

Address by
Mr. Najeeb Jung
Vice Chancellor

Annual Convocation
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Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi

Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, Shri Tejendra Khanna Sahab, distinguished guests, members of the press, the Jamia fraternity-my colleagues and students, ladies and gentlemen:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor to Jamia. We are honoured to have you amidst us. You have been our well wisher all along and we value your close association with Jamia. I also extend a warm welcome to all other guests.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Jamia is into the 91st year of its existence and these 91 years have witnessed many sacrifices and achievements which we commemorate today, but to my mind, more importantly, we are at the threshold of yet another renaissance today.

This is a historical moment for all of us here at Jamia. You would recall, earlier this year in February, the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions granted minority institution status to Jamia Milia Islamia. While this gesture is meant to strengthen and empower those who have so far been outside the fold of education and is expected to redress deficiencies which have existed in our society, this gesture also puts the responsibility on us of ensuring that we live up to the ideals on which this great institution was built.

These ideals are at once lofty and commonplace. They are lofty because of their philosophical import and they are commonplace because they are part of our everyday conduct here at Jamia. I refer particularly to the ideal of 'unity in diversity' which has been our strength at Jamia and will continue to serve us in the future as well. The onus is upon us to preserve this diversity, which we have come to value so dearly in our university.

I firmly believe that it is a confluence of diverse thoughts and ideas which makes a university grow and reach even greater heights. It is with the objective of attracting students from all parts of the country and actively preserving the ideal of diversity that Jamia is committed to, that we have decided to conduct entrance tests for

admission to Jamia outside Delhi too. I can say with conviction that the degree holders who are part of today's convocation stand testimony to this very principle of diversity at Jamia.

Let me take this opportunity to share with you some of the recent achievements and developments in Jamia as also point out the challenges ahead of us. We approached the new academic session with some trepidation: we were implementing a new admission policy which required putting into place procedures spread across 9 faculties, 36 departments, 27 centres and more than 240 programmes, a mammoth task by any standard. However, I am happy to note that the relentless work of my teachers and staff bore fruit and we were able to complete the task to our satisfaction. The other challenge before us was to reduce the number of entrance tests conducted by the university as taken by an average student. As a consequence, we adopted a common entrance test for a cluster of programmes in various faculties of Jamia.

The Faculty of Engineering and Technology, which also celebrated its silver jubilee this year with great aplomb, took many initiatives during the admission season. For the few hundred seats on offer, the Faculty of Engineering and Technology received more than 40,000 forms from all parts of the country and the world.

Apart from the challenges taken up and the innovations made in admissions, the new academic session also saw the introduction of many new programmes in Jamia.

The innovative Centre for Early Childhood Development and Research started an MA programme in 'Early Childhood Development' this year. The Centre for European and Latin American Studies introduced M.Phil. level research programmes in European Studies and Latin American Studies, as also a Diploma programme in Catalan Language. The Anwar Jamal Kidwai Mass Communication Research Centre added yet another programme to its list with the introduction of a one year Post Graduate Diploma in Broadcast Technology. Furthermore, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Sikkim, Mr. Pawan Chamling, who visited Jamia earlier this year, helped start a Sikkim Studies programme at Jamia, and we are grateful to him for his support.

The Faculty of Engineering and Technology also launched a new programme in M. Tech. in Earthquake Engineering. The tragedy in Japan earlier this year only makes our starting this programme seem all the more relevant today. The Faculty of Architecture and Ekistics too launched a new programme at the Master's level in Urban Regeneration, addressing an important contemporary need.

Besides, we also revamped our already existing BA programme and gave it a much needed fillip, to make it relevant for students of today.

Ladies and gentlemen, these new programmes are an indicator of the strides that the university is making in furthering its academic goals.

I am happy to announce that we will soon be starting a full-fledged Centre in Nano-sciences and Nano-technology, which is a cutting edge discipline today. Besides, we will soon be setting up a Centre for China Studies and a Centre for Afghanistan Studies. Both these centres have been duly approved by the University Grants Commission. These two centres and their programmes, in addition to the already existing programmes, especially in Pakistan Studies, will help researchers get an insight into the social, economic and political forces operating in our region.

I can say with some amount of conviction and satisfaction that the Pakistan Studies Programme at Jamia is by far the best programme on Pakistan Studies anywhere in the world. Starting this year, it launched the Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan Memorial Lecture which was delivered by Frontier Gandhi's grandson Afsandiyar Wali Khan. It is my sincere hope that we can develop similar expertise in other programmes as well.

