



SUBJECT ASSOCIATION OF  
CENTRE FOR WEST ASIAN STUDIES  
JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA

# AL-NAHDA

## THE WEST ASIAN HERALD

### राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप की मध्य पूर्व यात्रा

By Ayan Akhtar (M.A, Sem-IV)

राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने हाल ही में राष्ट्रपति बनने के उपरांत अपनी पहली विदेशी यात्रा की। यह यात्रा उनके दूसरे कार्यकाल की पहली यात्रा है, जिसमें वह पहली यात्रा के भांति इस बार भी अपनी पहली विदेशी यात्रा मध्य पूर्व को वरीयता दी है।

उनके इस विदेशी यात्रा में सऊदी अरब, कतर, और यूनाइटेड अरब अमीरात शामिल थे। ये यात्रा अमेरिका के लिए पश्चिमी एशिया देशों में पैर जमा रहे चीन को संतुलित और नियंत्रित रखने के लिए अहम दिखाई देती है।

इस दौरे के दौरान ट्रंप ने करीब अमेरिका में 2 ट्रिलियन डॉलर के निवेश की घोषणा की है, जिसमें सऊदी अरब ने 600 डॉलर का निवेश किया, जिसमें एक ऐतिहासिक 142 अरब डॉलर का रक्षा सौदा भी शामिल है, कतर ने 1.2 ट्रिलियन डॉलर का समझौता किया जिसमें विमानन, अवसंरचना, और रक्षा शामिल है, वहीं यूएई ने 1.4 ट्रिलियन डॉलर का तकनीकी निवेश अगले 10 वर्षों में करने का संकल्प जताया है, साथ है आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलीजेंस में नई साझेदारियां भी शामिल है।

रणनीतिक रूप से, राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप ने अपनी इस यात्रा में इजरायल का दौरा नहीं किया जो कि अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति के मध्य पूर्व की यात्राओं में सामान्य नहीं प्रतीत होता।

इस दौरे के दौरान ट्रंप ने प्रत्यक्ष बातचीत के जरिए ईरान और हमास से तनाव कम करने और मध्य पूर्व में शांति स्थापना का प्रयास किया। और सीरिया के राष्ट्रपति अहमद अल शरा के साथ मुलाकात की और सीरिया पर लगे अमेरिकी प्रतिबंधों को हटाने का ऐलान किया। यह कदम अमेरिकी मध्य पूर्व नीति में नई दिशा को दिखाता है- सैन्य हस्तक्षेप की जगह कूटनीति और आर्थिक सहयोग को प्राथमिकता देना।

विश्लेषकों के अनुसार इन समझौतों को लागू करने में कई चुनौतियां हैं - जैसे सुरक्षा और मध्य पूर्व में चीन के बढ़ते असर।

विश्लेषकों का मानना है कि, अमेरिका को इन समझौतों को और चीन को नियंत्रित रखने के लिए क्षेत्रीय साझेदारों के साथ बेहतर तालमेल बनाना होगा।

यह यात्रा अमेरिका - मध्य पूर्व नीति में स्थिरता और आर्थिक भागीदारी पर आधारित युग की शुरुआत प्रतीत होती है।

अब यह सवाल उत्पन्न होता है कि, क्या यह निवेश और ऐतिहासिक कूटनीतिक कदम मध्य पूर्व में क्या शांति स्थापित करने में कारगर होंगे या नहीं ?

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# POSSIBILITY OF INTELLECTUAL RENAISSANCE : THE IMPACT OF AI ON TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

By Warisha Wasi (M.A, Sem-IV)

In a technologically accelerating world, where knowledge and information literally about anything and everything are accessible and have been made possible just a click away through Artificial Intelligence. AI has truly transformed the landscape of learning experience and knowledge production. Due to the overflow of knowledge information, human minds are exposed to huge amount of meaningful data which can be excessive and ambiguous at times leading to confusion and uncertainty. AI boom manifested by the growth of generative models provides instant, pre structured answers and solutions to even complex concepts in a convenient way which accounts for the primary reason as human beings becoming increasingly dependent on AI even for simple tasks in which rigorous intellectual efforts are not required. Therefore, it can be stated that the oversimplification of intellectual tasks through AI leads to easier learning processes, on the other hand, however, it is adversely affecting the cognitive faculties of critical thinking and analytical skills among its users.

