

## **13<sup>TH</sup> HUMBOLDT INDIA PROJECT LECTURE**

**19<sup>TH</sup> of July 2019 (Friday) 13:00 – 15:00 hrs.**

Department of South Asia Studies,  
Institute of Asian and African Studies  
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin  
Invalidenstr. 118, Room 217



### **IFTEKHAR IQBAL**

#### **From Zomia to Holon: Rivers and Transregional Encounters in South and Southeast Asia, 1840-1950**

The paper seeks to secure for the river a larger berth in the recent macro-historical turn. Exploring the life-world of the Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy, Salween, Mekong and Yangtze rivers, it suggests that despite different fluvial itinerary and topography, these rivers together formed a connected waterspace. They engendered conversations between multi-agentive mobility and large-scale place-making and were at the heart of inter-Asian engagements until the formal end of empires. Being both a subject and a sponsor of transregional crossings these rivers epitomized the connections across parts of the Zomian uplands to the expansive plain land and the vast coastal rim of the Bay of Bengal and the China Seas. A connection that could be best examined from the vantage point of the concept of Holon.

**IFTEKHAR IQBAL** is Associate Professor of History and International Studies at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei. His research interests include Bengali intellectual history and Asian environmental history. Iqbal's monograph, *The Bengal Delta* (Palgrave 2010), examines agrarian economy and wellbeing of colonial Bangladesh and West Bengal from a political-ecological perspective. As a visiting fellow (July-August 2019) at the Institute for Asian and African Studies at HU Berlin, being sponsored by von Humboldt Foundation, Iqbal continues to work on a book project on the Tibetan-Himalayan rivers as a site of transregional mobility of commodities as well as human and non-human actors. Iqbal is holder of Georg Forster Fellowship of Humboldt Foundation (2012-13) and British Academy Visiting Fellowship (2008). He has published extensively including in leading journals in historical studies.

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