H Heart has put the name of our holy Prophet on the top while preparing a complete list of 100 most influential persons of the world in his famous book, 'The Hundred'. The total number of Christians in this world is double the total number of Muslims, even then Michael Heart has put the name of Jesus Christ after the name of our holy Prophet in the list referred to above. This is because of our Prophet's unique and commendable contribution towards moulding the minds of millions and millions of people of this world and his very valuable services rendered to the cause of humanity as a successful spiritual and political leader. Although Jesus Christ as the founder and as an exponent of the Christian religion rendered valuable services for the development of his religion

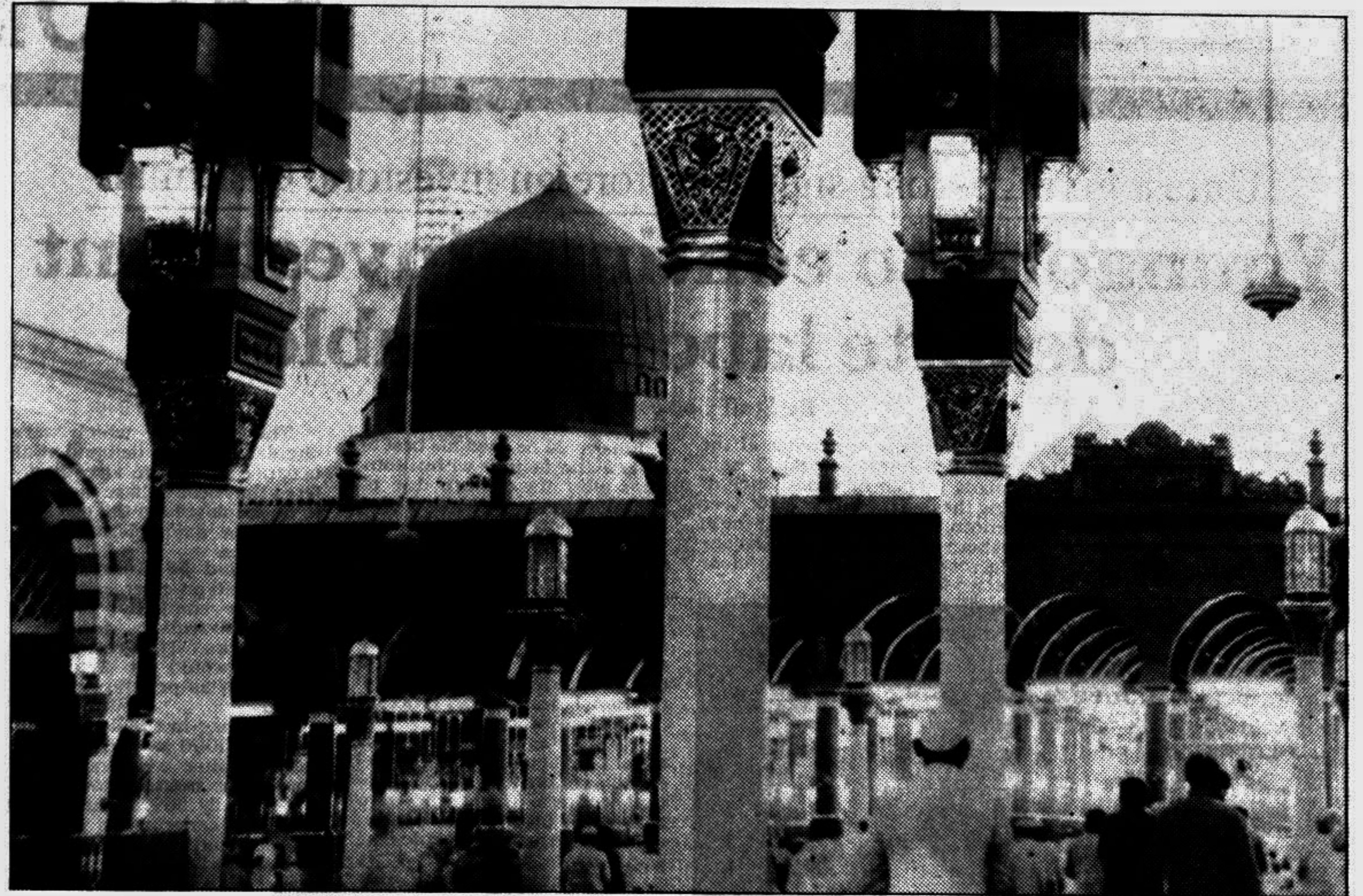
at the initial stage, it was St Paul who played the chief role for overall development and publicity of Christianity after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Apart from this, St Paul was the writer of the greater portion of the Bible (New Testament). On the contrary the far reaching role played by our holy Prophet during the very period of his 'Nabuat' (prophethood) for moulding the minds of countless ignorant, illiterate and indisciplined people as a successful reformer as well as a spiritual political and temporal leader is inimitable and as such cannot be compared with other leaders.

