



## Al-Azhar: Story of Pride and Enlightenment

**J**AWHAR the Sicilian, commander of the Fatimid troops who founded Cairo in 358 AH/969 AD, built Al Azhar mosque. It was first opened on 7th of Ramadan 361 AH/June 22, 972 AD.

Three and half years of its establishment, Al Azhar began to acquire its academic and scholastic nature and started as well to hold religious seminars. Right from the beginning, the seminars held at Al Azhar were of purely academic nature.

With the passage of ages, the Mosque earned a great reputation. Besides being a mosque, it also became a university for religious, Arabic and metaphysical sciences studies. Al-Azhar, as the principal seat for the Sunni sect, was attended by students from all Muslim countries.

guage.

In 1961 Al-Azhar Faculties increased in number, and besides the theoretical faculties, other practical and technical faculties were established, such as that of Medicine, Engineering and Agriculture. Other theoretical and technical faculties were founded for girls, all of which are affiliated to the Al-Azhar University. It is worth mentioning that all the theoretical sciences were taught at Al-Azhar in the olden times, and the Muslim women had attended the tuition circles that were held at the Mosque. The last law has in fact regulated and modernised these studies, and established several and different departments and sections as it is the case at the modern universities of the world.

well as physicians, doctors, engineers, all of whom are religiously tutored.

Before Law 103/1961, no faculties belonged to Al Azhar save that of Theology, Shariat and Arabic language. But now, the University comprises 55 Faculties.

**Muslim Foreign Students City:** Al-Azhar has always been, and is still, the fortress of Islam and of the Arabic language. It attracts the Muslims from everywhere. Previously, foreign students used to be accommodated in the various hostels of Al Azhar, each nationality in a separate hostel, or in other residences rented for them by Al Azhar. But in 1959, the Foreign Missions City was inaugurated to receive all the foreign students.

Al Azhar calls upon the Muslim Ummah to promote and to keep unity amongst its peoples.

The relationship between Bangladesh and Al-Azhar witnessed a new phase of co-operation following the successful visit of H.E. Abdus Samad Azad, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh to Egypt in February this year. The early fruition showed itself in the approval to increase scholarships for Bangladeshis.