It is also our hope that as part of the forthcoming 12th plan, we will be able to introduce M. Tech. programmes in all branches of Engineering in the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, we will be able to set up an exclusive women's polytechnic on campus, we will be able to start new and innovative courses such as B. Tech. in Petroleum Engineering, besides many other similar programmes, planning of which are underway.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you would appreciate from what I have stated thus far, we at Jamia, have fire in our bellies and we firmly believe that the rigour of academic programmes is absolutely essential for a university to make its mark today. We have initiated many steps in this direction. We have successfully implemented the semester system at postgraduate level across all courses in Jamia and currently we are in the process of doing the same at the undergraduate level. Starting the next academic session, we will be able to implement the semester system at the undergraduate level as well. The teachers at Jamia have been working hard to raise the profile of the university and it is their efforts which will bear fruit in the years to come.

Other projects which are underway at Jamia include upgradation of existing infrastructure such as classrooms, research laboratories, library facilities, residential facilities, among others. Recently, a new boy's hostel named after Fazlur Rahman Khan was inaugurated, which will be able to accommodate more male students on campus. I am hopeful that the soon to be ready hostel for girls will also be inaugurated shortly, and will be able to accommodate many more girls coming to study at Jamia too.

The biggest challenge as we prepare to take our plans for academic expansion forward is the need to augment our existing infrastructure, which requires both land and resources. I am happy to inform all present that with active support from the Lieutenant Governor's office, for which the Jamia community will be forever grateful to him, we are close to acquiring the Pahari land. Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor Sir, our debts to you are many and we know that in you we have a true well-wisher of Jamia. We constantly turn to you for support and it comforts us to know that you will always stand by us.

Besides academic excellence, Jamia Millia Islamia has also been excelling in the field of sports. In recognition of Jamia's state of the art sports infrastructure, the Sports Authority of India has made Jamia one of its extension centres. Our students have been earning glory for the university by lifting prestigious titles such as the All

India Inter University Shooting Championship, North Zone Inter University Hockey Tournament for Men, North East Zone Inter University Lawn Tennis Tournament for Women, besides many other laurels.

The students of Jamia also participated in a unique cycle rally earlier this year in March when they cycled from Wagah border to Delhi, spreading along the way the message of 'peace and universal brotherhood'. This is the kind of learning we wish to impart at Jamia, which takes a holistic approach to learning, so that when students step out of the university, they are, what we call mukammal.

Ladies and gentlemen, Jamia has historically been a unique experiment and the evidence of this uniqueness lies in the kind of challenges that this university willfully embraces. Jamia offers free coaching to members of minority communities, scheduled castes, and scheduled tribes, and to girls for various competitive examinations. I am happy to inform you that we have already started tasting success. Last year 4 students from Jamia cleared the Union Public Service Commission's Civil Services Examinations. Jamia also admitted 27 street children to Jamia schools, which brought with it its own set of challenges, but my teachers were unfazed by them. I want to laud the Jamia biradari for all their efforts. Together we make what Jamia is and will be.

There are many other milestones that Jamia crossed this year. Many departments of Jamia figured high in rankings released by various agencies, be it the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, or the Faculty of Law, or the Department of History and Culture. Besides, Jamia also received the Best Jury Award for ICT Enabled Institution of Higher Learning at the World Education Summit, 2011. Jamia also launched its newsletter *Jauhar* and is set to soon launch its new website. I cannot do justice to all the important landmarks attained by Jamia this year, but let it suffice to say that there are many, and I am sure more will follow in the days to come.

In the current year, Jamia also forged ties with many partner institutions and universities across the world. Notably, in a special

ceremony held at Jamia, the university conferred the title of 'Nishan-e-Azad' on His Excellency Faisal Hasan Trad, Ambassador of the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to India, for his support to Jamia. The Secretary General of King Abdul Aziz Foundation for Research and Archives has decided to make Jamia the Nodal Agency to create an Archival Library on Haj Affairs in South Asia. Two separate MoUs have been signed by Jamia with Imam Mohammad Bin Saud University and King Saud University. Besides, MoUs have also been signed this year between Jamia Millia Islamia and Shenzhen University, China, School of African and Oriental Studies, London, and Al-Beruni Institute of the Oriental Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The students of Jamia have also made the university proud on many occasions. I am happy to especially share with you the achievement of girl students at Jamia: two girl students earned the newly constituted Mukul Kasliwal Scholarship; two more girl students from the Faculty of Law were selected into the JAG branch of the Indian Army. One of our students in Political Science participated in India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) Forum 2011 held at Durban in October this year. I cannot exhaustively list all the laurels earned by you, my dear Jamia students, but it is my hope and dream that these are but stepping stones to bigger achievements that await you in your life.

I want to use this opportunity to remind us all that history is what we will make of it and as you, my students, step out of the precincts of this glorious university, know in your hearts and minds that there is no mountain high enough for you to climb. Set your goals high and the glory will be yours. Go into the world and make your alma mater proud!

Thank you all.