With a newly transformed landscape defining the creation and consumption of knowledge through algorithms, leads an important question relating to the legitimization of knowledge. Vast amount of information has been encoded into AI machines providing solutions and answers from the perspective of Western intellectual framework thereby having possibility of marginalizing non-western intellectual heritage. In the era of global intellectual exchange, the increasing fluidity in epistemological frameworks where knowledge gaps between traditional and modernity widens, is there any scope for the synthesis of the two? The quest for valid knowledge has prompted several nations particularly India and GCC countries to revive their indigenous knowledge systems which are rooted in their own intellectual traditions while aligning with AI. For instance, Kuwait, on 23 may 2025 , hosted a forum on 'Classical Arabic Thought in Contemporary Global Research' to employ modern analytical methodologies to classical texts in exploring new ways to examine sources of intellectual heritage. As described by Aisha Al-Mahmoud, Assistant secretary for culture of National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) a 'milestone'. The forum aims to foster collaboration on research and enhance Arab intellectual heritage through examination from different dimensions.

Moroccan author, Mehdi Berriah, proficient in medieval Islamic history believes there is a need for epistemological revival in Islam.

Berriah's book *L'art de la guerre chez les Mamelouks* (The Mamluks' Art of War), received the Verbruggen Prize in 2024. His acts as a link, mediating Western and Arab intellectual worlds. Berriah through his work has contributed to re-examining concepts beyond the lens of established epistemological canons leading to reconstruction of meanings and challenge dominant narratives.

The digital initiatives taken by Saudi government through vision 2030 aims to combine AI applications with Islamic and cultural norms. In case of country's AI driven healthcare system halal standards, gender sensitivity and privacy are maintained to align with Kingdom's cultural and religious values. The 'Fanar' project of Qatar is a customized Arabic centred generative AI system working on Arabic large language models (LLMs) to conform with the framework of Islamic principles.

India, has also initiated efforts to revive ancient knowledge and wisdom. In Nagpur, shri Vedvidyavardhini Gurukulam was inaugurated in May 2025. A learning institution, in which ancient Vedic learning tradition serves as an educational model. In a step towards reclaiming intellectual heritage of India, Sanatan Shiksha initiative, a national initiative launched by Shri Sanjay Kumar Pal. The initiative with a purpose to revive ancient knowledge system and integrate with modern technological innovations particularly, STEM education system is a big step towards efforts to restore indigenous knowledge inheritance.

The initiatives led by governments of these nations plays a key role to bridge the gap between ancient intellectual past and modern technological innovations. The efforts to reclaim indigenous intellectual legacy have to be in line with contemporary technological advancements in order to make efficient use of Artificial Intelligence.



# RED SEA CRISIS: GEOPOLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS AND TRADE DISRUPTIONS

By Md. Arif (M.A, Sem- II)

We are going to explore one of the top news events of 2025 the worse situation in the Red Sea. If you have been paying attention to the news, you know that this is not just a local News. It is a drama that has effect across the world, from fuel price to medical bills.

The Red Sea is once again critical point for the world because of attack on cargo Ships and oil tankers ships by Houthis Rebels. State like Yemen, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the US, and Israel are all playing important role. This type of attacks by rebels creates global price rises of fuel and result increase price of common households. this is not only a humanitarian problem, diplomatic, and economic problem to this Houthi rebellion from Yemen with the help of Iranian Regime, attack on cargo ships in the Red Sea, they are not trying to get attention, but they are really want creating a pressure on world. United States, United Kingdom, France, and other States are deploying more navy to patrol in Red Sea in the hopes of they stop Houthis attacks and Israel has given Intelligence and cooperation with regional partners for Red Sea.

