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Jamia Hamdard: Cementing top place in quiet, understated way

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Photos: Piyal Bhattacharjee

New Delhi: Hamdard University — popularly known as Jamia Hamdard — has largely remained in shadows. According to vice-chancellor Seyed Hasnain, this is because the university has never really publicised itself, but weighs on its body of work to speak.

In the 2017 ranking of top universities and colleges under the National Institutional Ranking Framework released by the union HRD ministry recently, Hamdard University topped the list in the pharmacy study category.

Jamia Hamdard was granted a deemed government-funded university status in 1989, before which it was just a group of few independent schools. Its Faculty of Pharmacy is one of the oldest and most reputed ones in India. However, according to Hasnain, the university has far more to offer than what meets the eye. "We have an excellent school of Unani medicine, which is one of its kind for its facilities. We have cured several patients, who have not found any relief in modern medicine, at our Unani centre," he said.

Though primarily a paramedical sciences university, it also is home to some centres that treat patients for free in its Open Patient Department, while giving students a chance to practise their skills. "We have close to 2,500 patients coming to the free general OPD everyday. Besides that, we also have a diabetic clinic that is a part of the Hamdard Institute of Medical Science and Research," said Hasnain.

According to students, it is the quality of research, experience of faculty and strong alumni network that makes it their top choice for higher edu-



CUT ABOVE THE REST: Jamia Hamdard's Faculty of Pharmacy is one of the oldest and most reputed ones in India

cation, especially pharmacy. "The alumni network is very strong here and we are in constant touch with people who hold very high positions in the pharmaceutical industry because of this network. It is also increases employability," said Utkarsh Johri, a third-year undergraduate student at the Faculty of Pharmacy.

Students also pointed out that the courses are structured to be more practical and are focused to provide jobs at the end

of the degree.

This is one reason why the university also has a sizeable population of foreign students. The administration said that at all points at least 10% of its population is from foreign lands like Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

However, Hamdard is not all work. It also conducts a range of cultural activities, inviting some of the most famous performers. Street plays and unplanned performances



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 VC, Jamia Hamdard

give students a creative outlet.

Yet, the administration is now making a move towards undoing the perceived "insulation" of the university, banking on its academic progress. "We have been an underdog for long, and it was a conscious decision, because it is easier to face the challenges of a competition once you have established yourself. But our excellence is seen in the rankings and we will continue to work to stay in top," said the VC.