

Press Release

JMI holds a Special Exhibition to commemorate the 145th Birth Anniversary of Munshi Premchand and to pay tribute to his cherished relationship with the university

New Delhi, August 11, 2025

On August 8, 2025, Jamia's Premchand Archives and Literary Centre (JPALC) brought to a close its special exhibition on the occasion of the 145th Birth Anniversary of Munshi Premchand (1880-1936), one of India's greatest writers after whom the Jamia Millia Islamia's famous archive is named. Premchand wrote in Hindi and Urdu with equal fluency, and, as his literary corpus demonstrates, he brought those on the margins of society to the very centre of his narrative.

The Premchand Archives, as JPALC is commonly called, preserves the century long history of Jamia Millia Islamia as well as a literary collection, in primarily Hindi and Urdu that illuminates the cultural context in which Jamia made its journey into the modern world. The works of Premchand and his contemporaries is amongst the most valued holdings of the JPALC.

The exhibition which was on display from July 31, 2025, put on display the letters and private papers of Premchand as well as books and dissertations that had been written on him. The journals and magazines where his literary works had been originally published were also put on display.

A special attraction was a series of posters of Premchand's quotations that had been accompanied by sketches and illustrations of the writer by eminent artists. Throughout the week, teachers and students of various departments came to visit the exhibition. Students who had come to the JPALC for an orientation on the history of Jamia at the start of the academic term were also taken around the exhibition. They were excited to learn about Jamia's connection to Premchand.

Like the founders of Jamia, Premchand was deeply invested in the freedom movement. On November 7, 1932, he wrote an editorial in *Sangram* (a magazine he edited) supporting and admiring the secular and decolonizing experiment that was Jamia. This support came at a crucial juncture when Jamia was confronting a huge financial crisis. In 1935, in response to a request made by the editor of Jamia which was published by Maktaba Jamia (Jamia's publishing house/printing press) Premchand sends for printing what is arguably his most famous short story, *Kafan*. It was Maktaba Jamia that first published Premchand's *Kafan*. In 1939, three years after Premchand passed away, Maktaba Jamia published the Urdu version of *Godaan*, his famous last novel.

The exhibition was a tribute to Premchand's cherished relationship with Jamia Millia Islamia.

Prof. Saima Saeed
Chief Public Relations Officer