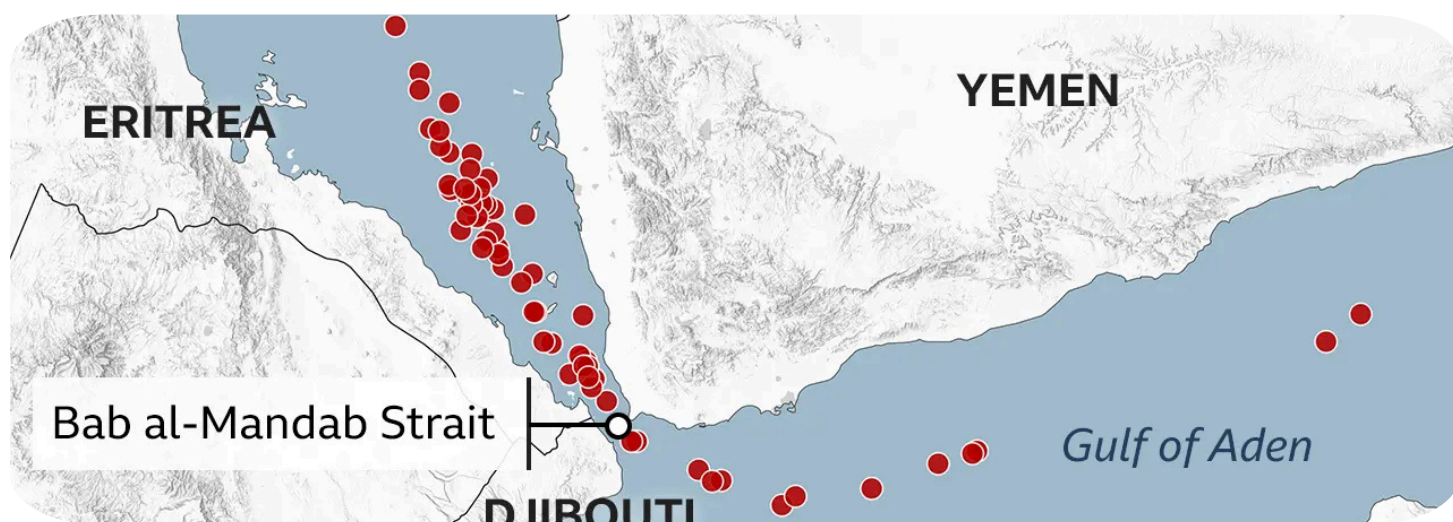
## How Trade Is Getting Hit?

Many maritime corporations are now stay back from the Red Sea and going hundreds of miles around Africa. That makes each round take two more weeks and use a lot more fuel. Cost are extremely high It cost so much to sail a ship through the Red Sea that the price for items are higher especially oil. The number of cargo ships that travel through the Red Sea area each week has gone down from 240 to only 85in last year.

The cost of insurance has more than four times. This problem has increased oil prices to go up 13% from last year and humanitarian crisis in Yemen is getting worse because the borderline and access the Red Sea are even more limited. People are forced to leave their home because There is less food, less medicine. State like Djibouti are seeing both opportunities (as emergency logistics center) and risks (the chance of instability and refugees).

## What's Next?

There is a lot of threat of military force going on, but no one really wants a direct war between Iran and the Western world. The global economy has too much at stake. Peace talk isn't going anywhere, which is regrettable. It seems hard to reach a middle ground because so many outside forces are engaged. In the next few months, expect further problems with commerce and more transportation expenses. There is always a chance that one wrong move may start a bigger fight, but for now, most players are being careful. There has never been a Much need for a diplomatic approach. Last word the Red Sea Yemeni Houthi's crisis shows us how rapidly problem in one part of the planet can affect the whole world. These incidents show how delicate these ties that bind us all are, whether you are in business, government, or just a citizen.



By Moin Aftab (M.A, Sem-II)



The fate of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) is now central to the contested future of Syria in the wake of Bashar al-Assad's fall. Following years as the leading force behind the US-backed war on ISIS and the core of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), the SDF entered 2025 confronted by immense uncertainty. The unexpectedly rapid ascent of an interim government led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) under Ahmed al-Sharaa has cast Syria's Kurds into high-stakes negotiations about autonomy, identity, and minority rights in a new and untested national order. After months of tense discussions, an historic agreement was brokered on March 10, 2025, between HTS President Ahmed al-Sharaa and SDF commander Mazloum Abdi, with US diplomatic mediation. International affairs analyst Aziz Mousa described the pact as "more than a test of logistics, it is a test of will, leverage, and the new government's capacity to incorporate its most organized non-state rival." The agreement's central terms included full integration of SDF fighters and civil officials into national structures, direct central control over borders and strategic resources, and the promise of Kurdish recognition as "an essential component of the Syrian people." It also committed to a nationwide ceasefire to facilitate the return of refugees and internally displaced persons and mandated that "basic cultural and administrative rights for Kurds" be safeguarded.

Yet, optimism is tempered by deep scepticism among Kurdish leaders. Implementing the agreement has uncovered fraught questions over how meaningful and lasting Kurdish participation will be. As Badran Jia Kurd, a senior Kurdish official, remarked to Reuters, "All Kurdish political forces in Syria have agreed on a common political vision regarding governance, the identity of the Syrian state, and Kurdish rights. We affirm the need for a federal, parliamentary, pluralistic, and democratic system." Despite these aspirations, he warned that "mere promises do not replace structures" and that "without constitutional guarantees, decentralization will remain a slogan."

