CDPP
CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE

بزمِ سخن

BAZM-E-SUKHAN

A CELEBRATION OF URDU POETRY

Annual Report 2025

defindia.org | ACODE | Lamakaan

CDPP
CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE

کچھ عشق کیا
KUCHH ISHQ KIYA
— FAIZ AHMED FAIZ —

بزمِ سخن
BAZM-E-SUKHAN

The Bazm e Sukhan Anniversary

January 14, 2026 (Wednesday), 6:00 p.m
at Lamakaan, Near GVK One, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad

The Centre for Development Policy and Practice (CDPP), in collaboration with the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) and A-CODE, warmly invites you to a vibrant edition of Bazm-e-Sukhan—Kuchh Ishq Kiya, An Evening of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's personality and poetry by Mir Ali Husain.



Faiz Ahmed Faiz



Mir Ali Hussain

Mir Ali Husain is an eminent academic, film writer, poet and intellectual whose passion for Urdu poetry is legendary. He has worked extensively on progressive writers movement.

RSVP HERE



Smita Bellur

Smita Bellur, BE MS (BITS Pilani) worked at Oracle and SAP before turning a full-time musician. She is a trained Hindustani Classical Sufi singer who has performed at more than 500 venues.
She has performed at Jodhpur RIFF, Spree Paisley Festival (Scotland), Rajgir Utsav, Kalaghoda Arts Festival, Jahan-e-Khusrau (Delhi), to name a few.

Presided over by Smt. Lakshmi Devi Raj & Prof. Ashraf Rafi

DINNER FOLLOWS

Supported by DEF | A·CODE

About the Bazm-e-Sukhan

Bazm-e-Sukhan is a celebration of Urdu poetry and literature, curated and conducted by CDPP in collaboration with the Digital Empowerment Foundation through its initiative A-CODE. Established in 2018, the gathering has found its home at Lamakaan, Hyderabad, a space that resonates with dialogue and cultural exchange. Over the years, Bazm-e-Sukhan has evolved into a vibrant forum where people come together to listen, recite, reflect, and engage with the living and ever-expanding tradition of Urdu literary expression.

Alongside its physical presence, Bazm-e-Sukhan has nurtured a global community of over 190 participants who meet every Tuesday on Zoom. These online sessions enable writers, readers, and listeners from across geographies to remain connected to Urdu poetry and prose, fostering an inclusive and intergenerational exchange of ideas, texts, and interpretations.

The in-person sessions at Lamakaan remain the primary anchor of the initiative. Held on the second Wednesday of every month, these gatherings offer a structured yet open forum for readings, discussions, and collective engagement. The format accommodates planned recitations, thematic explorations, and spontaneous conversations, allowing both regular contributors and first-time participants to share the space with equal ease. Together, these sessions reaffirm Bazm-e-Sukhan's commitment to keeping Urdu literature accessible, participatory, and rooted in lived cultural practice.

Our Publications

The Bazm also publishes anthologies that reflect its commitment to literature, translation, and cultural dialogue. Its first publication, Aata Hai Mujhko Guzra Hua Zamana (2021), is an iconic account of a life lived in poetry within the police force, authored by retired Director General of Police, Ram Pal Joshi.

Another significant publication is Alfaaz Ki Mehfil, a compilation of select Urdu poetry along with English interpretations, authored by Satya Prabhakar, one of the most eminent business leaders in the IT sector. The anthology has seen multiple editions: the first in 2022. In 2024, the Bazm published Daman-e-Gulchein, authored by Asrar Ahmed Khan, a collection of Urdu literary works with English translations by Prof. Ali Mir, Prof. Raza Mir, and Dr. Umair Ullah Khan, with a foreword by Ms. Anees Ayesha.

Also in 2024, Viriah by Krishna Ghubili was published in Urdu by CDPP. This work was first published in English in 2018 by Nation Press, followed by a Telugu edition published by Anvikshiki in 2020.

The Centre for Development Policy and Practice in collaboration with the A-CODE initiative of the Digital Empowerment Foundation and Lamakaan bring to you Bazm-e-Sukhan.

