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Editorial

Dear readers!

In a time of shifting alliances, contested identities and urgent calls for justice across West and Central Asia, IPICS continues to serve as a vital intellectual bridge, offering critical visions and promoting multidimensional academic dialogues among Pakistan, Iran and the wider Caucasus region. The August 2025 edition presents a powerful selection of articles that reflect the complexity, depth and detail of contemporary regional challenges and enduring historical legacies.

We open this issue with a timely and piercing study by Asfandyar Ayaz and Dr. Muhammad Asim, titled "When Afghanistan-Iran Trade Masks Human Insecurity: Investigating Compromised De-Marginalisation of Farsiwan and Hazara under Taliban 2.0." This work courageously unpacks the uneasy intersection of economic opportunism and ethnic marginalization, revealing how cross-border trade may obscure the persistent insecurity experienced by vulnerable communities. In a geopolitical climate often dominated by state narratives and transactional diplomacy, this paper forces us to confront the human costs often buried beneath policy success stories.

From the geopolitical to the spiritual, Dr. Ghulam Asghar offers a contemplative and accessible piece, "A Concise Overview of the Era of Maulana Rumi and His Masnavi Ma'navi," which revisits the classical Islamic humanism of the 13th century. Amid modern-day fragmentation and ideological rigidity, this contribution reminds readers of Rumi's timeless message -- where love, introspection, and divine unity transcend borders, languages, and sects. Dr. Asghar's nuanced reading invites both scholars and lay readers to re-engage with a text that continues to inspire generations across civilizations.

Finally, Dr. Muhammad Asim, in his intellectually provocative article "A Prophetic Model of Sustainable Urbanism for an Ideal Islamic State like Pakistan: Perspectives from Non-Muslim Western Scholars," brings together theology, urban planning, and cross-cultural comparative analysis. By extracting lessons from non-Muslim thinkers on prophetic urban ethics, this work challenges assumptions about where 'Islamic' ideas must come from. It simultaneously pushes us to envision new paradigms for sustainability rooted in prophetic principles yet informed by global interdisciplinary discourse.

Together, these contributions reflect IPICS's commitment to critical regionalism, intersectional scholarship, and ethical responsibility. Whether unpacking marginalization in the shadow of trade, retrieving spiritual wisdom from classical texts, or envisioning sustainable futures through unexpected alliances, each article in this edition speaks to a wider commitment: to explore and challenge, to remember and reimagine.

We thank our contributors, reviewers and readers for continuing to make IPICS a dynamic forum for engaged scholarship across the diverse yet interconnected spaces of Pakistan, Iran and the Caucasus.

Best regards,

Dr. Shumaila Arzoo
RMR Representative in IPICS
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