The central government in Damascus, while heralding a "new chapter of unity," resists substantive federalism or extensive self-rule for minority regions. A presidential aide was quoted as saying, "Our priority is keeping the nation whole and stable, not dividing it under the banner of diversity." International actors further complicate the landscape. The United States, having long backed the SDF, is facilitating the integration but gradually winding down its military presence. "The SDF leadership has already acknowledged its commitment to a future within a unified Syria," noted a US official, "but what matters now is whether their role in the new order is substantial or merely symbolic." American policy, according to analysts at The Washington Institute, centres on "quiet consensus-building" to balance Kurdish, Syrian, and Turkish interests while avoiding fresh entanglements.

Turkey, meanwhile, continues to view Kurdish autonomy as an existential threat, equating the SDF with the PKK. Turkish policymakers welcomed SDF integration chiefly as a means to "restore Syria's territorial integrity," but, as one Ankara official insisted, "Kurdish autonomy is a fantasy we will never accept so close to our borders."

The SDF's future, and with it, the Kurdish question, remains enmeshed in unresolved national debates; the real limits of decentralization, the legitimacy and inclusivity of new political institutions, and the degree to which minority protections have teeth or only symbolic value. As SDF commander Mazloum Abdi bluntly put it in a recent interview, "We seek a Syria in which Kurds are not guests, but builders. We'll judge the new government by its actions, not its declarations." Whether the current accords truly nurture pluralism and stability or instead set the stage for renewed conflict will depend on whether these promises find expression in everyday life, not just on paper.



## THE PROBLEM WITH 'SAVING' MUSLIM WOMEN: FEMINISM, EMPIRE, AND THE POLITICS OF LIBERATION

**Maliha Khan, Georgetown University**  
**Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service (BSFS)**



Lila Abu-Lughod, in her text *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*, critiques the universalisation embedded within the white Western feminist movement.[1] She argues that rather than recognizing Muslim women as "products of different histories, expressions of different circumstances, and manifestations of differently structured desires," Western feminism often insists on imposing a monolithic idea of what a woman is and what she should want, one that often aligns with a Western woman's identity.[2] Framing its critique through the rhetoric of 'saving women' in Afghanistan, Abu-Lughod's piece exposes the limitations of Euro-American feminism, highlighting how it often obscures non-Western feminist frameworks and erases the complex, intersecting identities of women of colour. In championing gender as the primary site of oppression, mainstream white feminism frequently fails to incorporate or recognise other axes of marginalisation, such as race, religion, and geopolitics.

Gendered oppression has always been at the core of feminist struggle and is fundamental to understanding women's experiences across the world. However, it is not sufficient to assume a singular category of "woman." Gender does not operate in isolation, but rather in intersection with other categories, such as class, race, religion, and geopolitical location. In *Ain't I a Woman?* Bell Hooks writes, "my destiny, my having been born black and my having been born female." [3] This understanding lies at the heart of Black feminist thought, which argues that the oppression of Black women is produced through the simultaneous workings of racism, misogyny, and sexism. [4] Hooks critiques the dismissal of these intersecting oppressions by the White feminist movements, saying, "No one bothered to discuss the way in which sexism operates both independently of and simultaneously with racism to oppress us." [5] Abu Lughod in her text *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*, also challenges the American tendency to oversimplify all women's struggles solely as a function of their gender, saying "tendencies to plaster neat cultural icons like the Muslim woman over messy historical and political dynamics." [6] Assuming that Muslim Afghan women are only oppressed because of their gender erases the oppression they face due to their Afghan identity. Such reductionist projections of a complex conflict are used to create black and white categories of victims and oppressors – here, women and the Taliban or Afghan men. [7] Reducing the complex geo-political oppression to merely a question of gender not only flattened their complex experiences as Muslim Afghan women but also allowed for the American government to manufacture the narrative of "saving Muslim women." [8] As Laura Bush, in her speeches, called the "civilised people throughout the world" to mobilise to save women and children from "cultural monsters" or "Taliban-and-the-terrorists," it paved the way for America's military intervention and violence in the region. [9] While Abu-Lughod makes it clear that cultural relativism should not be used to justify the marginalization and oppression that shape the lives of Afghan women, it is equally important to recognize that their oppression is not solely cultural or gender-based, but also deeply tied to geopolitical and imperial projects that have destroyed their homes, including the bombing that followed the "saving Afghan women" narrative. These patterns recently re-emerged when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu raised Iran's women's rights record to justify military action in Iran, stating, "They've impoverished you, they've given you misery, they've given you death, they've given you terror, they shoot down your women, leaving this brave, unbelievable woman, Mahsa Amini, to bleed on the sidewalk for not covering her hair." [10] While the statement is deeply ironic, given that his government is leading a genocide against Palestinians, it reflects the long-standing pattern in international politics where the suffering of Muslim women is instrumentalised to legitimise military interventions. [11] As this rhetoric resurfaces in the context of Iran, it becomes increasingly necessary to critically re-evaluate both the legacy of the American feminist movement and the recurring discourse of "saving" Muslim women. [12]

