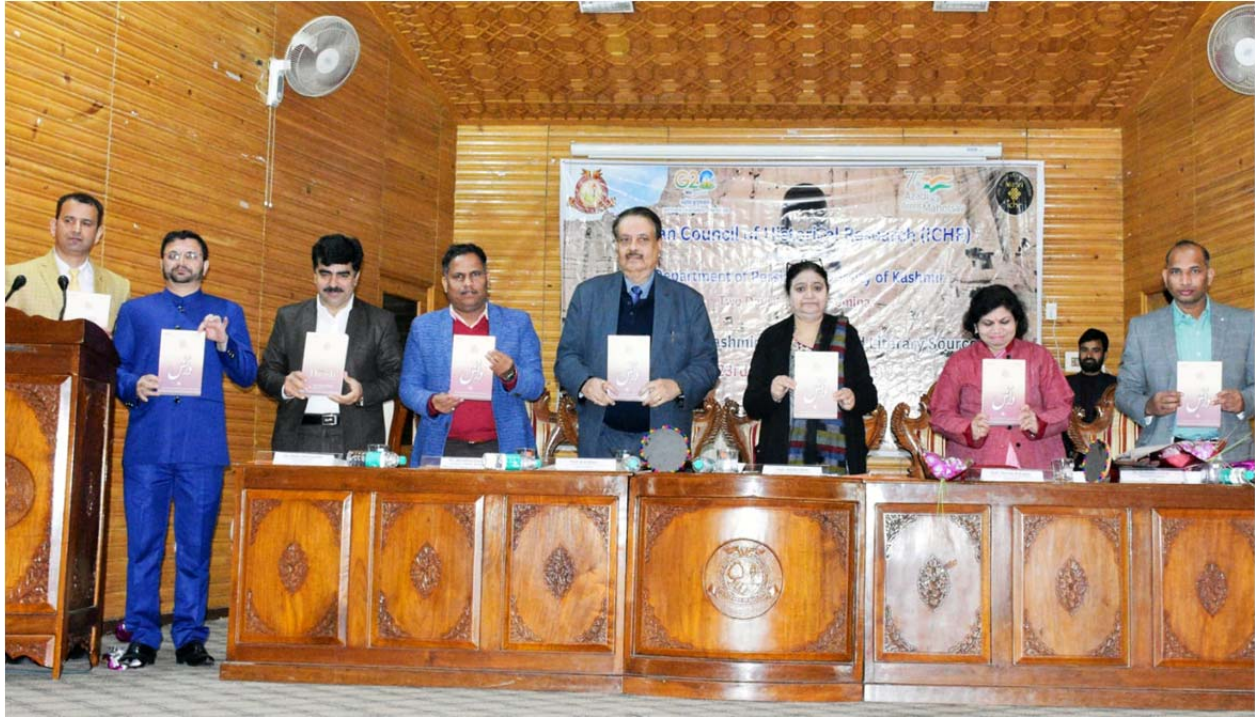


2-day national seminar on 'Buddhism in Kashmir' starts at KU



Srinagar, Mar 23: A national seminar on 'Buddhism in Kashmir: Historical and Literary Sources' started at the University of Kashmir on Thursday.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Nilofer Khan chaired the inaugural session of the two-day seminar, organised by the Indian Council of Historical Research, Ministry of Education, Government of India, in collaboration with the Department of Persian, KU.

In her presidential address, Prof Nilofer said the Department of Persian has a rich legacy of holding national and international seminars to widen its academic reach and visibility. She said the present seminar is very important for young students and research scholars to explore new aspects of the theme which have hitherto remained unexplored.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the ICHR for collaborating with the University and hoped that more such collaborations will be explored in other areas of study and research in future.

Keynote speaker, Prof B R Mani, former Director General, National Museum, New Delhi, spoke about the beginning, expansion and evolution of Buddhism in Kashmir, and referred to "direct evidence" in the form of Buddhist remains of the 1st and 2nd Century B.C. in the Valley.

Prof Mani said in his research he has found that there was a significant influence of Kashmir on ancient Gandhāra, which was a major centre of Buddhism, as against the popular view favouring influence of Gandhāra on Kashmir.

Special guest, Prof Neerja A Gupta, Vice-Chancellor, Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies, said Kashmir is beyond a geographical identity and has travelled to far East and to the West, in terms of languages, art, culture, manuscripts etc and the present seminar is an opportunity to “trace this treasure and find its glimpse.”

She said Kashmir has been an epitome of “Spiritual Buddhism” which spread beyond the Valley to Central Asia, Ladakh, China, and other countries.

Guest of Honour, Dr Anirbha Daish, Director NMM, IGNCA, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, said there is much textual evidence related to “golden phase of Buddhism in Kashmir” for 1500 years. It is from Kashmir that Buddhism has spread to other regions and countries and that’s why Kashmir holds a special place in terms of historicity and spread of Buddhism, he said.

Guest of Honour, Dr Nisar A Mir, Registrar KU, emphasised on the importance of the seminar from the perspective of multidisciplinary studies to explore different aspects of the theme.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Dr Jehangir Iqbal, Coordinator Department of Persian, highlighted the core objectives of the two-day seminar, which is being attended by scholars from different institutions in the country.

Dr Parveen Kumar, Director (Projects), ICHR, presented the formal vote of thanks while Dr Shadab Arshid conducted proceedings of the inaugural session.

On the occasion, the VC and other dignitaries released the 40th volume of ‘Danish’, the annual peer-reviewed journal of the Department of Persian.