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Press Release

JMI and MHE organises Mushirul Hasan Memorial Lecture on "Asian Universalism in the Age of Nationalism"

Jamia Millia Islamia(JMI), in collaboration with the Mushirul Hasan Endowment (MHE) organized the inaugural Mushirul Hasan Memorial Lecture on 1st October 2020 in memory of late Professor Mushirul Hasan who was Vice Chancellor of the JMI from 2004-2009.

The lecture was delivered online by Professor Sugata Bose, Gardiner Professor of History, Harvard University on "Asian Universalism in the Age of Nationalism".

JMI Vice Chancellor Prof. Najma Akhtar welcomed the participants to the lecture by paying her tribute to Professor Mushirul Hasan, who was associated with JMI for nearly 3 decades as a Professor of History and as Vice Chancellor. She referred to Jamia's journey of a hundred years and how JMI has been ranked as one of the best Central Universities today.

Professor Sugata Bose, an eminent historian of modern India, spoke extensively on the role of eminent leaders of the Indian national movement like Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore besides modern Chinese nationalists like Sun-Yat-Sen who were the leading proponents of Asian universalism in the 20th Century. The idea did not come to be practised meaningfully in the second half of the 20th Century due to the aggressive nationalism of other Asian countries who harboured and pursued imperial policies of the European variety.

Mahatma Gandhi understood that India's advocacy of peace and non-violence was the precondition for contributing to the concept and practice of universalism in Asia.

It was primarily the common anti-colonial agenda which had originally propelled China, India Japan and other countries of Asia to unite on a pan Asian ideology of Asian universalism in the early 20th century.

Regarding the future of the idea, Professor Bose remarked that much of its success will depend on Indo-China relations and the ability of these two potential Great Powers to rise above national rivalries and competitive power ambitions and work for the continent's betterment and future. He said that unfortunately the Western model of modernity and development which is militarily nationalistic and technologically aggressive cannot be a sound basis for the values that Universalism stands for and should be espoused for peace and human development.

Professor Bose urged for a better understanding between the contemporary Asian powers who should take the lead in ensuring a future free from narrow nationalism by adopting the value premises of a new liberating inclusive ideal of Universalism.

Dr. Zoya Hasan, Prof. Emerita, JNU, highlighted Mushirul Hasan's achievements as a historian and as one the builders of modern Jamia, a man with a universalist vision and mission.

Professor Asaduddin, Dean, School of Humanities and Languages reminisced about Mushirul Hasan the person, and the human being, who had a great sense of humour, and a great sense of fine arts and aesthetics.

Dr. Prabhat Patnaik, Professor Emeritus, JNU while discussing Prof. Bose's lecture, said the ideas of pan Asian unity and universalism will only take fruition when poverty and inequality is wiped out from Asia, especially India. India needs to move towards a genuine welfare state which guarantees a universal minimum income to all.

The Mushirul Hasan Memorial Lecture concluded with a vote of thanks from the coordinator Prof. Rumki Basu, Department of Political Science who thanked Dr. Sugata Bose, for a seminal presentation, which was not only thought provoking but also had a constructive vision for 21st Century Asia.

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