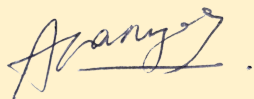


Minutes – The Cambridge Majlis, Michaelmas 2023-24

In the first event of Michaelmas term, the Majlis and the Cambridge Union hosted Dr. Aakashi Bhatt, Prof. Nitasha Kaul, and Ashis Ray for a historic speaker's panel on *India Beyond Modi*. An incredibly powerful conversation took place between the speakers, myself, and Keirit Dosanjh in the Union Chambers. We discussed both, the big criticisms of the Modi government, as well as the potential hope for an India after the BJP. Covering topics of judicial transformation, economic policy, India's insidious digital transformation and the 'climate of impunity' established under Modi – the speakers were striking in their precise, academic and often emotive criticisms of the Bharatiya Janata Party. As Prof. Kaul explicitly delineated, the conversation was not about 'the man', but a criticism of the project – a larger, global shift in common sense, shared by the RSS and Modi's BJP. Some striking moments included Dr. Bhatt's recounting of the harrowing experiences of her father – the sole whistleblower to the 2002 Gujarat Pogrom, and Ashis Ray's comparisons of the crackdown on dissent to Gandhi's Emergency, which he pointed out was still a legal action. The conversation concluded with a discussion on the weaponization of national pride, the lasting legacy of the BJP, and the hopes provided by the INDIA coalition. Rightfully, Prof. Kaul pointed to the importance of students, activists, and journalists on the ground leading the charge such as in the Shaheen Bagh and farmers protests, and noted that our hope must not lead to inaction.

A full video of the event is available on the Cambridge Union's YouTube channel.



Ananya Jain

President, The Cambridge Majlis 2023-24