Apart from the hard facts stated above there is a very important plus point in favour of our holy Prophet and this is with regard to authenticity, writing, preservation and compilation of the Holy Quran revealed on him by Allah from time to time over a long period of 23 years. It may be specially mentioned here that during this long period whenever a part of the holy Quran, that is, 'ohi' in the form of Ayats or Sura was revealed, it was simultaneously memorized not only by the Prophet himself and his close companions ('Ashab'), it was also being written down by an 'ohi' writer who also knew the relevant Ayats or Sura of the holy Quran by heart. Consequently upon martyrdom of quite a number of 'Hahz' (who knew the whole Quran by heart) in the battle fields after the sad demise of the Prophet (peace be on him), the necessity for proper preservation and compilation of the whole Quran in the form of a book was keenly felt and it was during the time of the third Caliph Hazrat Usman (RA) a committee was formed under the leadership of Hazrat

Zaid Ibne Sabit which was entrusted with the very important task of compiling the whole Quran after collection of all the manuscripts which were kept at that moment under the safe custody of Bibi Hafsa, the revered widow of our holy Prophet. It is obvious that the members of the said committee knew the whole Quran by heart and after careful study and examination of all the available manuscripts submitted to the Caliph in the form of a book which is still the confirmed and authenticated copy of Al Quran we have with us now. So, from this point of view also our holy Prophet is in a far better position, so far authenticity, preservation and compilation of Al-Quran is concerned.

In this context I would like to refer here only two memorable sayings of our holy Prophet, besides two episodes of his life which, I believe, will inspire as all. The two sayings are: (1) He is not a Momin (believing person) if he takes his full meal (bellyful) keeping his neighbour unfed. (2) Pay the labourer his due remuneration before the sweat of his body evaporates. And the two episodes are: (1) One day when the holy Prophet saw an old exhausted tired Jewess straining her every nerve to carry her load, he (the Prophet) was pleased to take the load on his shoulder and carried it to her house. (2) The holy Prophet just like an ordinary day labourer participated in the construction work of the first mosque after his 'Hijrat' to Medina. Such were the sayings, actions, attitude and approach of the Prophet of Islam.

So, as Almighty Allah says that our holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (peace be on him), is the best model for the whole of mankind (Uswatul Hasana), we should seriously and sincerely emulate this Prophet of Islam, the greatest of all men of all times and the leader of all prophets, during this holy month of Rabul Awal — the month of his birth as well as the month of his 'Wafat' (demise).



## Doctrine of Unity in Islam: Truth and Beauty

by A Ezzat

*In fact, the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (SM) has been called by the Quran the paradigm of beauty, that is, the embodiment of all the beautiful moral and practical values, principles and standards.*

THE most fundamental principle in Islam and its ideology is the doctrine of monotheism (Tawheed). The doctrine of monotheism is not only an article of faith but it is at the same time a way of life, thought and an approach to appreciation and criticism. As far as art is concerned, monotheism established that Allah is the Creator and He is the only Creator. He creates and has created everything including beauty and beautiful things. He is in fact not only beautiful but is the cause of all beautiful things. He is the source of all beauty. In this sense artists do not create beauty and beautiful things. They simply manifest, reveal and exhibit the beauty which is created by Allah. The artists thus fulfil a divine mission. They are thus the divine means by whom Allah reveals and manifests His own beauty for He does everything by means He makes available to man. The Holy Quran says: Surely we established him in the land and granted him means of access to everything. (Qur. 18:94). Then he followed a course' (Qur. 18:92).

Another very important implication of the doctrine of monotheism, as far as art and beauty are concerned is that beauty and truth are fully compatible and they correspond with each other. This is because Allah is the Truth (haqq), the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth. He himself is the Truth (haqq) and Beauty (jameel) at the same time. Because He is the only Truth, He creates true things which must be beautiful. Thus the source of truth and beauty are the same. Everything is created by Him (Who is Perfect), correctly (Ala al-jaqq), and thus beautifully (jameel). There are many Quranic verses which explain this point, e.g., 'It is He who made the sun to be a shining glory and the moon to be a light and measured out stages for her, that ye might know the number of years and the count

(of time). No wise did Allah create this but in Truth (bi al-haqq in a perfect way)'. (Qur. 10:5). 'Allah created the heavens and the earth in Truth and perfectly and has given you shape and made your shapes and features beautiful'. (Qur. 64:3).

