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Follow the Clues

BY: TRACY MONIZ

Student-detective unravels ancient tale

"It's about following clues and problem solving," says AlZahir Tharani about his efforts to help bring to life the diaries of Pir Sabzali, a traveller through India, China, Tajikistan and Afghanistan during "The Great Game" - a rivalry among the British, Chinese and Soviet empires for territory in Central Asia from the early 19th to the early 20th centuries.



AlZahir Tharani uncovers clues through the Research Opportunity Program. (Photo: Melissa Heide)

As part of the Research Opportunity Program, Tharani collaborated with historical studies professor Shafique Virani and other students on an audio book and general-interest radio drama to complement the book Virani is writing based on the diaries. Using the traveller's descriptions, Tharani researched the locations of little-known villages using old military maps, other travellers' accounts and library and other information sources. To ensure authentic illustrations for the print book, he also investigated native dress and landscape.

Once complete, Virani says these materials will offer an innovative way for the public and, in particular, students to learn about Muslim culture and different parts of the world during that time.

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