Centre for Development Policy and Practice (CDPP)

The Centre for Development Policy and Practice (CDPP) is an independent, non-partisan research organisation dedicated to influencing public policy, particularly focusing on vulnerable populations. Our work spans research and outreach, aimed at disseminating valuable research insights. We conduct rigorous internal and partnership-centric research, emphasising empirical evidence to bridge knowledge gaps and offer innovative solutions to societal issues.

A primary focus of our institution is to narrow the knowledge divide between the government and the public regarding inclusive policies. We aim to inform and raise public awareness about existing policy frameworks, engaging people, and valuing their input in the policy formulation. We achieve this through working with a team of research professionals and expert consultants, under the guidance of eminent public intellectuals, and conduct various events like seminars, workshops, roundtables, talks, and regular publications. These platforms bring together experts, government officials, and the public for multifaceted discussions and debates on crucial societal concerns.

Our Collaborators

About Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF)

Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) is a Delhi-based nonprofit organisation working towards empowering people to gain access to better healthcare, education, skills, and livelihood opportunities through digital literacy and digital tools. The organisation's main focus is to make technology easily accessible to the masses, and to empower women, youth, persons with disabilities, and the elderly through providing functional digital literacy, media literacy, and digital up-skilling across agriculture, micro and nano-business, health, education, livelihood, and entrepreneurial skills. Over the last 23 years, the organisation has been actively engaged in digitally empowering local communities through its 2,000 Community Information Resource Centres. These centres are supported by a widespread network of 10,000 digital foot soldiers located across 25 states and 250+ districts in rural, tribal, marginalised, and unreached areas. DEF has directly impacted the lives of more than 35 million people including people from below the poverty line, women, artisans, youth, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

A-CODE

A-CODE is an initiative aimed at strengthening collaboration among civil society organisations working across diverse sectors, while advocating for a more central role for the arts in driving social change. The collective focuses on several priority issues that cut across the work of civil society organisations and serve to define, shape, and advance processes of social transformation.

Lamakaan

Lamakaan is an inclusive cultural space and Trust that promotes and presents the best of arts, literature, theatre, debate, and dialogue, with a commitment to being open and accessible. As an independent organisation, Lamakaan encourages those hosting events to also work towards independence from corporate and government funds as a sustainable way of achieving independence from their agenda. As a result, Lamakaan does not host programmes that are sponsored by any businesses or governments, and does not accept any donations, cash or kind, from government or corporate organisations.

Why the Bazm?

At CDPP, one of our core commitments is to foster diversity and heterogeneity. In pursuit of this goal, we seek to shape policies that bring together diverse strands of culture and literature, while promoting their preservation, documentation, and dissemination.

Support

The Bazm e Sukhan is run frugally with enormous amounts of support in kind from our patrons. There is neither a membership/subscription fee nor is any ticket money charged for our events.

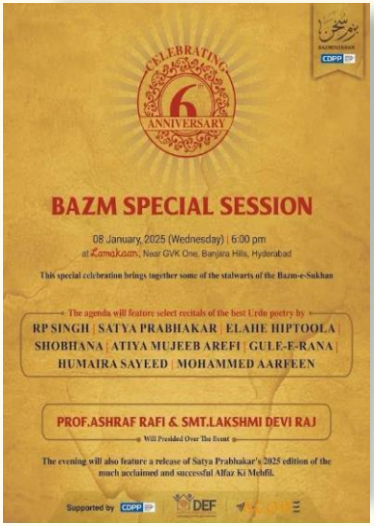
Our Events

The in-person sessions of the Bazm are designed to bring together scholars, poets, and enthusiasts, who share their ideas and recite poetry in focused presentations, followed by open and engaged discussions. In 2025, the in-person events revolved around the following themes:

Events

1. Bazm 6th Anniversary Special Session

Lamakaan is an inclusive cultural space and Trust that promotes and presents the best of arts, literature, theatre, debate, and dialogue, with a commitment to being open and accessible. As an independent organisation, Lamakaan encourages those hosting events to also work towards independence from corporate and government funds as a sustainable way of achieving independence from their agenda. As a result, Lamakaan does not host programmes that are sponsored by any businesses or governments, and does not accept any donations, cash or kind, from government or corporate organisations.



