



# **CENTRE OF CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR**

**ORGANIZES**

**TWO-DAY NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**ON**

**From Ancient Exchanges to  
Contemporary Relations:  
Social and Cultural Foundations of  
India–Central Asia Linkages**



**DATES: 2ND & 3RD MARCH, 2026**

**TIMING: 10:30AM**

# CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATION & COORDINATION

CHIEF PATRON  
**PROF. NILOFER KHAN**  
HON'BLE VICE CHANCELLOR  
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR



PATRON  
**PROF. PIRZADA  
SHARIEFUDDIN**  
DEAN ACADEMIC AFFAIRS  
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

PATRON  
**PROF. NASEER IQBAL**  
REGISTRAR  
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR



CONVENOR  
**PROF. WAHID NASARU**  
DIRECTOR, CCA  
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

COORDINATOR  
**DR. MUMTAZ A. YATOO**  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
CCAS, UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR



COORDINATOR  
**DR. M. ILHAM SHEIKH**  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
CCAS, UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

## ORGANISING COMMITTEE

**PROF. TAREAK A. RATHER**  
**PROF. TABASUM FIRDOUS**  
**DR. ABID GULZAR**  
**DR. MOHAMMAD AJMAL SHAH**  
**DR. MUSHTAQ AHMAD MALIK**  
**DR. ZOHRA BATUL**  
**DR. PARVANA BHATT**  
**DR. ASIF MOHI UD DIN**

**VENUE: CONFERENCE HALL CCAS**

# KEY SPEAKERS

**PROF. RAFIULLAH AZMI**  
HEAD,  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
MANUU, HYDERABAD



**DR. NIRAJ RAI**  
BIRBAL SAHNI INSTITUTE OF  
PALAEOSCIENCES, LUCKNOW

**PROF. MOHAMMAD  
MOHIBUL HAQUE**  
DEPARTMENT OF POL. SCIENCE  
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY



**PROF. PARWEZ NAZIR**  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

**PROF. GUL MOHAMMAD  
WANI**  
FORMER HEAD  
DEPARTMENT OF POL. SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR



**PROF. G. N. KHAKI**  
DIRECTOR  
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR  
SPIRITUAL STUDIES  
IUST, AWANTIPORA, J&K

**DR. AFAQ AZIZ**  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR (RTD.),  
CCAS  
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR



**PROF. MUFTI MUDASIR**  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,  
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

**DR. SATISH VIMAL**  
PROGRAM EXECUTIVE  
ALL INDIA RADIO, SRINAGAR



**PROF. KAHKASHAN A SAAD**  
DEPARTMENT OF HINDI,  
JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA, NEW DELHI

**DR MUZAFFAR ALI MALLA**  
COORDINATOR & ASSISTANT  
PROFESSOR  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
IUST, KASHMIR



**DR JAVID IQBAL KHAN**  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS  
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

**DR YOUNIS RASHID**  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR



**BADRUNISSA BHAT**  
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR



## **From Ancient Exchanges to Contemporary Relations: Social and Cultural Foundations of India–Central Asia Linkages**

India and Central Asia share a rich and interconnected history spanning several millennia. From antiquity, the Silk Route functioned as a major artery connecting South Asia with Central Asia, China, and West Asia. Far beyond commerce, it enabled sustained exchanges of people, ideas, religions, technologies, artistic forms, and intellectual traditions. Merchants, monks, scholars, Sufi saints, craftsmen, and rulers travelled across these regions, shaping enduring social and cultural relationships.

Among the most significant legacies of these interactions was the spread of Buddhism from India to Central Asia and beyond, visible through monasteries, manuscripts, and artistic traditions. At the same time, the flow of Persianate culture into the Indian subcontinent profoundly influenced literature, architecture, music, court culture, and administrative systems. Political formations such as the Kushan Empire, followed by the Timurid and Mughal dynasties, exemplified the synthesis of Indian and Central Asian traditions. Sufi networks and scholarly exchanges further sustained cross-cultural dialogue across centuries.

Language and intellectual traditions formed a vital foundation of Indo–Central Asian engagement. Persian emerged as a shared language of learning and administration, while Sanskrit texts and Indian scientific knowledge circulated through translations and scholarly interactions. Thinkers such as Al-Biruni, Amir Khusrau, and Abdur Rahman Jami reflect the cosmopolitan nature of intellectual life across the region, with notable exchanges in astronomy, medicine, philosophy, and historiography.

Material culture and the arts provide vivid evidence of these long-standing connections. Gandharan art represents a remarkable fusion of Indian and Central Asian aesthetics, while architectural forms such as domes, arches, gardens, and calligraphy that demonstrate enduring stylistic influences. Shared traditions in textiles, metalwork, performing arts, and cuisine further reveal the depth of everyday cultural exchange shaped by migration and mobility.