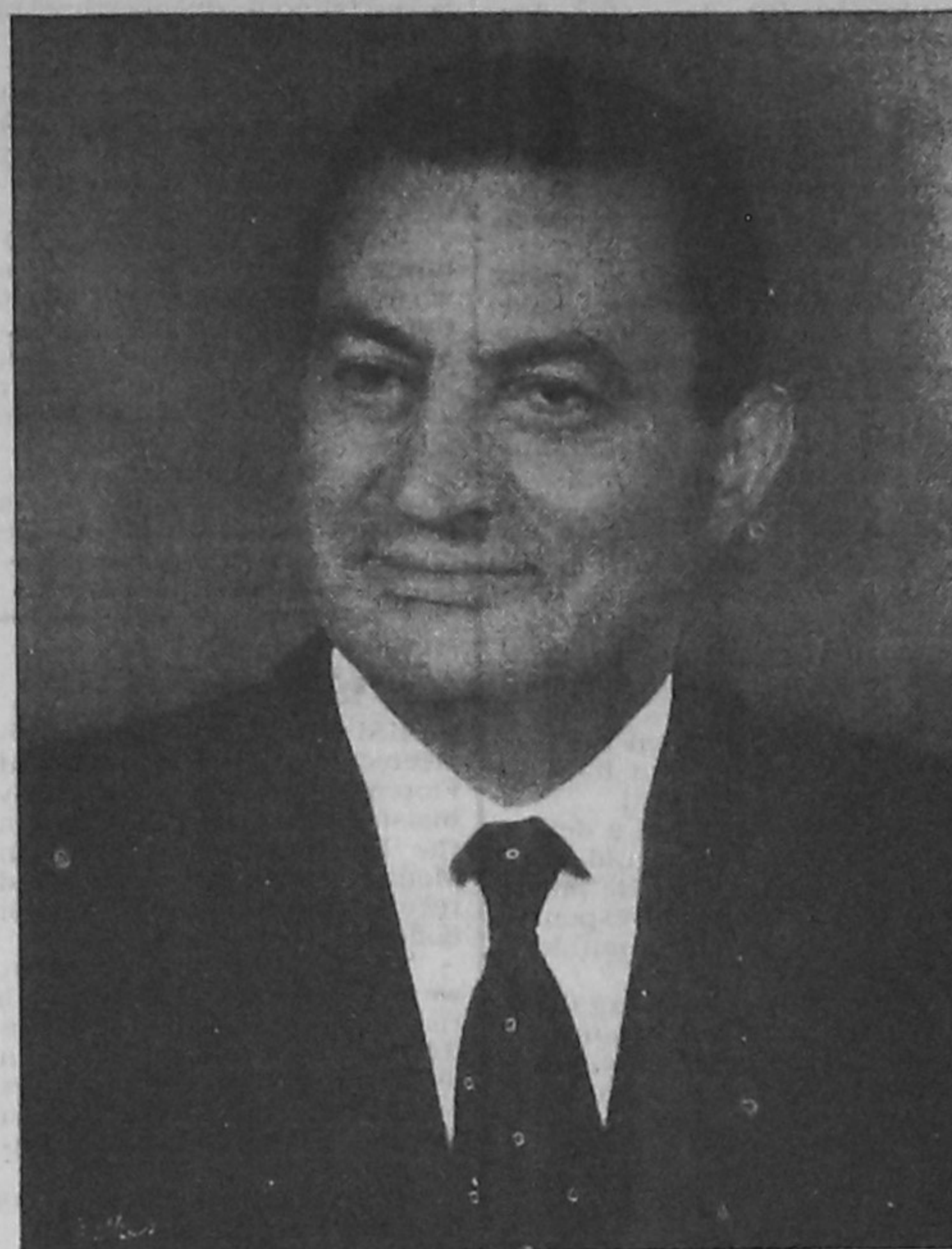


El Azhar Mosque

The first statute for Al-Azhar was promulgated in 1822, AD, whereby the steps for procurement of "Al-Alamiya" (PhD) Certificate and the relevant subjects to be studied were specified. Then other laws regulating education followed, which divided education there into three categories, and introduced the faculty-education system i.e. Faculty of Shariat (Islamic Jurisprudence) Faculty of Theology (Osoul Al-Deen), and Faculty of the Arabic Lan-

**Al-Azhar's main departments:** In 1961, Al Azhar was divided into the following Departments: 1) Supreme Council of Al-Azhar; 2) Academy of Islamic Researches; 3) Al Azhar University; 4) Institutions Directorate.

**Al Azhar University:** Al Azhar University is entrusted with the higher education, and related researches of Al-Azhar. It produces specialised scholars in religious subjects in Arabic language and in instruction, as



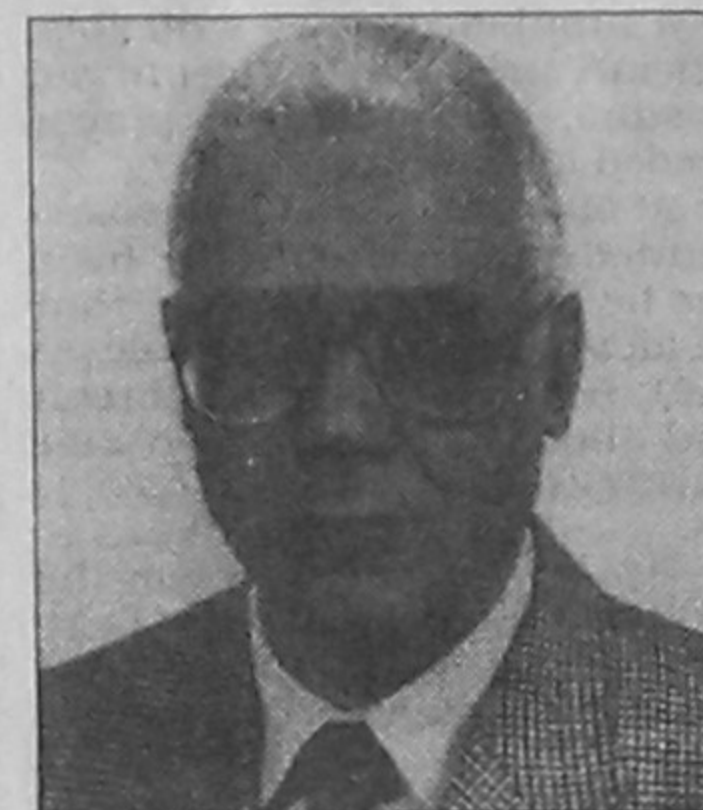
President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak

## Trade Centre of Egypt

The Trade Centre of Egypt (TCE) in Dhaka is one of several branches of Misr Import and Export Company which is one of the most reputable public sector business companies in Egypt aiming to promote bilateral foreign trade. The TCE was established in 1960 and throughout the last 40 years, it has intensified its efforts to enhance diversity and strengthen the bilateral trade between the two brotherly countries.

TCE lately started to initiate a satisfactory target within the volume of trade between Egypt and Bangladesh especially in the sectors of Raw Jute, Jute

goods, Raw Cotton and Rod. This target has been achieved through fruitful collaboration of Bangladeshi authorities and trade institutions. In addition, the TCE is sparing its efforts to diversify the bilateral trade to include other items of Egyptian exports to Bangladesh: Ceramics, Cement, Marble, Cotton Fabrics, Cotton Yarn Sugar, Medical and Pharmaceutical items etc. TCE seizes the opportunity of the 48th National Day of Egypt to invite the Bangladeshi business community to explore potential opportunities for further enhancing trade between the two brotherly countries.