08 January, 2025 | WEDNESDAY | 6:30 p.m.
Lamakaan Opp. GVK One, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills

This special anniversary session marked six years of Bazm-e-Sukhan as a vibrant literary forum. The evening featured guest readings by poets and scholars, reflections on the journey of the Bazm, and the formal release of Alfaaz Ki Mehfil 2025, celebrating Urdu poetry and its contemporary interpretations.

2. Zikr-e-Shora-e-Deccan

Dedicated to the rich poetic heritage of the Deccan, this session revisited the lives, works, and enduring influence of Deccan poets. Speakers highlighted their unique literary traditions, linguistic styles, and contributions to the evolution of Urdu literature in the region.



12 February, 2025 | WEDNESDAY | 6:30 p.m.
Lamakaan Opp. GVK One, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills

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Dedicated to the rich poetic heritage of the Deccan, this session revisited the lives, works, and enduring influence of Deccan poets. Speakers highlighted their unique literary traditions, linguistic styles, and contributions to the evolution of Urdu literature in the region.

3. Be Zubani se Zuban tak: Urdu Shayerat ka Fikri Safar

Dedicated to the rich poetic heritage of the Deccan, this session revisited the lives, works, and enduring influence of Deccan poets. Speakers highlighted their unique literary traditions, linguistic styles, and contributions to the evolution of Urdu literature in the region.



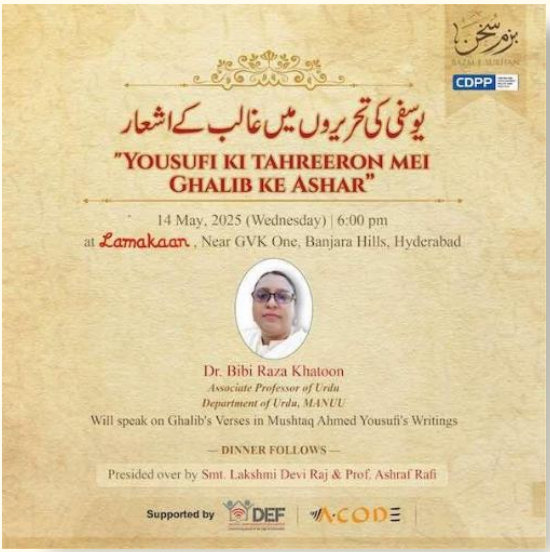
09 April, 2025 | WEDNESDAY | 6:30 p.m.
Lamakaan Opp. GVK One, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills

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This thoughtful discussion focused on the intellectual and creative journey of women in Urdu poetry. The session traced how women poets have articulated voice, resistance, emotion, and identity, examining shifts in themes, language, and expression across generations.

4. Yousufi ki Tahreeron mein Ghalib ke Ashaar

This Bazm explored the poetic presence and influence of Mirza Ghalib in the prose writings of Mushtaq Ahmed Yousufi. Through close readings and analysis, the session revealed how Ghalib's verses enrich Yousufi's humour, irony, and literary depth.



14 May, 2025 | WEDNESDAY | 6:30 p.m.
Lamakaan Opp. GVK One, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills

BAZM-E-SUKHAN

5. Ek Shaam Mizah ke Naam

A lively and engaging evening devoted to Urdu humour, this session featured presentations, talks, and a special humorous poetry segment. The event celebrated wit, satire, and laughter as essential elements of Urdu literary culture.



