

Report of Extension lecture

on

India and Iran: Ancient Civilizational Links and Contemporary Perspectives



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India Arab Cultural Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia organizes a lecture on the evolution of Islamic Law and the transformation of status of muslim women

TFP 1 CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB 6

India Arab Cultural Centre Jamia Millia Islamia organized an extension lecture on "From Jahliya to Legal Reforms: The Evolution of Islamic Law and the Transformation of Status of Muslim Women" on Thursday. The event was chaired by Prof. Hemanyun Akhtar Nazmi, Director of Centre for West Asian Studies Jamia Millia Islamia and moderated by Dr. Md. Aftab Ahmad, Director of India Arab Cultural Centre Jamia Millia Islamia New Delhi which was con-



ducted in the conference room of IACC.

Dr. Md. Aftab Ahmad director of IACC inaugurated the event by thanking honorable Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mazhar Asif and the Registrar Prof. (Dr.) Md. Mahtab Alam Rizvi for being generous enough to support and patronize such academ-

ic activities which enhance the debate and discussions among students and faculties. He also thanked Prof. Hemanyun Akhtar Nazmi for accepting his invitation to chair the session and enlighten the students with his expertise in this field. The director of the Centre along with intro-

ducing the theme of the lecture introduced the speaker, Dr. Alisha Khatun from the Faculty of Law and thanked her for agreeing to speak on the topic. Introducing the topic to the audience chair of the session Prof. H. A. Nazmi highlighted the socio-cultural and as well as politi-

cal condition of Arab society before Islam in general and the condition of women in particular. He believed that the after Islam, the condition changed hugely but in modern context there remains various things to be explored and interpreted to meet the needs prevalent in today's society.

The speaker Dr. Alisha Khatun explored that the status of Muslim women has been shaped by a long historical evolution in the Islamic world—from the pre-Islamic era (Jahiliyya), through the revelation of Islamic

law (Shara), to modern legal reforms. While Jahiliyya is often characterized by social customs that marginalized women, early Islamic teachings brought transformative changes, granting rights in marriage, inheritance, and economic life. Over centuries, Islamic legal interpretations (fiqh) and socio-cultural practices influenced women's position in Muslim societies. In the modern period, legal reforms—often stimulated by colonial encounters, nationalism, and women's rights movements—have further

reshaped women's rights and status.

The evolution from pre-Islamic practice to Islamic legal reforms demonstrates a trajectory of expanding rights for Muslim women, albeit shaped by historical, cultural, and political forces. Early Islamic law introduced significant protections and rights. Over centuries, juristic interpretations and social norms limited some freedoms. Modern legal reforms—driven by national legislatures and women's movements—have further transformed women's status, often reconciling

religious principles with contemporary human rights ideals. The ongoing debates reflect the dynamic interplay between tradition, reform, and gender justice in Muslim societies.

The event was concluded by a formal vote of thanks by Dr. Zulfikar Ali Ansari from IACC, JMI who thanked all the participants present in the event including Prof. H.A Nazmi from West Asia Prof. Nasir Raza Khan from IACC, Dr. Md. Aftab Ahmad and all the faculty members of West Asia and India Arab Cultural Centre.



India Arab Cultural Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia organized an extension lecture on “***India and Iran: Ancient Civilizational Links and Contemporary Perspectives***” on 13 April 2026. Dr. Faridoddin Faridasr, Cultural Councilor of Islamic Republic of Iran in New Delhi delivered the lecture. The event was chaired by Prof. Zubair Meenai, Dean, Faculty of Social Science Jamia Millia Islamia.

Dr. Aftab Ahmad, Director of the Centre inaugurated the event by thanking the Honorable Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mazhar Asif and Respected Registrar, Prof. (Dr.) Md Mahtab Alam Rizvi for being generous enough to support and patronize such academic activities which enhance the debate and discussions among students and faculties. Expressing his thanks and gratitude towards the guest speaker, Dr. Faridoddin Faridasr and the chair, Prof. Zubair Meenai introduced the theme of the lecture and introduced the speaker. Dr. Ahmad said that the civilizational links between India and Iran are among the oldest and most profound in the world, rooted in a shared Indo-Iranian origin that dates back over 3,000 years.

Dr. Faridasr expressed his view by revisiting the history and said India and Iran (ancient Persia) rank among the world’s oldest continuous civilizations with deep cultural, linguistic and historical ties. Both share a civilization heritage that predates recorded history, rooted in the early Indo-Iranian cultural sphere and shaped over millennia through trade, religion, language and geopolitical interaction. He highlighted that archaeological and historical evidence shows that contacts existed between ancient India and regions in what is now Iran and Mesopotamia as early as the 3rd millennium BCE. Indus Valley artefacts and seals appear in areas of southern Iran and Mesopotamia, indicating trade and cultural exchange. Linguistically, Sanskrit and Old Persian are both branches of the Indo-European language family. Early texts like India’s *Rigveda* and ancient Iran’s *Avesta* show parallels in vocabulary, mythic motifs and ritual concepts. With the spread of Islam into Persia and parts of India, cultural and intellectual exchange expanded. Persian became a major language of administration and literature in medieval India. The Indo-Persian literary tradition, including styles like *Sabk-e-Hendi*, deeply influenced South Asian arts and literature. In contemporary time India and Iran established formal diplomatic relations in 1950 and have maintained cooperation in various spheres — from cultural diplomacy to economic cooperation. Throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War era, India sought to maintain a balanced relationship with Iran, even as geopolitical pressures (such as U.S. sanctions) affected economic ties.

In his presidential remarks, Prof. Zubair Meenai said that the relationship between India and Iran is not limited to modern geopolitics — it is anchored in deep historical and civilizational links

that encompass linguistic roots, shared spiritual traditions, material culture exchanges and long-standing interactions over millennia. In the contemporary era, these ties continue to evolve pragmatically in response to global dynamics, reinforcing both countries' interests in economic cooperation, regional connectivity, and cultural collaboration.

The event was concluded by a formal vote of thanks by Dr. Zulfikar Ali Ansari who thanked all the participants present in the event including the Guest Speaker, Dr. Faridoddin Faridasr and the Chair, Prof. Zubair Meenai.