Mohamed Eldawey  
Trade Representative,  
Trade Centre of Egypt

## The Egyptian Economy: Towards a Breakthrough

**T**HE year 1920 marks the real start of the modern Egyptian Economy when Talat Harb established his historical institution (The Bank of Egypt) which worked on nationalising the Egyptian economy during (1920-1952).

After the revolution of 1952, Egypt launched the policy of modernising the economy and its transformation from an agro-based economy to a modern industrial economy. The first 5-year plan (1959-1964) set the base for a comprehensive heavy industries (Iron & Steel, Aluminum, etc.) and much attention was paid to energy sector by erecting the giant project of the highdam in southern Egypt which tripled the electricity production to 46 billion kwh in 1996.

Egypt launched successfully the Economic Reform Structural Adjustment Programme (ERSAP) through the period 1991-1996. During the industrial production jumped from \$2.5 billion in 1981 to 39 billion in 1996 as the investment in the industrial sector reached \$10 billion bringing the GDP to 188 billion (1998).

### Growing Investments

After decades of consecutive serious efforts, Egypt attained economic stability in which encouragement of investment is a main pillar, accordingly, in August 1997, Egypt was awarded the long-term rating of BBB-investment grade by the IBCA. Europe's international credit agency, recognising the giant developments of the modern Egyptian economy and its ability to attract and prosper long term investments within the economy's potentials.

Creating investment atmosphere in economic terms has

required many modifications which Egypt had already launched since the early 1990's in this context amendments were applied on investment, banking and credit laws in addition to all the laws regulating foreign economic activities (e.g. acquisition of real property banks, Land Plots) under the banner of privatisation policy the transformation of the entire economy from state-owned one relies on a vital role of private sector (domestic/foreign).

In the first half of 1997, authorisations were issued to incorporate 1000 companies with total investments reaching \$6 billion. In addition, there were 380 projects within the Free Zone investment projects reaching a total cost of \$1.2 bil-

lion which led to an estimation of total investments of \$120 billion to be implemented over the current five year plan (1997-2002).

Currently, the Egyptian Government is giving a special focus to Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), assuring all facilities for foreign investors especially within the framework of Free Zone Investment (FZI) as there had been established 5 Free Zones already in Cairo (Nasr City), Port Said, Alexandria-Suez and Ismailia.

Moreover, thriving sectors offering opportunity for the foreign investment include: Petroleum, Gas, Infrastructure, Industries (Readymade Garments, Carpets, etc.), Services (Tourism, Banking, Insurance).

### MESSAGE



lim Worlds are both amongst the most important circles of everlasting concern to Egypt's Foreign Policy.

Egypt and Bangladesh have many features in common especially as peace initiators either in regional or international arenas. Also Bangladesh's comprehensive role in peace-keeping operations in various parts of the world attracts admiration, and is very highly appreciated.

As for the bilateral relationship, it has always been very excellent, both brotherly countries are bound by mutual understanding and cooperation. As members of many international organisations, they co-operate closely on matters of mutual interests.

Lastly, may Almighty Allah bless our two countries and the already excellent existing relations to further progress.

**Mohy Youssef**  
Ambassador of Egypt  
to Bangladesh

## Gigantic National Projects of Egypt

**W**HILST entering the 21st century, Egypt has taken up some gigantic projects with long term strategies to enhance the strong foundation of the already existing modern society for future further development.

The first such project is

building a New Delta in Toshka (South Western Egypt) benefiting from the excessive water of the Highdam. This project was launched in January 1997. The new projected delta has opened new horizons of investment in the fields of agriculture, industry, tourism and mining plus establishing new urban communities, such communities would attract population and generate a huge number of jobs opportunities.

The New Valley Canal (the Sheikh Zayed Canal) aims to move the excess water of Lake Nasser to the New Valley. The targeted length of the canal is 310 km (30 meter width at bottom, 58 meter at surface and 6m deep). It will irrigate 3.3 million feddans of virgin arable lands.

The huge amount invested in this project reflects the greatness of the work. It is estimated to cost Egyptian Pound 5.5 billion (\$1.5 billion). The pumping station alone will cost around 1.5 billion Egyptian Pound. There will be some complementary projects of infrastructural nature.