The veil becomes a central example of how the discourse of "saving" Muslim women is employed to construct a specific and often Western-centric notion of freedom. Abu-Lughod notes that, as the Western feminists celebrated the "freeing" of Afghan women from the Taliban, they were confounded by the fact that Afghan women were not abandoning the veil.[13] This is because the Western feminists tried to understand the oppression of Afghan women, completely removed from their cultural and religious context, positioning the veil as nothing but a garment imposed by the "brown men" from which the white men need to save the brown women.[14] Abu Lughod writes, "we need to work against the reductive interpretation of veiling as the quintessential sign of women's unfreedom, even if we object to state imposition of this form." [15] The veil can represent a meaningful expression of their identities and spiritual practice.[16] The layered relationship women have with the veil, whether as a means of enabling public participation while maintaining segregation or as a symbol of modesty, is disregarded within the dominant white feminist frameworks.[17] Muslim women are expected to cut off every link with their culture and religion to embrace the notion of freedom. This expectation constructs freedom not as a lived or contextual experience, but as a performance of the Western notion of freedom. To be free then becomes as monolithic as the category of woman, rendering it incapable of accommodating religious and cultural identities outside of the Western framework. As White feminism fails to recognise culturally grounded forms of agency, it leaves no space for intersectional feminism or Islamic feminism. Its limitation lies in its narrow framing of liberation, portraying veiled Muslim women as complete victims lacking any agency, positioning Islam against the West or feminism itself. An intersectional understanding would require a rethinking of what liberation is and what it looks like for different people.

In conclusion, there is a critical need for an intersectional understanding of rights, freedom and the feminist movement. It calls for a movement that decentres the monolithic experience of a white woman and derives legitimacy from structures beyond the Western liberal structures. Such an intersectional approach offers the capaciousness needed to grapple with the complexity of global injustices ranging from class, race, gender, and imperialism in tandem rather than in isolation.

Link to References - [Link](#)

## **REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE: HISTORY, CULTURE AND ARTS**

**By Shafaque (M.A, Sem-IV)**

The Republic of Türkiye became the official name of the country in 2022 replacing 'Turkey' as its previous official English name. Ankara is the capital of Türkiye since the declaration of Türkiye as a Republic in 1923. Geographically, Türkiye spans across Europe and Asia, with around 3% of land in Europe and rest in Asia. Türkiye is surrounded by Black Sea, Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. The Bosphorus Strait connects Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara serving as the vital trade and tourism route.

The history of Türkiye dates back to several thousand years, around 8800 years with early settlements such as Çatalhöyük followed by Hittites around 4000 years. Around 330 BC, Alexander the Great conquered the region under the Greek empire until it was further captured by the Romans. With the decline of the Roman Empire, it was conquered by Byzantine Empire and then eventually by the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans ruled the region for around 623 years from 1299 to 1922. After World War I, the Ottomans lost their territory to Allied powers which resulted in the divisions of land. After the Turkish War of Independence, led by Mustafa Kemal, the Republic of Türkiye was founded in 1923.

The population of Türkiye mainly comprises of Muslims, with small percentage of Christians and Jews. The largest ethnic group is Turkish, followed by Kurds. The warmth and hospitality of Turkish people and blend of Asian-European influences in its cuisine makes Türkiye a sought-after tourist destination. Kebabs, Dolma, Mantı, Lahmacun etc. and desserts such as Lokum,

Baklava etc. are some of the famous Turkish delicacies. Pide, a Turkish bread is a must-have at breakfast which complements perfectly with other meals and beverages.

