

Press Release

JMI hosts a lecture by Mr Alaa Didi, ICCR, MEA, GoI's Academic Visitor from the Republic of Maldives

New Delhi, April 15, 2026

The Department of History and Culture, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) last week hosted a talk and interactive session by Mr. Alaa Didi, Research Analyst, Ministry of Arts and Heritage, Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. Of India's Academic Visitor from the Republic of Maldives, in the Seminar Room of the department.

On his arrival in the campus accompanied by Mr. Abdullah Asim, his social media Team and ICCR's liasioning officer Mr Deepak, Mr Alaa Didi had a meeting with the Head of the Department, Prof Preeti Sharma and faculty members. The Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Languages Prof. Iqtidar Mohd. Khan and Dean, International Relations, JMI, Prof. Ushwinder Kaur Popli also joined for the deliberations. The guest was briefed about Jamia's illustrious history and its current expansion and progression. Mr Didi also shared interesting facts and information about Jamia's Maldivian connections and the legacy of Maldivian students coming to Jamia for higher studies in the past. He carried copy of a letter written by Jamia Millia's then Vice Chancellor and former President of India, Dr Zakir Husain to a Maldivian scholar.

After the introductory meeting with Deans and HoD, Mr Didi addressed the students and delivered a lecture on "*India-Maldives Historical and Civilization Ties and Leveraging these Linkages to Enhance Present and Future Bilateral Ties.*" The event was attended by faculty members, research scholars, and students in large numbers.

Reflecting Jamia's cultural tradition the programme began with *Tilawat-e-Quran* by Dr. Shahnawaz Fayyaz from the Department of Urdu, and the Jamia *Tarana*. The Head of the Department, Prof. Preeti Sharma delivered the welcome address. She stated that such initiatives, as undertaken by the ICCR, are conducive for fostering shared academic goals and exploring collaborative research opportunities. She also acknowledged the generous support and encouragement provided by Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, JMI, Prof. Mazhar Asif and Registrar, JMI, Prof. Md Mahtab Alam Rizvi for organizing such events. This was followed by words of blessings from Prof. Iqtidar Mohd. Khan, Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Languages, who emphasised upon the relevance of such academic activities. The Dean, IR, Prof. Ushwinder Popli shared information about the various activities and programs undertaken by the International Office, JMI, attesting to its global presence.

The guest speaker was formally welcomed and felicitated by the Dean - FHL, Dean - IR, and the Head of the Department of History. A formal introduction of the speaker was presented by Dr. Rohma Javed Rashid.

In his engaging lecture, Mr. Alaa Didi discussed the long-standing historical and cultural connections between India and the Maldives. He challenged the common

misconception that the Maldives emerged only after colonial intervention, emphasizing instead that the region has a much older history, with origins dating back to before the Common Era. He noted that the Maldives was known by different names in historical sources and developed through interactions between South Indian Dravidian populations and Indo-Aryan settlers.

Mr. Didi also spoke at length about the political and social structure of the Maldives, highlighting that it remained a monarchy until 1968 and had an ancient system of governance divided into mandalam. He further explained that Maldivian society was originally matrilineal, offering insights into how such a system functioned in practice.

The lecture also touched upon the introduction of Islam in the Maldives in 1153 CE, noting that there are multiple theories regarding this transition. Mr. Didi emphasized the importance of understanding these historical processes in order to better appreciate the cultural links between India and the Maldives. He concluded by reflecting on the role both countries can play in strengthening bilateral ties by building on these shared historical and cultural connections.

The session was followed by a energetic question-and-answer round, where the participants engaged with the speaker on topics such as the functioning of matrilineal society, the process of Islamization, and contemporary India–Maldives relations and so on...

The vote of thanks delivered by Prof. Nishat Manzar, expressing gratitude to the speaker, organizers, and participants for making the session informative and engaging. The event concluded with the National Anthem.

Mr Didi met Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, JMI, Prof. Mazhar Asif after the lecture. He was accompanied by Prof Preeti Sharma and Prof Ushwinder Popli. They discussed various academic, historical ties, cultural affinity and contemporary issues pertaining to India-Maldives and West Asia. The Vice Chancellor shared information about Jamia Central Library's rich manuscripts collections with the guest. Prof Asif also gifted the library resources catalogues to the visitor.

Overall it proved to be an academically enriching experience.

Prof. Saima Seed
Chief Public Relations Officer



Jamia Millia Islamia
NEW DELHI





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New Delhi, Delhi, India

Jamia Nagar, New Delhi, Delhi 110025, India
Lat 28.560181; Long 77.281624

Wednesday, 08/04/2026 11:48 AM GMT+05:30

Note : Captured by GPS Map Camera



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Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar Marg, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi, Delhi 110025, India

Lat 28.560123, Long 77.281658

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New Delhi, Delhi, India
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Delhi, Delhi 110025, India
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