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Press Release

JMI organises Online Lecture on “The Indo-Pacific Concept: Genesis and Conceptualisations”

The MMAJ Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), hosted an online lecture titled “The Indo-Pacific Concept: Genesis and Conceptualisations” on 30th September 2021. Captain (Dr) Gurpreet S Khurana, Indian Navy, delivered the lecture. He is a visiting Professor at the Naval War College, Goa, a member of the drafting committee of the Newport Manual of Law of Naval Warfare and former Executive Director, National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi.

Prof. Ajay Darshan Behera, Officiating Director of the MMAJ Academy of International Studies, welcomed the speaker. In his introductory remark, he introduced the participants to the lecture’s theme and emphasised the emerging importance of the Indo-Pacific region in academia.

Dr. Khurana began his lecture explaining the components of India’s geostrategic frontiers vis-a-vis the Indo-Pacific, which is premised on security linkages since the turn of the 21st century. He elucidated India’s objectives concerning the Indo-Pacific, which is, (i) to meet geo-economics ends, (ii) to achieve shared prosperity, (iii) common interests in a free and open maritime order, and (iv) restraining disruptive forces, both state and non-state. He recalled the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses and Japan Institute of International Affairs Dialogue in 2006, in which China’s increasing role in the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean Region (IOR) was discussed. According to him, Japan, is apprehensive of a threat to the Sea Lines of Communications. Whereas, for India, the threat pertains to its prospective blue economy and the security of the Indian Ocean Region.

Highlighting US interests and approach, he argued that the ‘Asia-Pacific’ construct was inadequate. He expounded two reasons for this argument: (i) China’s strategic footprint expands to the IOR, (ii) Need for India’s proactive role in the pan-Asian security architecture. He narrated how the US framed and re-framed the region and finally, in 2017, re-instated the term “Indo-Pacific”. He also explained the interests and approaches of ASEAN and the European Union (EU) in the Indo-Pacific. He stated that President Trump’s “Indo-Pacific” statement, and the simultaneous launch of the ‘QUAD’, made ASEAN countries apprehensive. He added that both ASEAN and EU do not endorse the “Indo-Pacific” concept. He analysed China’s interests and approaches vis-a-vis the Indo-Pacific. He pointed out that President Trump’s statement on the “Indo-Pacific” caused adverse reactions among Chinese Think-Tanks. He also surmised that China is looking to capitalise on the Indo-Pacific.

He concluded his presentation by highlighting the conceptual tools and objectives of India vis-à-vis Indo-Pacific. The tools include the vision of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific. Whereas, the objectives are economic well-being and prosperity.

Participants from all across India attended the lecture. It was followed by a question- and-answer session where the participants raised several questions. In his concluding remarks, Prof. Ajay Darshan Behera thanked the speaker for his critical observations and insights and thanked the audience for their enthusiastic participation.