

## **KU's CCAS organises seminar on Kashmir Neolithic Sites**

*Experts for amalgamation of data-sets from Central Asian region to trace cultivars*

**Srinagar, Jan 19:** Kashmir University's Centre of Central Asian Studies organised a day-long international-level seminar on Neolithic sites in Kashmir.

The online seminar titled "New AMS 14C direct dates trace early West Asian cereals and pulses, as well as East Asian millets, from Neolithic Sites in Kashmir" was organised in collaboration with the Department of Archaeology, University of Sydney, Australia.

Several eminent scholars from around the world presented their research findings during the inaugural and technical sessions, including Prof Alison Betts and Dr Micheal Spate from University of Sydney; Dr Giedre Motuzaite Matuzeviciute from Vilnius University, Lithuania; Dr Robert Spengler and Li Tang from Max Planck Institute for Science of Human History, Germany; Prof Ravi Korisettar affiliated to ICHR New Delhi and Dr Mumtaz A Itto from CCAS KU.

In his presidential address, Dean of Research at KU Prof Shakil A Romshoo, who was the chief guest, underscored the significance of Karewas in the study of palaeobotany and reconstruction of paleo-environment during the mid-Holocene period in Kashmir.

"These are the issues of critical importance to be discussed and explored. I congratulate CCAS for organising this important seminar," he said.

In his welcome address, Director CCAS Prof Taraek a Rather said the focus of the seminar was the discussion around the earliest dates of domesticated East Asian crops reported from Kashmir Neolithic Sites outside of their centre of origin.

In his special address, Prof Bettes spoke about the importance of pre-historic Kashmir as the pivotal region in fully understanding prehistoric subsistence activities in South, Central and Inner Asia.

In his keynote address, Prof Maanasa Raghavan, Department of Human Genetics, University of Chicago, USA highlighted the potential of ancient DNA (aDNA) studies for systematic archaeobotanical research. She also congratulated CCAS for holding the timely seminar.

In their concluding remarks, Dr Mumtaz A Itto and Dr M Ajmal Shah from CCAS—along with Dr Hayley Saul, Western Sydney University Australia—stressed on amalgamating datasets emerging from Kashmir and various central Asian countries in tracing the cultivars from their point of domestication in this vast region.

Dr M Ajmal Shah, Assistant Professor CCAS chaired the technical session while Dr Mumtaz Itto presented a vote of thanks.