

Press Release

Jamia's Premchand Archives & Literary Centre, JMI, holds the IX Munshi Premchand Memorial Lecture

Jamia's Premchand Archives and Literary Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), organized the IX Munshi Premchand Memorial Lecture on Tuesday, 10th February 2026. The lecture was delivered by Prof. Prof. Saghir Afraheim, Former Head, Department of Urdu, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, and presided over by the honorable Vice Chancellor of JMI, Prof. Mazhar Asif.

In his address, Prof. Asif highlighted the contributions of Mushi Premchand in the field of literature and the relevance of his fiction and writings in the present scenario. He said that Premchand remains "a torchbearer for the teachers, students, and scholars" for their research and writing. He reminded the audience about the contributions and work of both Premchand and Kabir, who Prof. Asif said are "the valuable and priceless heritage of Indian literature". Prof. Asif also assured all possible institutional support to Jamia's Premchand Archives.

Prof. Saghir Afraheim, former Head, Department of Urdu, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, an erudite writer, critic, and fiction novelist, placed Premchand as a pathfinder (*Naqeeb*) who transformed Urdu/Hindi literature by grounding it in the stark realities of rural Indian life. The lecture made rich references to his critical analysis of the relevance and human significance (*manviat*) of Premchand's fiction. "Ethical Humanism: The "manviat" (significance/meaning) lies in Premchand's portrayal of moral conflicts, particularly how characters maintain their humanity under the pressure of poverty, colonial oppression, and social hierarchy," he stated. He spoke about how the purpose of literature aligns with Premchand's own philosophy in *Sahitya Ka Uddeshya* (The Purpose of Literature), which argues that literature should be a tool for social awakening and reform. Based on the literary research of Saghir Afraheim, notably in his work *Prem Chand : Ek Naqeeb* (1987) and *Prem Chand Ki Takhliqat Ka Maroozi Mutala* (2017), the "humanity" or humanistic essence (Manviat/Insaniyat) in Premchand's fiction was reiterated as a profound commitment to realism and social empathy. The humanistic aspect in Premchand's fiction, according to his analysis, as he stated in his talk, includes anti-caste sentiment, empowerment of women, and peasant struggle: chronicling the struggles of peasants against landlords and the colonial system (e.g., *Godaan*).

Prof. Iqtidar Mohd. Khan, Dean, Faculty of Humanities & Languages, JMI also spoke about the close relation of Premchand with Jamia who acclaimed Jamia as the great secular institution of Hindustan. Prof. Kausar Mazhari, Head, Department of Urdu, Jamia Millia Islamia, advised that there is a need of the collection of all those books of different languages in the Archives for their easy reference of the scholars and students in one place. Prof. Neeraj Kumar, Head, Department of Hindi, JMI also highlighted the literary beauty and contribution of Premchand for both Hindi and Urdu.

On this occasion, Prof. Shahzad Anjum, *Director of Archives*, inaugurated the event by thanking honorable Vice Chancellor Prof. Asif for being generous enough to support and patronize such academic activities in the Archives, which enhance the level of debates and discussions among scholars, students, and faculty members. He also thanked Prof. Saghir Afraheim for accepting his invitation to chair the session and enlighten the students with his expertise on Munshi Premchand, the iconic writer of Urdu/Hindi. He also thanked Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Ganai, Nazim, Iqbal Institute, Kashmir University, Srinagar, who graced the occasion during the lecture.

Ms. Shradha Shankar, the convener of the program, introduced Munshi Premchand and the theme of the memorial lecture. The event was concluded by a formal vote of thanks by Ms. Snigdha Roy, Archivist, from JPALC JMI, who thanked all the participants present on the occasion. The program was attended by a large gathering of students, researchers, and teachers in the main hall of the Premchand Archives & Literary Centre.

Prof. Saima Saeed
Chief Public Relations Officer