11 June, 2025 | WEDNESDAY | 6:30 p.m.
Lamakaan Opp. GVK One, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills

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6. Urdu Poetry in Bombay Cinema

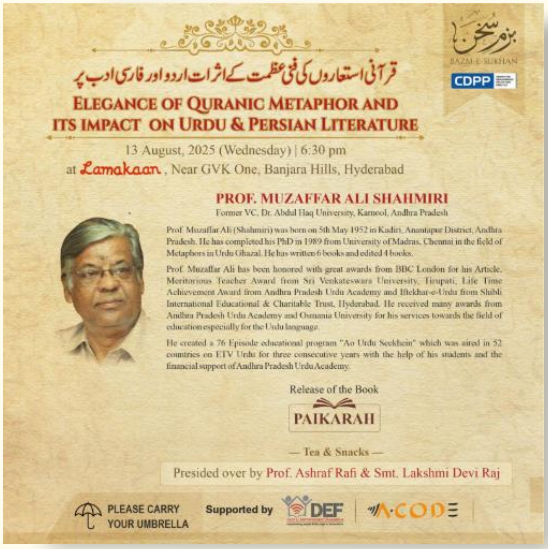
This session examined the significant role of Urdu poetry in shaping the language, lyricism, and aesthetics of Bombay cinema. Discussions highlighted poets, lyricists, and iconic film songs, alongside the release of the book Raah-e-Hosh by its author, Ms. Kausar Sultana.



09 July, 2025 | WEDNESDAY | 6:30 p.m.
Lamakaan Opp. GVK One, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills

7. Elegance of Quranic Metaphor and Its Impact on Urdu & Persian Literature

This intellectually rich evening featured a lecture by Prof. Muzaffar Ali Shahmiri on Quranic metaphor as a profound literary and philosophical influence. The session explored its stylistic elegance and thematic resonance in Urdu and Persian literature and included a book release.



13 August, 2025 | WEDNESDAY | 6:30 p.m.
Lamakaan Opp. GVK One, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills

8. “Whose Urdu Is It Anyway?”

This evening hosted a stimulating conversation with Qamar Jamali and Dr. Rakshanda Jalil on questions of ownership, evolution, and identity of the Urdu language. The discussion addressed contemporary challenges, cultural belonging, and the future of Urdu in a changing world.



12 September, 2025 | WEDNESDAY | 6:30 p.m.
Lamakaan Opp. GVK One, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills

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9. Ek Shaam "Gilli" aur "Danda" ke Naam

This event was a humour-centric session celebrating the distinctive poetic voices of Sarwar Danda and Gilli Nalgondavi. The evening showcased their playful styles, sharp wit, and unique contributions to Urdu humorous poetry.



07 October, 2025 | WEDNESDAY | 6:30 p.m.
Lamakaan Opp. GVK One, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills

10. Vidya Shah: In Tribute to Akhtari Bai

This enchanting Bazm featured a musical and narrative tribute by Vidya Shah to Begum Akhtar. Through song, storytelling, and reflection, the session traced Begum Akhtar's artistic journey and her lasting impact on ghazal and thumri traditions.

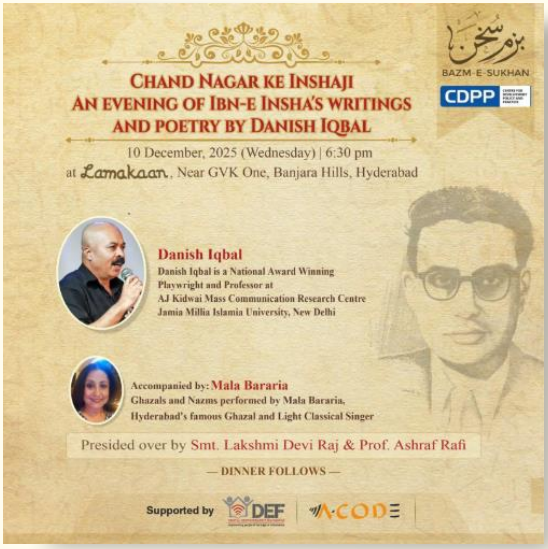


12 November, 2025 | WEDNESDAY | 6:30 p.m.
Lamakaan Opp. GVK One, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills

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11. Chand Nagar ke Inshaji—An Evening of Ibn-e-Insha's Writings & Poetry by Danish Iqbal

The final Bazm-e-Sukhan of the year 2025 was a memorable literary evening featuring celebrated playwright Danish Iqbal, who brought Ibn-e-Insha's writings and poetry to life. The programme was complemented by soulful ghazals and nazms performed by Mala Bararia.



