

# ALIAH UNIVERSITY

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Aliah University started its glorious journey from the 2008-09 academic session with great potential and immense opportunities. It is hoped that this university, harmonizing tradition and modernity, will emerge as a unique institution of higher studies and research. As per Aliah University Act 2007, Section 3 (3), it has been conferred the status of a minority educational institution. Aliah University is an autonomous university under the Department of Minority Affairs and Madrasah Education, Government of West Bengal. It is hoped that along with the people of any race, creed, caste or class, this University will play a crucial and leading role in the advancement of higher education for socially and educationally backward classes belonging to the Minorities. Aliah University has with it the rich heritage of the 229-year old educational and cultural institution, Mohammedan College of Calcutta, popularly known as Madrasah-i-Aliah or Calcutta Madrasah, the first educational institution set up in India in 1780 by Warren Hestings, the then Governor General of India. Thus, one of the oldest centres of higher learning and culture, the institution is steeped in history. Many eminent scholars were associated with this institution as administrators, principals, teachers as well as students. Calcutta Madrasah was upgraded to Calcutta Madrasah College and then to Aliah University by the Government of West Bengal through Aliah University Act XXVII of 2007 passed in West Bengal Legislative Assembly. Calcutta Madrasah was established chiefly for the study of the Arabic and Persian languages and Muslim Law so that the sons of the Muslim gentry can perform the duties as officers for running the revenue administration and judiciary. The Naib Nizam was instructed to recruit the students of the Madrasah as vacancies occurred in the Fauzdari Courts, on production of certificates of efficiency. However, within a decade Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Astronomy, Islamic Theology, Oriental Studies, Natural Philosophy, Geological Studies, Law, Logic, Rhetoric, Grammar, and Oratory were added on the list of prescribed subjects for study. In 1821, the Annual Examination of the Madrasah was held in the presence of many respectable officials and gentlemen of Calcutta. This was the first public examination held in British India. A medical class, headed by Dr Breton, Professor of Medicine, was started at this Madrasah in 1826 for the first time in British India. Dr Breton was authorized to purchase a skeleton and collect medical books. An anatomical work published by John Taylor was arranged to be translated into Arabic.

The medical class continued here till the establishment of Calcutta Medical College in 1836. However, the students of the Madrasah were allowed to study medicine at Calcutta Medical College. This speaks for the high standard of education at the Madrasah in those days.