

Two-day national conference on Central Asia begins at KU

VC chairs inaugural session, Ambassador Ashok Sajjanhar delivers keynote speech



Srinagar, Nov 1: Vice-Chancellor University of Kashmir Prof Nilofer Khan Tuesday inaugurated a two-day national conference on 'Connecting Central Asia: Opportunities and Challenges'.

The conference has been organised by the Centre of Central Asian Studies (CCAS).

In her presidential address, Prof Nilofer said such conferences involving a large number of students and scholars are critical to understanding varied aspects of our country's historical and present relations with the Central Asian region.

Calling for engagement of students in discourses like the current one to know the shared history and cultures of the two regions, Prof Nilofer said she is glad to see the conference covering a range of topics related to trade, economy, tourism and gender development concerning India and Central Asia.

She urged the CCAS to hold panel discussions on these themes on a regular basis involving students and research scholars.

Former Indian Ambassador to Kazakhstan, Sweden and Latvia Mr Ashok Sajjanhar delivered the keynote address, discussing in detail the historical and current status of ties between India and Central Asia.

“India considers the Central Asian region to be a part of its extended neighbourhood,” he said, adding that our country today places a much greater focus on its ties with all the five Central Asian countries, especially since 2015 when the Honourable Prime Minister visited all these Central Asian countries thus setting the stage for significant expansion and deepening of the bilateral ties.

Former director CCAS Prof Abdul Majeed Mattoo delivered the special address at the inaugural session, discussing in detail the historical relation between India and Central Asia, and the current issues and challenges thereof.

Registrar Dr Nisar A Mir called for developing a strong database in the country to create academic and research collaborations with the Central Asian countries.

In her welcome address, Director CCAS Prof Tabassum Firdous said the conference aims to bring together scholars and experts on Central Asia to deliberate on challenges that India faces in the Central Asian region as well as the potential that the region holds for the country. Prof Firdous also highlighted the achievements of the CCAS.

Prof G N Khaki delivered the vote of thanks, while Dr Mohammad Ajmal Shah conducted proceedings of the inaugural session, which was attended by a galaxy of academics and scholars.

A book titled 'Revisiting Himalayan Borderlands: A bridge between India and Central Asia' authored by Prof Taraek A Rather, Dr Ajmal Shah and Dr Mumtaz Yatoo was also released by the Vice-Chancellor on the occasion.