The last quoted verse explicitly states the compatibility of truth and beauty in Islam, which is based on the Islamic ideology and the Quranic verses, and shows that not only do artists reveal and manifest beauty but they reveal and exhibit the truth at the same time. To emphasize that Allah's creation is in truth and in perfect measure, the Quran frequently reminds us that nothing has been created in vanity (baatl: opposite of haqq). Creation thus corresponds with 'the truth' and perfection which in turn corresponds to beauty. In fact there is a special term for the perfection and truth of the entire creation in Islamic ideology: al-adl al-takweeni which means order, perfection and truth in creation. That is to say, Allah is Just and Truth. Thus He has created everything in justice, in perfection, order and beauty. Truth, justice and perfection in creation is the beauty of creation, and creatures are all beautiful to be appreciated, discovered, revealed, exhibited and manifested. The artist does the work of discovering and exhibiting beauty and beautiful things.

We may thus conclude that as far as the actual Divine Being is concerned, Allah is the whole Truth. He is the Sole Creator and His creation is based on the fact that He created everything in truth and in perfection. Since He is the Truth, the truth is beautiful and thus He is beautiful.

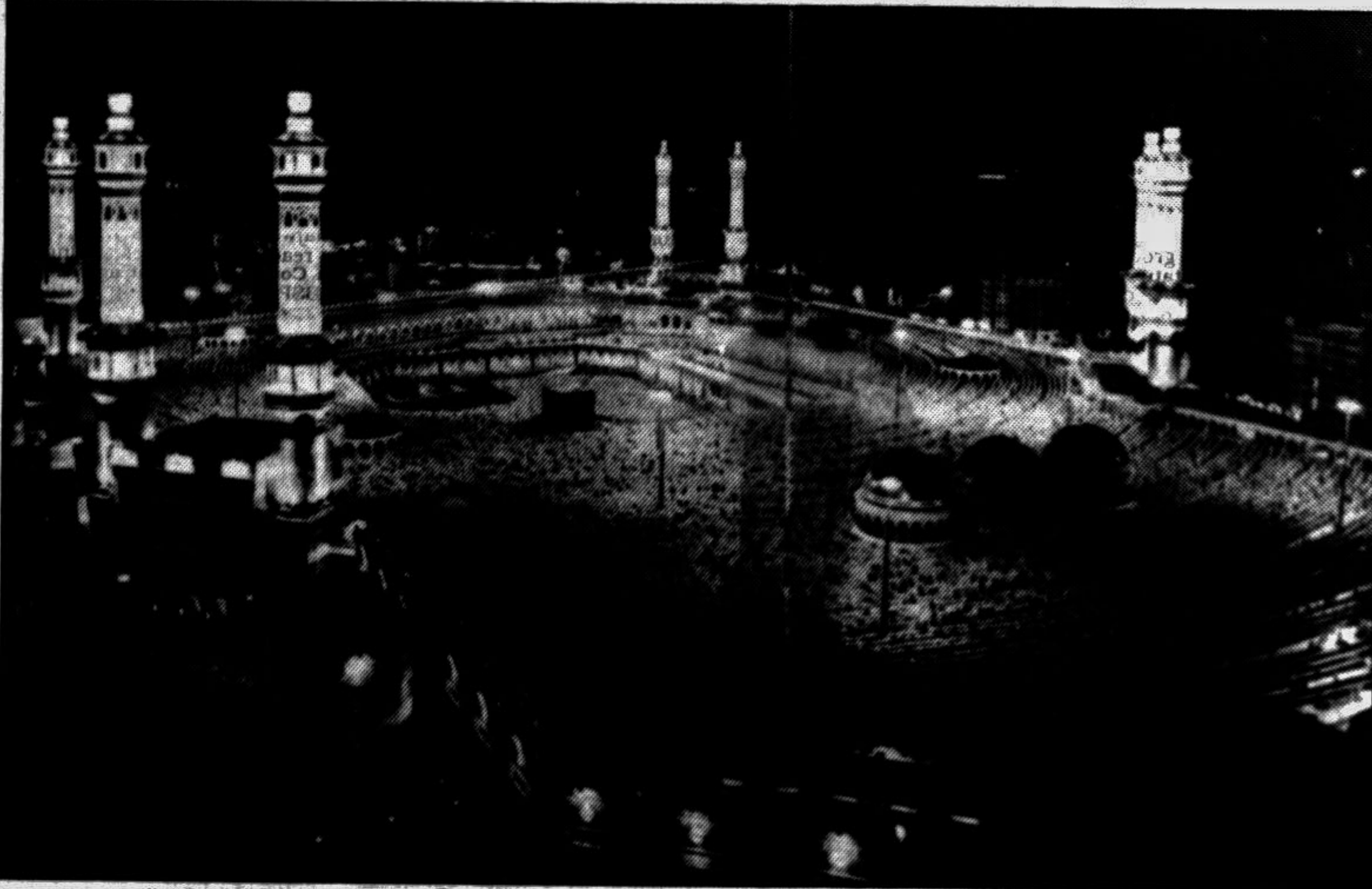
tiful, the whole beauty and the source of beauty, and creates everything beautifully. This brings us to His attributes (asma wa sifat), one of which is beauty. He is Beautiful (jameel) as well as the Truth. Truth and beauty correspond with each other. Thus truth and beauty correspond in His creatures. Allah's creatures are both true and beautiful, a point which has been frequently emphasized in the Quran: 'He it is Who has created everything and has made them most beautiful' (Qur. 32:7). The term husn (beauty/embellishment) more than forty times. One of Allah's attributes is Beauty (jameel). Since He is beautiful, He creates everything in beauty and thus likes beauty.

