



OCIS NEWS

OXFORD CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Vice President of India lectures on Identity and Citizenship



HE Mr Mohammad Hamid Ansari speaks on "Identity and Citizenship"

On Friday 1 November the Centre hosted HE Mr Mohammad Hamid Ansari, the Vice President of India, for a lecture and dinner. He was welcomed at the Centre's new building by the Director, the High Sheriff and the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire.

In his well-attended lecture, Mr Ansari took as his theme:

"Identity and Citizenship". Citizenship, he argued, should be seen not merely as a narrow concept, encapsulating rights and duties in society, but as accommodating the existence of a plurality of social identities. He went on to analyse how the Indian constitution was drafted in the

light of the distinctive heterogeneity of Indian society. The lecture was presided over by Lord Patten, the Chancellor of the University of Oxford, who proposed the vote of thanks. After the lecture, the Centre held a dinner in the Vice President's honour at Exeter College, where he was joined by senior members of the University, diplomats and leading personalities.

Baroness Verma represented Her Majesty's Government at the lecture. After the dinner, she gave a speech of welcome in which she emphasised the benefits to Britain and India of strengthening the close



HE Mr Mohammad Hamid Ansari is greeted by Lord Patten

OCIS - ECSSR Joint Symposium on Security in the Arabian Gulf

In December 2013, the Centre organised a Joint Symposium on "Security in the Arabian Gulf" with the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR). Senior academics and policymakers from the UK, Europe, the US, the Gulf region, China and Russia exchanged views and analyses at the event, which was hosted at ECSSR's headquarters in Abu Dhabi. Dr Jamal

Sanad Al-Suweidi, ECSSR Director General, and the Centre's Director welcomed participants to the opening session of the event.

The Symposium, which was widely reported in the UAE press, addressed security in all its aspects - military, economic, environmental, social - and in the light of its national, regional and global dimensions. Participants identified future challenges for the region, including the impacts of the continuing change and instability in a number of Arab countries, and also the opportunities to maximise the positive impacts of the region both regionally and internationally. This was the inaugural event in an important new partnership with the Emirates Centre and it is planned that such meetings will be convened on an annual basis, alternately in Abu Dhabi and in Oxford. The second in the series is planned for Ditchley Park, Oxfordshire, in the autumn of 2014.



The ECSSR - OCIS Roundtable in Abu Dhabi, December 2013

Chevening Visiting Fellows

A number of elections were made to Visiting Fellowships at the Centre:

Professor Amidu Sanni (Lagos State University) to a Visiting Fellowship in Michaelmas Term 2013 to conduct research on Arabic Literature. He made a presentation as part of the "Islam and Nation" seminar series.

Professor Osman Taştan, a specialist in Islamic Law from Ankara University, is the first Abdullah Gül-Chevening Visiting Fellow. While in residence during Hilary Term 2014, he gave a Fellows' seminar on "Public and Private Spaces Across Theory of Rights in Islamic Law: Past and Present".

Dr Muhammad Syafii Antonio, a specialist in Islamic Finance from Komite Ekonomi Nasional, Indonesia, joins the Centre in Trinity Term 2014 furthering the Centre's work on Islamic Finance.

Scholar in Residence in Islamic Finance

Dr Valentino Cattelan (University of Rome Tor Vergata) joined the Centre for the academic year as the second Securities Commission Malaysia-OCIS Scholar in Residence in Islamic Finance.

He gave a Fellows' Seminar on "Rule (*hukm*) and Right (*haqq*) in Islamic Finance" in Michaelmas Term 2013.

New Appointments

Sultan Azlan Shah Fellow

The Rt. Hon. Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers joined the Centre in Michaelmas Term as the first Sultan Azlan Shah Fellow.

Lord Phillips, former President of the UK Supreme Court, is additionally a visiting fellow of Mansfield College and has been appointed to a Visiting Professorship in Law at the University of Oxford. This is the Centre's first appointment in Law.



Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers

Mellon Senior Research Fellow

Dr. Moin Nizami received his PhD from the University of Cambridge before working as Assistant Professor in History at the International Islamic University of



Dr Moin Nizami

Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur). He specialises in Indo-Muslim social and intellectual history and joins the Centre as the Mellon Senior Research Fellow on the Centre's Atlas Project.

Roundtable on

Tolerance and Moderation in Muslim Societies

On 17 December 2013, the Centre held a conference on "Tolerance and Moderation in Muslim Societies" with the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. Scholars and leaders from different academic and religious traditions participated in discussions on issues surrounding the concepts of tolerance and moderation. Participants focused on three main themes in their discussions: the place of tolerance and moderation in Islamic religious thought and philosophy, the historical record, and the challenges facing Muslim and other faith communities today. Sessions were chaired by Professor Paul

Tun Abdul Razak Fellow

Dr Surin Pitsuwan, former Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), has joined the



Dr Surin Pitsuwan

Centre as the Tun Abdul Razak Fellow and contributed to the "Islam and Nation" seminar series in Michaelmas Term 2013. He has participated in academic conferences in the UK and overseas, strengthening the Centre's research capacity on Southeast Asia.

Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Fellow

In her new position as the Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Fellow, Tan Sri Zarinah Anwar continues to contribute to the Centre's work. In particular she plays a leading role in the



Tan Sri Zarinah Anwar

Centre's activities in Islamic Finance, supporting the annual SC-OCIS Conference on Islamic Finance which will take place in Kuala Lumpur this academic year.



Roundtable discussion on Tolerance and Moderation

Fiddes, Professor of Systematic Theology, The Revd Dr Andrew Gregory, the Chaplain of University College and Dr Liz Carmichael, the Convenor of the Oxford Network of Peace Studies.

ISESCO Director-General lectures on Renewal of Islamic Thought

In October 2013 The Director-General of the Islamic Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO), HE Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, visited the Centre and signed a programme of cooperation between the Centre and ISESCO. Activities to be supported include a workshop on “Peace, Coexistence and Tolerance” (to take place in Oxford), a Prize for Educators (to help shed light on major institutions, leading figures and sponsors active in the promotion of the values of peace and coexistence in the West)



HE Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri

In his lecture, HE Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri addressed the need to promote dialogue, tolerance and academic cooperation both locally and on global scale.

and support for the Centre’s Young Muslim Leadership Programme (YMLP), now in its ninth year.

Vice President of The World Bank lectures on From Political to Economic Awakening

Ms Inger Andersen (Vice President, Middle East and North Africa, the World Bank), delivered a lecture: “From Political to Economic Awakening” at the Examination Schools in November. She spoke about the steps taken by the World Bank to stimulate economic growth in the region, including cutting red tape and curbing abuses. She traced the role of economic and demographic factors in triggering the wave of political change which had swept across the region and analysed the challenges faced by international financial institutions as a result. She emphasised the extent to which



Ms Inger Andersen

a large percentage of the population was under 25. Education also had an important part to play in enabling young people to realise their aspirations and contribute to society.

economic reform would be required to meet the political demands of the people of the region. Reducing youth unemployment was a particular priority in countries where

HE Mr Nasser Judeh lectures on Jordanian Foreign Policy

In November, as part of the Special Lecture Series, the Foreign Minister of The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, HE Mr Nasser Judeh, delivered a lecture on “Jordanian Foreign Policy in a Changing Region”.

The Minister reviewed the measures taken by the Government of Jordan to promote economic development, which was an essential element of social and political stability. The wave of change affecting the Arab world, and consequent instabilities, had posed many new challenges for the Jordanian



HE Mr Nasser Judeh

Government. The continuing and painful conflict in Syria was a particular preoccupation. Jordan had to cope with instability on the border and a large number of refugees from the fighting. Jordan would continue to play a leading role in meeting these humanitarian challenges and promoting dialogue and peace in the region.

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Seminars on Islam and Nation

The Centre held a series of Seminars in Michaelmas Term on “Islam and Nation”. Centre Fellows and Visiting Fellows gave lectures on “Islam and Ethnicity as Articulating Principles of Grievance among the Malay Muslims of Southern Thailand” (Surin Pitsuwan, Tun Abdul Razak Fellow and Former Secretary-General ASEAN); “Maulana Jamal Mian Farangi Mahalli and Pakistan” (Francis Robinson); “The Power of Authority and the Authority of Power in Muslim West Africa: A Narrative from Nigeria” (Amidu Sanni, Chevening Visiting Fellow).

These talks were complemented by external contributors speaking on “Religious Knowledge and Cultural Politics in Egypt” (Hilary Kalmbach, University of Sussex); “Muslims in Southeast Asia and Symbols of the National State” (Kees van Dijk, Leiden University); “Myth and Nationalism in Modern Iran” (Ali Ansari, University of St Andrews).

Leadership Programme

In September, the Centre welcomed 23 young Muslim men and women to Oxford for the annual two-week Young Muslim Leadership Programme (YMLP).

Participants in the eighth YMLP were accommodated in Wadham College and enjoyed the usual busy programme of training with leaders in many fields of public life.

Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia speaks on Importance of Diversity

In September 2013, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, visited the Centre and delivered a lecture at Ditchley Park after a dinner with the Centre's Trustees and other invited guests.

His Excellency spoke about the importance of diversity and drew on the Malaysian experience of managing a complex multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious community. Dialogue and mutual respect underpinned by the appropriate legal framework were essential to the success of a diverse society such as Malaysia. The Minister also emphasised the vital role played by education.



Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin giving his lecture

This was an essential means to promote and sustain the values of citizenship, tolerance and cooperation.

HE Mr Bakir Izetbegovic lectures on Dignity, Freedom, & Democracy

HE Mr Bakir Izetbegovic, Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, visited the Centre on 28 October 2013 and lectured on: "The Quest for Dignity, Freedom, and Democracy in the Islamic World: A Bosnian Muslim's Perspective".



HE Mr Bakir Izetbegovic

He traced the hardships and suffering which the Bosnian people had undergone throughout history and notably in the violent period following the break-up of Yugoslavia. Many wounds had been opened which, after such a bitter conflict, would take time to heal. Much remained to be done, and many sacrifices had been required, but Bosnians could also be proud of their achievements and of the progress they were making, steadily and despite setbacks, towards creating a successful new state, based on values of mutual respect for diversity and shared citizenship.

The lecture sparked a lively discussion and many questions from an attentive audience.