

# JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA

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Jamia Millia Islamia, an institution originally established at Aligarh in United Provinces, India in 1920 became a Central University by an act of the Indian Parliament in 1988. In Urdu language, Jamia means 'University', and Millia means 'National'. The story of its growth from a small institution in the pre-independence India to a central university located in New Delhi—offering integrated education from nursery to research in specialized areas—is a saga of dedication, conviction and vision of a people who worked against all odds and saw it growing step by step. They “built up the Jamia Millia stone by stone and sacrifice by sacrifice,” said Sarojini Naidu, the nightingale of India.

Under the colonial British rule, two dominant trends joined hands and contributed towards in the birth of Jamia. One was the anti-colonial Islamic activism and the other was the pro-independence aspiration of the politically radical section of western educated Indian Muslim intelligentsia. In the political climate of 1920, the two trends gravitated together with Mahatma Gandhi as a catalyst. The anti-colonial activism signified by the Khilafat and the pro-independence aspirations symbolised by the non-cooperation movement of the Indian National Congress helped to harness creative energies and the subsequent making of Jamia Millia Islamia. Rabindranath Tagore called it “one of the most progressive educational institutions of India”.

Responding to Gandhiji's call to boycott all educational institutions supported or run by the colonial regime, a group of nationalist teachers and students quit Aligarh Muslim University, protesting against its pro-British inclinations. The prominent members of this movement were Maulana Mehmud Hasan, Maulana Mohamed Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari, and Abdul Majid Khwaja.

On 22 November 1920, Hakim Ajmal Khan was elected the first chancellor of Jamia. Mohamed Ali Jauhar became Jamia's first Vice Chancellor, as Allama Iqbal could not accept the offer made through Gandhiji. It also elected a syndicate and created a syllabus subcommittee. The known freedom fighter and Muslim theologian, Maulana Mehmud Hasan, laid the foundation stone of Jamia Millia Islamia at Aligarh on Friday, 29 October 1920.

On 1 March 1935, the foundation stone for a school building was laid at Okhla, then a non-descript village in the southern outskirts of Delhi. In 1936, all institutions of Jamia, except Jamia Press, the Maktaba and the library, were shifted to the new campus. The basic emphasis of Jamia was on evolving innovative education methods. This led to the establishment of a teacher's college (Ustadon ka Madrasa) in 1938. In 1936, Dr. M.A. Ansari passed away. On 4 June 1939, Jamia Millia Islamia was registered as a society.