10 December, 2025 | WEDNESDAY | 6:30 p.m.
Lamakaan Opp. GVK One, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills

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Other Events

Urdu Literary Fest 2025

The Urdu Literary Fest was delivered through the collaboration of Human Development Trust (HDT), CDPP with Bazm-e-Sukhan, the FEED Foundation, and the Hyderabad Institute of Excellence. It brought Urdu medium government school students together for debates, storytelling, drama, art, and public- speaking activities, giving them exposure beyond their everyday school environment. The event included safe transport, meals, guided support, and awards, offering students a chance to build confidence, interact with peers, and explore a modern campus setting. Overall, the Fest provided meaningful enrichment and skill building- in a simple, practical, and engaging format.











BAZM MEMORIES OF 2025

















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BAZM MEMORIES OF 2025

















CDPP Governing Council

G. Sudhir is a former IAS officer. He was Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry to study the Socioeconomic and Educational Conditions of Muslims in Telangana.

Amitabh Kundu is Professor Emeritus at L. J. University, Visiting Professor at MANUU, and Trustee of Development Alternatives. A former Professor and Dean at JNU, he has chaired major committees including the Post-Sachar Evaluation, Diversity Index, Housing Shortage Estimation, and Housing Start-Up.

Aalok Wadhwa is a management professional with over three decades of experience working in FMCG, online and social media content, publishing, and retail businesses.

Saleema Razvi is the Director at CDPP. She is a Research Economist at the Copenhagen Consensus Center. She has previously served in organisations like the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, the Population Foundation of India, and UNICEF.

Abdul Shaban is a Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He has been a member of the Post-Sachar Evaluation Committee, the Chief Minister's High-Powered Committee on Muslims, Government of Maharashtra, and Sudhir Commission, Telangana.

Amir Ullah Khan is the Founder- Research Director of CDPP and a Member of the Telangana Public Service Commission (TGSPC). He is a development economist and a Visiting Professor at the Indian School of Business (ISB).

Syed Adeeluddin serves as the Director of CDPP. In addition to his leadership role, he is a philanthropist and social worker, balancing his professional commitments with the responsibilities of his family's construction business. An engineering graduate from Osmania University, he also holds an MBA in Finance.

Neelima Khetan is the Managing Partner at Nous Consulting. A seasoned social sector advisor, she brings extensive experience in non-profits, CSR, sustainable development, and rural development. She has previously led the CSR divisions at Coca-Cola, Vedanta Group, and Hindustan Zinc.

Jeemol Unni is a Professor at Ahmedabad University, and a former Director and RBI Chair Professor of Economics at the Institute of Rural Management, Anand. A specialist in labour economics, she serves on the editorial boards of the *Indian Journal of Labour Economics* and the *Journal of Development Policy and Practice*.

Rathin Roy is a Visiting Senior Fellow at ODI Global, where he previously served as Managing Director. His research focuses on fiscal and macroeconomic issues in developing economies. He was the Director and CEO of NIPFP in New Delhi and has held key roles at the UNDP and the Thirteenth Finance Commission. Dr. Roy holds a PhD and MPhil in Economics from the University of Cambridge.

CDPP Research Team

Amitabh Kundu is a Professor Emeritus at L. J. University, Ahmedabad, a Visiting Professor at MANUU, Hyderabad, and a Trustee of Development Alternatives, Delhi. Formerly a Professor and Dean at JNU, he chaired key committees, including the Post-Sachar Evaluation, Diversity Index (Ministry of Minority Affairs), Housing Shortage Estimation (Urban Development), and Housing Start-Up (RBI).

Soma Wadhwa is a development studies researcher, with extensive experience as a media professional. Currently, she is a Research Scholar at the School of Liberal Studies and Media at UPES, Dehradun, India.

Nahia Hussain is Vice President (Policy Affairs) at CDPP with a Master's degree from the National Law School of India, Bangalore.

Anjana Divakar is the Executive Director of Public Policy Research and Operations at the CDPP. She has a Master's degree in Public Policy from the Jindal School of Government and Public Policy.

