

Press Release

**JMI's Department of Economics organizes Panel Discussion on Union Budget 2025-26**

New Delhi: The Subject Association, Department of Economics, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) organized a Panel Discussion on the Union Budget 2025-26 on February 10, 2025, at the Conference Room of the Department. The event commenced with opening remarks by Prof. Asheref Illiyan, Head of the Department, who outlined that Budget is not simple numbers but they show the policy priorities of the Government. Therefore, a detailed analysis of the budget is an imperative. He highlighted the positive aspects of Union Budget 2025-26.

The distinguished panelists of the event were: Prof. Arun Kumar, former Professor, Centre for Economic Studies and Planning (CESP), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Prof. Amitabh Kundu, former Dean, SSS, JNU. The session was moderated by Dr. Md. Zakaria Siddiqui, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, JMI.

Prof. Arun Kumar, provided the macroeconomic context to this year's budget. He underscored that economic growth has slowed, unemployment continues to rise and growth of inequality remains unchecked. In his view this year's budget continues with the trend to adopt the infrastructure spending oriented growth strategy which is not adequate to combat growing inequality which is a major concern in India. Further, this strategy limits the scope for addressing the growing unemployment problem of this country. He highlighted the need to focus on the informal sector, as it provides employment to 75% of the non-agricultural workforce in India, and job intensive sectors for the sustainable growth of the Indian Economy.

Prof. Amitabh Kundu highlighted the growing trend of neglect of socially disadvantaged communities in the Indian budget. Not only that the generic social sector spending is restricted but the budget of the Ministry of minority affairs has also seen significant decline over time despite very low achievement of minorities in social outcomes compared to national average such as educational and health outcomes. As a result of this neglect in budget, there has been continuous reduction in enrolment of Muslims in educational institutions right from secondary to higher education. This is particularly worrying when National Education policy wants to increase Enrolment in higher education to 50% in 2035 from 26.3% in 2017-18. He argued for increased spending for the social sector and minorities particularly Muslims.

Dr. Zakaria Siddiqui summarized the discussion by panel speakers and highlighted the need for focusing on virtuous growth that combats the issue of significant lag that India experiences in human development, growing unemployment and unprecedented inequality by focusing spending on human development led growth policies.

The event was enthusiastically attended by students, research scholars, and faculty members from the Department. The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks proposed by Dr. Vasim Akram, student advisor, Department of Economics, JMI. The event was coordinated by Dr. Vasim Akram and Dr. Md Kashif Khan. Ms Sahana Arakkal and Aksat were the student coordinators of the event.



