

3-day international seminar on Literature and Environment begins at KU

Srinagar, Mar 26: An international seminar on “Literature and Environment: The Promise of Ecological Criticism” began at the University of Kashmir on Monday.

The three-day seminar—first of its kind by the Department of English—was presided over by the Vice Chancellor Prof Khurshid Iqbal Andrabi and attended by distinguished academics, scholars and students.

In her welcome address, Head, Department of English, Prof Lily Want said that the seminar aims to “create an interdisciplinary platform for leading academics and scholars to present and discuss the most recent trends, research results, experiences, concerns, practical challenges and various nuances of the theme.”

She hoped that the seminar would not only facilitate exchange of views among scholars, but also help initiate policy-oriented debates and discussions.

Keynote speaker Prof Fakrul Alam, pro-vice chancellor East West University Dhaka Bangladesh, spoke at length on the topic titled “doing environmental criticism from where we are.”

He traced the issues concerning environmental degradation in the city of Dhaka, eventually dwelling deep into how famed writers and scholars have addressed the subject of ecological criticism.

“Carson and Marx were truly pioneers, for it took at least two more decades, and more awareness on the part of intellectuals across humanities and social science disciplines as well as scientists, to realise the full and continuing extent of the unwanted changes mankind was inflicting on the environment year after year through mindless industrialisation, unplanned expansion and aggressing mining of the earth’s resources. By the 1908s environmental criticism, or eco-criticism, or if you want to be even more au courant, Green Cultural Studies, had gathered a lot of momentum in the English departments in the West. And how could we, in our part of the world lag behind on such an issue,” Alam said.

Author and environmental activist Dr Vandana Shiva, who was the guest of honour, also spoke on the theme of the seminar which, among others, was attended by Dean Academic Affairs Prof MA Sahaf, Dean Research Prof Zafar A Reshi, Registrar Prof Khursheed A Butt, Dean School of Arts, Languages and Literatures Prof Zohra Afzal and former HoD English Prof Mohammad Aslam.

Dr Iffat Maqbool conducted proceedings of the event while Dr Tasleem A War presented vote of thanks.