Laldinmoi Pangamte is the Copy Editor, Publications, at CDPP. She has a PhD degree from the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Moumita Barman is a Senior Research Associate at CDPP. She has a Master's degree in Public Policy and Governance from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad, and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science (Hons) from Loreto College, University of Calcutta.

Sejal Gupta is a Senior Research Fellow at CDPP, working on the Regulation Project across Emerging, Infrastructure, and Consumer sectors. She holds a Master's in Urban Planning (SPA, New Delhi) and a Bachelor's in Architecture (RV College, Bengaluru).

Manisha Dhulipala is a Senior Research Fellow at CDPP. She holds an MSc in Science and Technology for Sustainability (SPRU, University of Sussex), an MSc in Environmental Sciences (Marathwada University), and a BSc in Microbiology (Osmania University).

Lubna Ludheen is a Research Associate at CDPP. She has a Master's degree in Public Policy from Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru.

Mohammed Ahmed is a Graphic and UI Designer at CDPP. He has a Bachelor's degree in Commerce from Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University, Telangana.

Mohammed Rahmath Ali is the Manager, Operations & Finance at CDPP. He has a degree in Commerce from Osmania University, Hyderabad, Telangana.

Iqra Ahmed is a Communications and Copyediting Associate at CDPP. She has a Master's degree in Journalism and Mass Communication from Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Assam.

Arnav Panwar is a Research Fellow at CDPP. He has an undergraduate degree from FLAME University in Public Policy. He has previously worked as a research intern at TIDE, Bangalore.

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BAZM-E-SUKHAN

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Mir Ali Hussain
Eminent Academic, Poet, Film Writer, & Intellectual



Smita Bellur
Indian Classical Sufi Singer



Jayesh Ranjan
Special Chief Secretary & CEO Industry & Investment Cell SPEED, Government of T.S.



Sreeha Reddy Deshmukh
Director, Toys Industries & Commerce Dept., Govt. of T.S. & Director – Industry Linkages Promotion & Skilling, Osmania Foundation



Osama Manzar
Founder-Director
Digital Empowerment Foundation



Shobhana Krishnaswamy
Creator
Lafz-E-Imroz



Satya Prabhakar
Author, AI-SaaS Entrepreneur

Key Highlights

- Curated literary–musical presentation: *"Kuchh Ishq Kiya: Faiz Ahmed Faiz"*
- Visual Storytelling Session on *"Artisanal Wisdom amidst Digital Challenges: Stories of Phygital Social Enterprises"*
- Museum of Digital Society (MoDS) exhibition on *"Fana-e-Haq & AI"*
- Report Release:
  - Jayesh Ranjan, Special Chief Secretary & CEO, Industry & Investment Cell, SPEED, Government of Telangana
  - Sreeha Reddy Deshmukh, Director, Toys Industries & Commerce Department, Government of Telangana, and Director – Industry Linkages, Promotion & Skilling, Osmania Foundation
- Satya Prabhakar on *"Urdu Poetry" ROI*
- Lafz-E-Imroz presentation by Shobhana Krishnaswamy

defindia.org | A·CODE | Museum of Digital Society

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CDPP

URDU POETRY & BOLLYWOOD

BAZM-E-SUKHAN

February 11, 2026 (Wednesday), 6:00 p.m
at Lamakaan, Near GVK One, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad

This special session features the journey of Cinema and the role played by Urdu poets. Songs and music have been a key feature of Indian films and often the reason for the success and popularity of this medium.



Dr. Zaheer Baig

Dr. Zaheer Baig will present this journey, singing some of the rarest and some of the best known lines that define Urdu's contribution to Indian films.

Presided over by Smt. Lakshmi Devi Raj & Prof. Ashraf Rafi

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To attend the online sessions held every Tuesday at 10:00p.m. IST, please scan this QR code.

Zoom Details

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10-3-303, 3rd Floor, Serene Heights Building, Humayun Nagar, Masab Tank, Hyderabad - 500 028 | info@cdpp.co.in | www.cdpp.co.in