The 'Prophet Muhammad' (SM) is reported to have said: 'Allah is beautiful and He likes beauty', and thus likes beauty to be appreciated. Artists appreciate beauty and cause beauty to be appreciated by others. They thus shoulder a divine responsibility and fulfil a divine mission. According to many Quranic verses Allah Himself has created things in an artistic (beautiful) way and manner. 'We have indeed decked the lower heaven with beauty' (Qur. 37:6). In this sense Allah Himself is the Artist as well as the Creator. 'Why do they not look at the sky above them and see how we have made it and adorned it and there are no flaws in it' (Qur. 50:6).

It is this ideological root for art and beauty in Islam that caused Muslims to get involved in religious arts and culture. No wonder the first artistic activities in Islam began with the artistic production of religious

artifacts — namely calligraphy and artistic writings of the Holy Quran and artistic architecture of mosques and religious buildings. But the artistic activities always covered a very wide and large area with a divine purpose and religious mention. Tile making, carpet weaving, architecture, handicrafts and book binding — the list is long — are some of the areas in which Islamic art has greatly developed.

But beauty is not confined to physical things. Being an all inclusive and complete way of life and ideology, in Islam beauty and art cover the moral, spiritual and the mental as well as the physical area. The entire philosophy of ethics is based on the concept of beauty. Man, in Islam, is not only beautiful physically but he can and should be beautiful spiritually and morally as well. Man must manifest beauty in both directions and one dimension should not be neglected for the sake of the other, for man is naturally a two dimensional creature. Not only things but thoughts, actions, intentions, minds and words can all be beautiful. The term Beauty (husn) has frequently been applied to these things in the holy Quran. The term Jameel has also been applied. In fact, the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (SM) has been called by the Quran the paradigm of beauty, that is, the embodiment of all the beautiful moral and practical values, principles and standards. Man is not only physically beautiful, he can also be mentally beautiful spiritually and morally. Many Muslim philosophers of ethics, such as Al-Ghazzali, suggest that Islamic moral and ethical philosophy is based on the sense of beauty. They suggest that Allah is the source of beauty, perfection and truth and has created man physically beautiful and has made him His own vicegerent, manifesting Allah's beauty, seeking and appreciating the ultimate beauty which is 'Allah'.



## Metropolitan

### Seminar on MCH-FP project

## 'Improve coordination capabilities of urban local govt bodies'

A day-long seminar on 'lessons learned and programmatic implications of the MCH-FP Extension Project (Urban)' of the Health and Population Extension Division of the ICDDR,B was held at the centre's Sasakawa Auditorium in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

Six presentations were made by the researchers and the related programme managers in two scientific sessions of the seminar, which was organised by the ICDDR,B to discuss the implications of the findings from the perspective of urban health policy.

The inaugural function was chaired by Director of ICDDR,B Dr Demissie Habte and addressed by USAID Mission Director Dr Richard M Brown, senior advisor of ICDDR,B. Said Shamim Ahsan and Director General of Family Planning Directorate Sirajul Islam, among others.

