

Public Relations Office

Jamia Millia Islamia

April 9, 2025

Press Release

Jamia Millia Islamia Hosts Soul-Stirring Qawwali Performance by Niazi Nizami Brothers in Collaboration with SPIC MACAY

New Delhi: Jamia Millia Islamia, known for its diversity and vibrant mosaic culture rooted in the Swadeshi movement during India's freedom struggle, continues to enrich the student experience through holistic and immersive educational initiatives. In keeping with its legacy of pluralistic values and academic vibrancy, the Office of the Dean, Students' Welfare, the Cultural Committee, and SPIC MACAY (Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth), under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, organized a mesmerizing qawwali evening on April 8, 2025 at Dr. M.A. Ansari Auditorium and Safdar Hashmi Amphitheatre, JMI.

The event commenced with the reverent recitation of the *Tilawat-e-Quran*, setting a serene and spiritual tone for the evening. This was followed by a brief introduction to SPIC MACAY, an organization with a glorious 47-year legacy dedicated to value-based education and cultural preservation.

The centerpiece of the evening was a spellbinding performance by the Niazi Nizami Brothers, legendary qawwals from the venerated Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya Dargah, who have been the bearers of the 700-year old tradition of qawwali to this day. The group—comprising Ustads Haider Nizami, Hasan Nizami, and Imran Nizami—is celebrated for their extraordinary vocal artistry and for keeping alive the centuries-old tradition of qawwali. With renditions of timeless classics and spiritually uplifting compositions, the artists transported the audience to a realm of devotion and transcendence.

The welcome address was delivered by Prof. Neelofer Afzal, Dean, Students' Welfare and Chairperson, Cultural Committee, JMI. She expressed her sincere gratitude to Prof. Mazhar Asif, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of JMI and Chief Patron of the event, for his constant encouragement and guidance, which made the programme possible. She also extended warm appreciation to Prof. Md. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, Registrar of JMI, for his thoughtful insights, support, and

meticulous coordination behind the scenes that contributed to the event's grand success. She warmly welcomed the enthusiastic audience and thanked the Niazi Nizami Brothers for their gracious acceptance of the invitation, despite a demanding schedule.

In his address, Prof. Md. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, Registrar JMI, offered profound insights into the historical and spiritual significance of qawwali, highlighting its strong roots in Sufi traditions and its expression of deep devotion and divine love.

Padma Shri Dr. Kiran Seth, Professor Emeritus, IIT Delhi, and the visionary Founder of SPIC MACAY, delivered a thought-provoking talk on the distinction between mere programme and a transformative experience. He remarked that while the performers present the art, it is the engagement of the audience—particularly students—that truly elevates it into an unforgettable experience.

Delivering the presidential address, Prof. Mazhar Asif, Vice-Chancellor JMI, quoted verses from the Holy Quran while elaborating on the concepts of *sama* (spiritual listening) and *raqs* (ecstatic dance), both intrinsic to Sufi musical traditions. He traced the etymology of the word *qawwali*, and underscored the enduring importance of *zikr* and music in human life and spiritual evolution. Reciting a couplet from the great Sufi poet, composer, musician and scholar, Amir Khusrau, a pioneering proponent of ghazal and qawwali, Prof Asif delved into the aural experience that emanates from musical instruments like *dhol* and *tabla* during qawwali renditions.

The qawwali performance began with the iconic "Chaap Tilak" and flowed seamlessly into deeply spiritual renditions of "Khwaja Mere Khwaja," "Rangreza," "Mere Rashke Qamar," and other devotional classics. Each performance was met with thunderous applause and emotional resonance from the audience, who were visibly moved by the profound artistry and energy of the Niazi Nizami Brothers. In its commitment to nurturing a culturally enriched and student-focused academic environment, Jamia Millia Islamia, in collaboration with SPIC MACAY, reiterates its dedication to organizing such events that broaden students' horizons and foster appreciation for India's diverse cultural heritage.

The event concluded on a gracious note with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Umaima, Convener of the Cultural Committee, JMI, who acknowledged the collective efforts of all contributors and extended heartfelt appreciation to the audience for their presence and

participation. The programme culminated with the rendition of the National Anthem, marking a unifying end to the soulful evening.

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