

ADDRESS BY HON'BLE CHANCELLOR, JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA AND GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR, DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA AT THE ANNUAL CONVOCATION, 2017 OF THE JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA AT JMI, DELHI ON APRIL 16, 2018

Hon'ble Minister of Science and Technology, Dr. Harsh Vardhan,
Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia, Prof Talat Ahmad,
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Prof Shahid Ashraf,
Registrar JMI, Mr. A. P. Siddiqui (IPS),
Distinguished Guests, Faculty Members, Students, Media Persons,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a matter of singular pride and honour to be here in your midst on the occasion of the Annual Convocation 2017. I am particularly delighted as this is my first convocation as Chancellor of Jamia. It is a moment that evokes an emotional response on two counts: one, it is a reminder of the greatness of this institution that was founded almost a century ago in 1920. Second, we have to bid *adieu* to you as students who we have nurtured all these years as you prepare to leave the annals of Jamia and go out into the world to embark on your careers and new destinations in life. Jamia to most of you, like many in the teaching fraternity means more than a university; it is a second home. Its unique cultural diversity, friendly atmosphere and dynamic departments and centres of research make it particularly endearing.

This is a much awaited moment in every student's life when your hard work is appreciated in the form of the degree you are awarded and in some cases a medal for those who have outshone their peers. However, it is only befitting that I remind you that there are more reasons to rejoice than this. You are getting your degree from an extraordinary institution, one with a distinctive history, making your degree special ... a university whose founders were nationalists and freedom fighters. Invoking their names is like making a roll call of honour --- the illustrious list includes the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu,

my own granduncle Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who not only made the cause of Jamia their own but gave unflinching support to the founders of Jamia. The founders of this institution were luminaries of their time like Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar, A.M. Khwaja, Maulana Mehmud Hasan, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. M.A. Ansari, Dr. Zakir Husain, Dr. Muhammad Mujeeb, and many more men and women who made great sacrifices to build this institution which today you call your *alma mater*.

This puts you in an extraordinary league of graduates, postgraduates and PhD degree holders who carry with them values that are synonymous with the Republic of India --- pluralism, unity in diversity, a scientific temper and above all nationalism.

You, my dear students, are a product of an institution which has had its baptism by fire and which has shown tremendous perseverance. Resistance to the colonial system of education, a thought which impregnated the genesis of Jamia in its concept of '*Nai Taleem*' paved the way for the philosophy of 'education with a difference' as is evident from the growth and progress of the institution in its post independence phase. JMI got the status of a 'Deemed University' in 1962 and was made a Central University in December 1988 by a Special Act of Parliament. It so happened that I was presiding where the Act was passed as Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha.

Without doubt Jamia has made tremendous progress over the years. Today, the university offers an impressive catalogue of over 250 courses covering the entire spectrum of the educational system from under-graduate, post-graduate and doctoral studies. Through their academic departments and research centres of excellence, JMI's 9 faculties offer rigorous programmes in all major academic disciplines including multidisciplinary and upcoming areas.

In the last four years, Jamia Millia Islamia has been making a mark at national and international levels under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Talat Ahmad. This is reflected in its ranking, details of which have been enumerated by the Vice-Chancellor in his annual report.

JMI has been rendering a yeoman's service to the nation in the last 98 years since it was founded in 1920. The national flag fluttering on a 102-foot high pole in the midst of the university's lush green lawn testifies to Jamia's rich history of nationalism and its present day commitment to nation building by adding trained workforce of engineers, technocrats, teachers, scientists, journalists, lawyers, artists and social scientists.

Let me also put it on record that the university has been implementing with sincerity and dedication all programmes and initiatives of the Government of India to make higher education a partner in the country's growth and development. Jamia has taken a lead in implementing the **Prime Minister's Digital India** programme by producing large volumes of e-content, making the campus fully Wi-Fi enabled, opting for Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), digitizing its library services and by becoming a member of National Digital Library. In line with **Skill India programme**, JMI is running short-term courses for drop-outs and unemployed youth under the aegis of its Centre for Innovation & Entrepreneurship where they are trained in bottle making, bakery products, spice grinding, packaging, jewellery design, tailoring and the like. These youth acquire the necessary skills to become future entrepreneurs and be usefully self employed. The university has also been giving thrust to the government's Swatch Bharat campaign.

Since taking over as Chancellor, I have been making every effort to connect the universities in Manipur, where I am Governor with Jamia Millia Islamia through exchange programs like joint seminars. As part of this

initiative, a two-day national seminar on “Migration and Ethnicity in North-East India” at Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Regional Campus located at Kangpokpi was organised in collaboration with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies and JMI’s Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research. I hope we are able to replicate it in other disciplines, especially in Mass Communication. I am referring to the university’s coveted Anwar Jamal Kidwai Mass Communication Research Centre which has produced outstanding actors, journalists, film makers and films, radio and TV technicians.

I am a strong votary of girls’ education especially in the field of Science and Technology. To encourage women students from minorities and disadvantaged groups about education and professional opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) at US institutions of higher learning, I was a part of a 4-day workshop that we organised at JMI in collaboration with Ohio State University. 25 young women, many of them from J&K actively participated in the workshop and should hopefully book a berth for themselves in top US universities in STEM fields.

I would like to conclude by adding that Jamia has expanded in the last 9 decades to provide all-round education in major disciplines of the Humanities, Sciences and the Social Sciences. However, one discipline that is glaringly missing is the **Medical Sciences**. I take this opportunity to request the Honourable Minister to help us in setting up a Medical College with a hospital so that we can train future professionals in a science deemed necessary for health and well-being of society. Jamia is already equipped and doing well in allied medical fields like Physiotherapy and Dentistry. Adding a medical college will make it a complete destination for higher education in Medical Sciences. Given JMI’s track record of excellence in teaching and

research, I am sure it will become one of the pioneering institutions in the country.

I am happy to see so many women students in convocation robes. This is an empowering and a happy sight. You have hit the glass ceiling and I am sure this is only the beginning, as the famous Chinese proverb puts it, ‘a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step’. My dear students, you are the country’s future. You are capable and have infinite potentiality. I wish you all the very best for a future that is full of possibilities. Make the most of it. Go out in your pursuit of truth and knowledge, fame and glory will follow. There might be moments of self doubt and fear of failure, abandon them and chase your dreams.

All my best wishes will always be with you.

Thank you.