Sema dance “whirling dervishes” is a dance performed by Mevlevi Order. It is a spiritual dance performed in the remembrance of God and has deep mystical meaning attached to it. Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi; a 13th century poet and a Sufi mystic, is one of the most prominent and revered figures in the history of Türkiye. His migration to Konya made the city a symbol of his spiritual legacy and is considered as a pilgrimage site to visit Rumi’s grave and museum dedicated to his life and works. Turkish literature is deeply rooted in Ottoman traditions, classical poets and authors such as Yunus Emre, Namık Kemal, Ziya Paşa etc. and contemporary writers such as Orhan Veli, Sabahattin Ali, Orhan Pamuk, Elif Şafak reflect the cultural heritage of Türkiye. Orhan Pamuk won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2006.

Along with having rich cultural heritage Türkiye is blessed with scenic views and natural wonders. Cities such as Istanbul, Antalya, Cappadocia, Pamukkale, Bodrum etc. attract global tourists. *Foreign tourists’ arrivals jumped by 6.95% year-over-year to 52.63 million, surpassing the previous high of 49.2 million in 2023. In October, the government revised its target upward and said it expected the overall figure to reach 61 million at the end of 2024, up from an earlier estimate of 60 million. Revenue from tourists jumped 8.3% from the previous year to \$61.1 billion (Daily Sabah, 2025).*

#### FACTS

- Ankara is the capital of Türkiye.
- Istanbul is the most populous city in Türkiye.
- Türkiye is an earthquake-prone region.
- Turkish Lira is the currency of Türkiye.
- Wrestling is the National Sport of Türkiye.



Chief Editor– Prof. H A Nazmi (Director & President of Subject Association)

Editorial Advisor– Prof. Sebastian N. (Course Advisor)

General Editors– Warisha Wasi (Vice President), Ayan Akhtar (General Secretary),  
Syed Shahabuddin Andrabi and Md. Arif

Editorial Assistance– Zafar Madni, Sadiya Patel, Muhammad Safwan

Graphics Team – Shafaque and Abul Ahla

For Feedback E-Mail us at - [subjectassociationcwas@gmail.com](mailto:subjectassociationcwas@gmail.com)



## HIGHLIGHTS OF CENTRE FOR WEST ASIAN STUDIES



### Invited Talk on Cultural Relations Between Iran and India

The Centre for West Asian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, organized an invited talk on “**Cultural Relations Between Iran and India: Capacities and Prospects**” on **28th January 2025**. The session was addressed by **Dr. Fariduddin Faridasr**, Cultural Counsellor at the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in New Delhi. The event took place at the India-Arab Cultural Centre and witnessed active participation from students and faculty. The talk highlighted the historical and contemporary dimensions of Indo-Iranian cultural ties.



### CWAS, Jamia Holds Lecture on Today's West Asia

On **March 20, 2025**, Jamia Millia Islamia's Centre for West Asian Studies hosted a lecture titled “**Understanding West Asia in Contemporary Times.**” The speaker was **Professor A.K. Ramakrishnan** from Mahatma Gandhi University, a well-known expert on West Asia. He spoke to students, teachers, and researchers about the current political, social, and economic changes in the region. The event encouraged discussion and showed Jamia's focus on global studies.



### CWAS, Jamia Hosts Lecture on India-West Asia Economic Relations

Jamia Millia Islamia's Centre for West Asian Studies hosted a lecture on “**Emerging Dynamics of India-West Asian Economic Relations**” on **April 4, 2025**, at the Indo-Arab Cultural Centre. **Prof. Muhammad Azhar** from Aligarh Muslim University was the keynote speaker. He discussed the changing economic ties between India and West Asia. The session saw active participation from students and faculty and encouraged academic dialogue on regional economic trends.



### Launch of Al Nahda and Farewell of Batch 2023-25 at CWAS Jamia Millia Islamia | April 29, 2025

The Centre for West Asian Studies (CWAS), Jamia Millia Islamia, launched its monthly newsletter **Al Nahda: The West Asian Herald**, led by the **Subject Association**. The event was graced by **Prof. H.A. Nazmi (Director)**, **Prof. Sebastian N. (Course Advisor)**, and other faculty members. The **Editorial team** included **General Editors - Warisha Wasi, Ayan Akhtar, Syed Shahabuddin Andrabi, and Md. Arif**, with **Editorial Assistance - Zafar Madni, Sadiya Patel, and Muhammad Safwan**. The **Graphics team** featured **Shafaque**. and **Research assistance** was provided by **Tabassum, Subia Minhaj, and Shad Alam**. The day also included a farewell ceremony for the M.A. batch of 2023-25. Faculty members shared warm messages, appreciating the students' journey and contributions. The event celebrated academic collaboration, creativity, and new beginnings.