

Concept Note

National Conference

India, Central Asia, and the Arab World: History, Politics, and Society

Proposed Dates

21-22 August 2024

Organised by:

India-Arab Cultural Centre

Jamia Millia Islamia (Central University), New Delhi, India

Conference Convener

Prof. Nasir Raza Khan

The Indian subcontinent, Central Asia, and the Arab World are not only geographically close to but have also evolved through millennia of political, economic, and cultural interaction. The contact between India and the two areas has a long history of diversified and multidimensional exchanges. The larger region, which is a combination of 'heartland' and 'rim-land,' has historically played an important role in the development of Asia, Eurasia, and the world. Major civilizations have emerged, thrived, and left indelible imprints on humanity. They were in regular communication with one another, not only via water and land, but also through social interactions. People, ideas, goods, and technologies flowed across the regions, resulting in a synthesis of varied elements.

Though they were under several political regimes at the time, economic and cultural strands drew them together, aided by philosophical beliefs and trade via monsoon winds or the Silk Route. There has been a spiritual connection between the three regions since antiquity. Buddhism and Zoroastrianism showed humankind the spiritual way from South Asia and Central Asia until Christianity developed in West Asia and affected sections of humanity. Later, the Arab world contributed Islamic teachings, which prepared the path for the growth of Sufism and Bhakti traditions in India. Great men from the three regions travelled huge distances in search of knowledge and piety, resulting in the establishment of cultural and religious landmarks. The synthesis can also be seen in numerous domains, such as architectural styles and artistic traditions, as shown in monuments and structures. In India and other places, architecture was open to adopting other people's specialties into local forms.

Linguistic convergence has had a much longer-lasting effect and has helped people learn more about each other. Languages like Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian were important ways for the rich and poor to share their culture with each other. People like Al Beruni and Ibn Batuta who travelled and studied are great links and are known for their enlightening work.

The existence of economic connection among the three regions is not a recent phenomenon. Historically, merchants and traders hailing from India, Central Asia, and West Asia actively participated in both marine and caravan trade operations along the routes. In historical contexts, trade encompassed the exchange of various commodities, including silk, spices, textiles, precious metals, and horses. Central Asia holds significant potential for growth and development, which can be further enhanced by the utilisation of Indian expertise and labour, as well as the financial strength and investment capabilities of the Arab World.

In the present-day context, there is a noticeable rise in political, economic, and cultural engagements among India, Central Asia, and the Arab World. Diplomatic contacts, commercial collaborations, and cultural exchanges have a significant role in facilitating the dissemination of best practises and fostering the emergence of novel ideas. The continued interactions across these regions encompass several aspects such as energy commerce, investment collaborations, and educational exchanges. Indian educational institutions are actively engaged in knowledge dissemination by establishing their presence in Central Asia and West Asia.

When looking at South Asia, Central Asia, and West Asia, India stands out as having the largest economy. In its recent roles as chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the G-20, India has been a strong advocate for the issues facing countries in the Global South. Countries from all over the world want to deepen their ties with New Delhi because India has the potential to become a major participant on the international stage and the ability to make significant changes through digital and other forms of cutting-edge technology. Knowledge transfer is aided by the presence of Indian universities in both Central and West Asia. It is crucial that we pool our expertise, resources, and time in order to speed up our quest of advancement.

To comprehend the nuances and threads of commonalities, as well as the trends and emergent challenges, it is essential that we discuss them in depth and take advantage of the opportunities while addressing the challenges collectively. Uniquely positioned, the India

Arab Cultural Centre of Jamia Millia Islamia is hosting a two-day national conference on the subject. The conference's themes and subthemes are as follows:

- Historical Perspectives on India, Central Asia, and West Asia Political, Economic, and Cultural Ties.
- Strengthening social, cultural, and linguistic relationships in order to promote growth and development.
- In the changing global environment, what are the areas that the three regions can achieve together?
 - Linkages, translations, and multilingual traditions in literature
 - Travellers, travelogues, biographies, in a variety of formats
 - The fields of art and architecture. Impact of Indian regional cultures
 - Sufism, Bhakti traditions, and a transitioning society
 - Existing political and economic collaboration between the three regions
 - identifying opportunities to expand economic cooperation.
 - Methods for enhancing connectivity.
 - To create a shared political, economic, and cultural route, offer fresh ideas.

Please send your paper titles and a 500-word abstract to the following address to participate in the conference: conference.iacc@gmail.com or nrkhan@jmi.ac.in

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