The presenters put emphasis on the findings regarding mechanisms to improve planning and coordination capabilities of urban local government bodies.

During their presentations on key findings from applied research and interventions, the researchers laid stress on mobilisation of community resources to support efficient planning, coordination and interventions to improve quality of and access to some of the basic components of the essential service packages.

They also suggested improved management information system, promoting quality and continuity of care, cost effective and sustainable models of clinic-based service delivery, building capacity of programme managers to reduce the unit cost

of services and development of the systematic pricing mechanism to improve cost recovery of the health and family planning programme.

The seminar was attended by

### France to supply equipment for proposed textile college in city

France has proposed to supply textile machineries and equipment for a proposed College of Textile Technology in Dhaka, reports UNB.

An agreement to this effect is likely to be signed between BGMEA and the French Textile Machinery Manufacturers Association (UCMTF) in November.

This was announced by French Ambassador to Bangladesh Renee Veyret during a meeting with the leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association at its office yesterday.

Trade Commissioner at the French Embassy in Dhaka Bertrand Desruelles proposed the establishment of a college of textile technology in the city as wanted by the UCMTF and assured of giving required technical assistance for the college.

BGMEA President M G Qudus sought all-out cooperation of the French Ambassador so that Bangladesh gets the GSP facilities to protect the country's garment industry from ruination.

planners, managers, service providers, policy makers, and representatives from the donor countries and international development partners.

Both the presenters and the discussants underscored the need for focussing on the urban health issue which they perceived as a major concern and challenge for the coming years in Bangladesh.

The project, with a number of government agencies and the NGO 'Concerned Women for Family Planning', started a new partnership effort under the aegis of ICDDR,B in 1994, aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of the rapidly growing urban population.

Government agencies, participating in this partnership are the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, the Directorate of Health Services, the Directorate of Family Planning and Dhaka City Corporation.

The partnership known as 'Urban MCH-FP Initiative' is meant for developing a coordinated, cost-effective and sustainable system for delivering an essential package of health services to the urban population of Bangladesh with special emphasis on slum population and non-slum poor.

An ICDDR,B official said the project through its operation research was seeking to identify and test sustainable interventions to maximise the use of existing public and private services both by creating demand among the target groups and by developing cost-effective service delivery strategies and efficient support systems.



Bangladesh and Italy signed a three-year cultural exchange agreement in Dhaka yesterday. Minister of State for Youths, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader and the visiting Italian Deputy Foreign Minister Patrizia Toia signed it on behalf of their respective governments. —PID photo

### Toia meets Kibria, Samad Azad Italy urged to take sympathetic view regarding GSP

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria yesterday said grounds were already prepared to move fast in implementing reform programmes to achieve better discipline in various fields, reports UNB.

The government is determined to carry out reform programmes in different sectors including privatisation of state-owned enterprises, he told Italian Deputy Foreign Minister Patrizia Toia when she called on him at his office yesterday.

The Finance Minister sought greater cooperation and assistance of Italy in social infrastructure like education, health-care and family planning in addition to substantial infrastructure development cooperation.

He urged the Italian Deputy Foreign Minister to take sympathetic view regarding the Generalised System of Preference (GSP) facility for better trade present of Bangladesh.

Toia assured of her country's increased support and cooperation for the development of Bangladesh and also appreciated its reform programmes.

Meanwhile, Italian Deputy Foreign Minister Patrizia Toia called on Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad at his office.

They discussed matters relating to mutual interests.

The Foreign Minister thanked Toia for providing soft loan and considering Bangladesh's proposal on Generalised System of Preference (GSP) in tariff concession.

### Russian envoy meets Yusuf

Russian Ambassador in Bangladesh, Eugeny P Ivanov, called on Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf yesterday, reports UNB.

The minister thanked the envoy for his government's initiative to set up a power station in Khulna.

### Obituary

Abdul Quader Chowdhury, a former director, Directorate of Fisheries, died while undergoing treatment in Singapore on Wednesday.

He was 65, says a press release.

He left behind two sons and a number of relatives. His namaz-e-janaza will be held tomorrow at the Siddheshwari Jame Masjid after Zohr prayers.



Muktijodha Sanghati Parishad held a rally protesting the activities of anti-liberation forces in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. —Star photo



The Action Committee of the BCS (Fisheries) and other related branches held a rally demanding an end to anomalies in service. —Star photo