

Press Release

**Union Minister Shri Chirag Paswan inaugurates National Conference on 'Eco-Inclusive Packaging in Food Processing' at Jamia Millia Islamia; Calls for stronger collaboration between industry, regulatory bodies and research institutions**

New Delhi, 24 March 2026

Hon'ble Union Minister for Food Processing Industries, Government of India, Shri Chirag Paswan today inaugurated a National Conference on '*Eco-Inclusive Packaging in Food Processing: Bridging Sustainability, Gender and Innovation*' at Jamia Millia Islamia's Ansari Auditorium in the presence of the Vice Chancellor, JMI, Prof. Mazhar Asif and Registrar, JMI, Prof. Md. Mahtab Alam Rizvi. The national conference was organised by the Centre for the Study of Social Inclusion (CSSI), Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), in collaboration with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) and the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL). More than 300 NGOs from across the country participated in the day-long conference which includes three technical sessions.

The inaugural session commenced with a ceremonial quarter Guard of Honour by NCC cadets setting a formal tone for the proceedings. Other dignitaries present on the dais, included Dr. Abha Rani Singh (IRS) Chairperson and Managing Director, National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC), Ministry of Minority Affairs, GoI; Dr. M. J. Khan, Chairman Emeritus, Indian Chamber of Food and Agriculture and Prof. Tanuja, Dean Academic Affairs and Officiating Director, CSSI.

Stating that he was delighted to be in the midst of the faculty and students of "a university that needs no introduction" and that he "would have loved to be a student of JMI had he been given the opportunity", Hon'ble Union Minister Shri Paswan in his inaugural address highlighted the Government's initiatives and vision for sustainable food processing, eco-friendly packaging, and inclusive innovation in the sector. He emphasized the crucial role that the food processing industry will play in ensuring food safety not just within India but in delivering nutritious and high-quality food products to consumers in countries around the world.

Shri Paswan said that the Green Revolution ensured that India started producing surplus grains but the need of the hour is to "convert the volume into value". Emphasizing the importance of quality in the food processing and agriculture sector, as well as the significance of global standards and quality assurance, the Hon'ble Minister said the industry must align itself with the vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047*. "The kind of attention this

sector has received from the Government of India in the last 11 years is unprecedented. The govt. got FDI in the sector which was missing until now." Shri Paswan echoed Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji's vision of making India the 'global food basket' and said that the target should be to ensure that "at least one 'Made in India' food item is served in every dining table across the world".

Emphasizing the importance of quality in the food processing industry and across its verticals, Hon'ble Minister, Shri Paswan cautioned that a single rejected consignment at an international port could dent India's carefully built image. The goal of his ministry and all the stakeholders ought to be to build a reputation where it is said that "if something has come from India it must be of a very high quality".

The Union Minister stressed the need to build stronger collaboration between industry, regulatory bodies and research institutions like JMI and said that the food processing industry had tremendous growth potential especially because of impactful schemes like PMFME under the *Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan*. Shri Paswan therefore appealed to the students to tap the emerging opportunities in the sector and participate in it. He said that his ministry and the scheme will provide the necessary hand-holding and the right ecosystem such that the future entrepreneurs, especially the youth can grow from being small scale entrepreneurs to micro, medium and eventually large scale entrepreneurs and transform into becoming industry leaders. "It is the youth that will realise the vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047* as we enter the next quarter of the 21st century in which the year 2047 falls", Shri Paswan said. He urged the youth and students of JMI to chase their dreams and be very ambitious when it comes to achieving their targets as they are the future of the country.

Stating that the challenge of food wastage needs to be addressed urgently, Shri Paswan reminded the audience of the need to be sensitive to the environment and adopt practices and use packaging materials that are not harmful to the earth's delicate ecosystem as we must all ensure that "we return the mother Earth in the same condition to our future generations as we inherited it from our forefathers".

In his address, Prof. Mazhar Asif, VC JMI, emphasized the role of higher education institutions in advancing sustainability and inclusion through collaborative efforts between academia, government, and industry and the big role that research institutions like JMI could play therein. Prof. Asif said that the name 'Chirag' Paswan symbolised knowledge, *noor*, *ilm*, and hope, and congratulated the Union Minister on the stellar work that he and his ministry were doing for the farmers and those linked to the agriculture and food processing sector of the country. Citing the examples of bananas and banana flowers, bamboo shoots and jack fruit which had tremendous potential for processing and marketing if harnessed well, Prof. Asif underscored the need to take the latest innovations and technical know-how to the farmers in small villages so that the benefit does not remain centred to big towns and large scale farmers.

In his address, Prof. Md. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, Registrar, JMI, underscored the university's commitment to fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and policy-relevant research in the growing sector of food processing in India. He said that under the young and extremely dynamic Union Minister, Shri Chirag Paswan, who carries the rootedness, humility and the vision of his father, the tall leader and prominent politician, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan ji, the ministry is set to re-define India's nutrition ecosystem into a robust and self-reliant one. Stating that in the last 11 years, the food processing sector has registered impressive growth, Prof Rizvi said that JMI was looking forward to collaborating with the Ministry in research and teaching related activities under the rubric of the food processing sector.

Delivering the welcome address, Prof. Tanuja, highlighted the importance of sustainable and inclusive approaches in the food processing sector, particularly emphasizing the intersection of gender, innovation, and environmental responsibility.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Arvind Kumar, Convenor, followed by the National Anthem, marking the formal close of the inaugural proceedings.

Prof. Saima Saeed  
Chief Public Relations Officer



**Prof. Mazhar Asif**  
Vice Chancellor  
Jamia Millia Islamia

**Shri. Chirag Paswan**  
Hon'ble Minister  
MoEP