In contemporary times, historical linkages continue to inform India–Central Asia relations through diplomacy, cultural exchange, education, energy cooperation, and diaspora networks. India's Connect Central Asia Policy has renewed interest in cultural diplomacy, heritage routes, academic partnerships, and people-to-people engagement.

## Conference Themes

### • **Historical Linkages and Early Contacts**

Silk Route exchanges; Kushan and Turko-Mongol legacies; archaeological evidence of interaction.

### • **Religious and Spiritual Connections**

Spread of Buddhism; Sufi networks and orders; pilgrimage routes and sacred geographies.

### • **Language, Literature, and Intellectual Traditions**

Persian and Sanskrit exchanges; scholars, poets, and translators; scientific and philosophical knowledge systems.

### • **Arts, Architecture, and Material Culture**

Gandharan art; architecture, crafts, textiles, music, and culinary traditions.

### • **Migration and Socio-Cultural Mobility**

Movement of peoples; formation of hybrid communities; social and cultural transformations.

### • **Contemporary Relations and Future Prospects**

Cultural diplomacy, academic collaboration, heritage revival, and digital connectivity.

## Establishment of CCAS

In order to study the Central Asian region from diversified point of view, the Centre of Central Asian Studies was established in 1978 at the University of Kashmir, Srinagar. Immediately thereafter, the Centre embarked upon a series of un-interrupted and unflinching research exercises largely aimed at re-discovering the cultures and peoples of the region. Therefore, the most of the studies conducted through the Centre were historical and cultural in context, specifically focusing on affinities between Kashmir and Central Asia. For the reason that Kashmir is closely situated to Central Asia and served as bridge between India and Central Asia, its cultural mosaic reflected the syncretism and blend of various soio-cultural practices of a vast region.

In view of the historical and contemporary studies on the above geographical space, the Centre and its faculty is engaged in research on India's bilateral and multilateral relation with Central Asian countries. In addition to above, the focus of research is currently on the themes like:

- **International Relations & Conflict Resolution**
- **Power Structure & Security**
- **History, Culture & Archaeology**
- **Silk Route Revival and Trade**
- **Islamic Revivalism**
- **Ethnicity & Out-migration**
- **Socio-economic Transformation**
- **Resource Management**
- **Disaster Management**
- **Cooperative Development**
- **Environmental Degradation**
- **Technology Transfer**
- **Globalisation and Liberalisation**

### **Central Asian Museum:**

Established in 1982, the bilateral and multilateral relations between India and Central Asia are sufficiently supported by thousands of artifacts showcased in the Central Asian Museum. Although CAM has been organising thematic exhibitions from time to time, yet it was a moment of joy when America-based organisation Asia Society and Museum (New York) requested CAM to send (temporarily) some of its art objects for the Art of Kashmir exhibition to be held in New York at 725 Park Ave (October 3, 2007 to January 6, 2008). The 'Arts of Kashmir' was a major international loan exhibition of objects of exemplary quality devoted to the rich artistic tradition of Kashmir. This exhibition which covered the period from fourth to twentieth century was the first ever to be devoted to the extraordinary arts of Kashmir valley. Premier examples of Kashmir's little-known works of Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic art, along with famed craft works ranging from furniture and paper-machie to carpets and embroidery, were included to provide a sense of the broad artistic production of this region.

### **Area Study Programme:**

Specialized studies pertaining to the region began to be pursued under its Area Studies Programme (ASP) after 1983 when the University Grants Commission provided the Centre with additional staff for an allied research wing – a special status that, inter-alia, served to link the Centre with rest of the Area Studies Centres of India. This enabled the Centre to set afresh its priorities with regard to contemporary problems relating to defence strategy, economic restructuring, resource management, religious revivalism, international relations, foreign investment, legal guarantees, etc. While negotiating new challenges, the Centre expeditiously carried forward its research agenda quite undaunted by the most hostile and unfavourable circumstances that existed in Kashmir.

### **PG Program Archaeology:**

Centre of Central Asian Studies has quite recently in 2017, established PG in Archaeology discipline. Given that the Jammu and Kashmir state including the Ladakh region has a rich archaeological heritage spanning over mellinia of history needs a dedicated Archaeology program as an academic discipline in a university set up. The administration at University of Kashmir acknowledged the need of the course in the Himalayan region and subsequently the course was introduced in 2017. Apart from focus on National curriculum and considering the regional needs the course focuses on field archaeology and involvement of technology in archaeological research more to make the Himalayan archaeology as an intersting discipline for students.

### **Journal of Central Asian Studies:**

In continuation to the ongoing research agenda, the Centre has been uninterruptedly publishing annually The Journal of Central Asian Studies (ISSN 0975086X) for the past 30 years. It has an international Editorial Board and is acclaimed across the world for its quality, style and content. This refereed Journal with the research papers received from across the world are being evaluated by experts from the world over. Besides, printing its hard copies, it is also available on