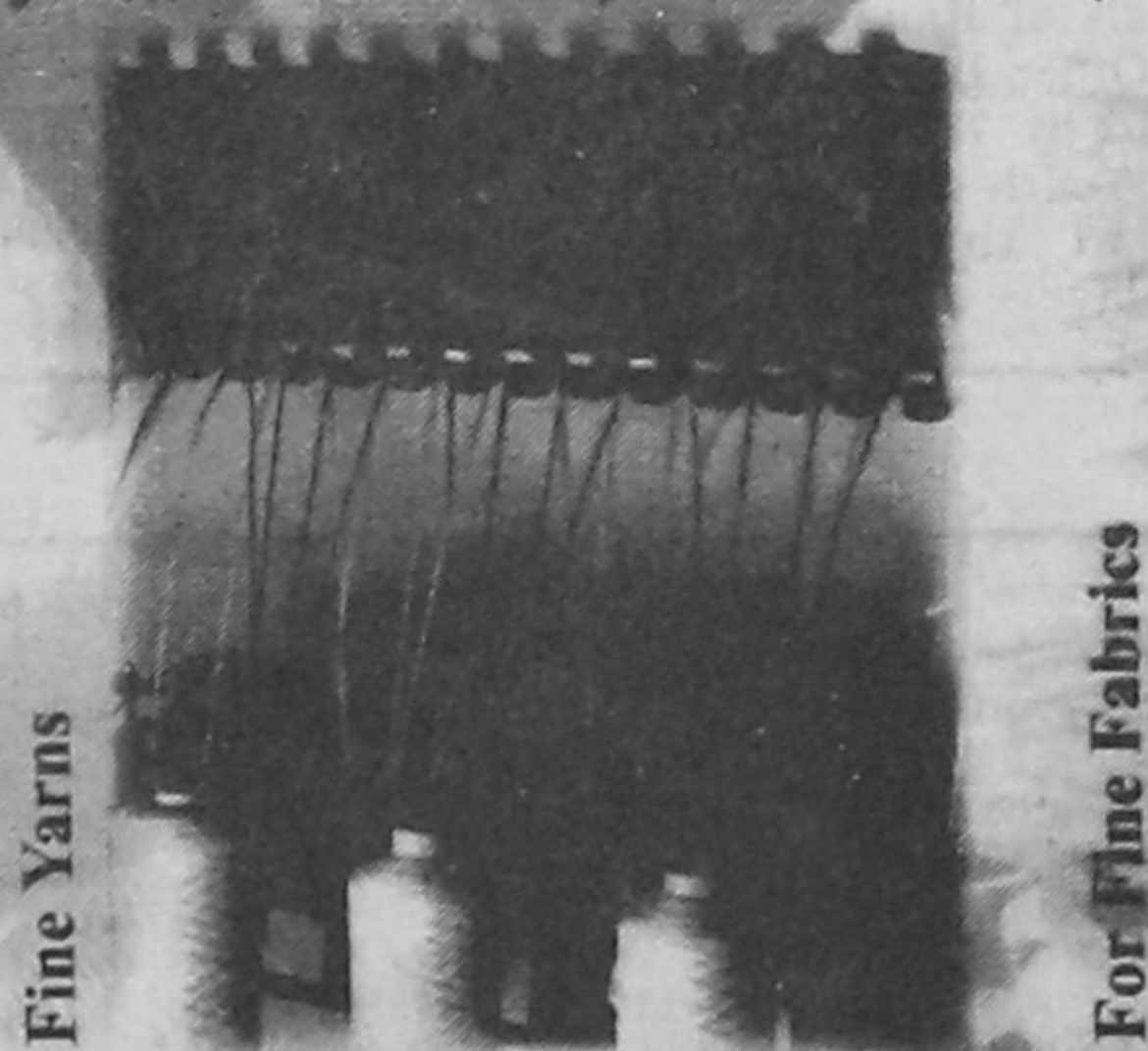
The second national project is Development of North Suez Gulf, which attracted the attention of world investors and economists. It has been indicated that the North Suez Gulf area, especially the free zone, will attract considerable investments. This project will be integrated with other national project for developing Sinai. It would lead to raising the rate of economic growth to 7 per cent annually by this year. Within this framework, development in the eastern coast will focus on tourism while development in the western coast will focus on industry and port activities. The duration of the first phase of the project is seven years ending 2001. It is worth mentioning that the industrial estate is including an area of 4.6 million sq m, accommodating some 400 factories for manufacturing building materials and foodstuffs with their utilities and infrastructure. Also, there will be an industrial free zone for 90 factories. The first phase of the project is estimated to cost more than Egyptian Pound 1.2 billion.

The second phase of the project will take five years starting 2001/2002 through 2005/2006 and will include setting up new Al-Ein Al-Sokhma city for housing 25,000 people, developing Ras Sedr and Oyoum Moussa area, building two maritime harbours at Al-Ababeya and Ataka, installing a radar network, building a watch tower and completing the international coastal road surrounding the area in addition to constructing a tourist zone along side the bank of Gulf Suez.

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