AVVISO DI SEMINARIO

Il giorno 30 Maggio alle ore 11.00

nell'aula Seminari

Il Prof. Abhik Ghosh

terrà un seminario dal titolo

**"The Grammar of the Elements:
Did the Sanskrit alphabet influence Mendeleev's
periodic table?"**

Proponente: Prof. Roberto Paolesse

The Grammar of the Elements:
Did the Sanskrit alphabet influence Mendeleev's periodic table?

ABHIK GHOSH

Professor, Department of Chemistry, and

Coordinator, UiT Center for Sustainable STEM Education

UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, N-9037 Tromsø, Norway

E-mail: abhik.ghosh@uit.no

Chemists familiar with the history of the periodic table may recall that Dmitri Mendeleev gave the prefixes *eka*, *dvi*, and *tri* (Sanskrit for "one," "two," and "three") to eight then-unknown elements. Eka-aluminium (later named gallium), for example, was so named because it sat one below aluminum on Mendeleev's table. But why he chose to pay homage to the ancient language (which is related to ancient Greek and Latin) in his life's work has remained a mystery. This talk will present the story of the periodic table and that of Sanskrit and of how the two stories may have intersected in Mendeleev's work [1].

[1] Ghosh, A.; Kiparsky, P. The grammar of the elements: Did the Sanskrit alphabet influence the construction of Mendeleev's periodic table? *American Scientist*, **2019**, 107, 350-355.

Biography. Abhik Ghosh is an inorganic and theoretical chemist at UiT – The Arctic University of Norway. He has contributed to many aspects of bioinorganic chemistry and, in recent years, has developed the coordination chemistry of corroles and other porphyrin analogues, focusing on their interactions with 5d transition metals. He is also an amateur Sanskrit scholar and a fluent speaker of the language, which placed him in a position to critically examine the question posed in the title of the seminar. For additional details, see: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1161-6364.