



## **Academy's Major Cultural, Literary Package Unfolds For Kashmir**

**Jammu, April 23, 2013**

Buoyant with a successful and sustained schedule of its activities in the winter capital, Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture & Languages is geared up for hectic cultural and literary activities in Kashmir this summer beginning next month. The cultural bonanza starts with over-two month long Kashmir folk music and theatre carnival at different places in the valley starting from Pahalgam on May 4, 2013. Alongside this, the Drama Festival would be held at Srinagar early next month.

Giving details, Secretary Academy, Khalid Bashir Ahmad, said that extensive activity of celebrating Kashmiri folk has been planned in collaboration with the Tourism department during which weekly local folk music and theatre performances, mixed with ghazals and light music, would be held at places across the valley. This, he said, was to showcase and promote the rich Kashmiri folk on a major scale. A similar proposal for Patnitop and Katra is awaiting approval from the Tourism & Culture Department. He said alongside with this extended cultural activity, the Academy will hold drama festival at Srinagar. The activity, he said, would be held in the valley after a long break. The selected theatre groups have been asked to complete rehearsal by this month end, he added.

Among other scheduled activities in Kashmir, the Secretary said that All India Painting Camp, All India Sculptors Camp, Writers Camp and Children's on the spot painting competition were scheduled for the coming months. He said the Academy is also exploring Terracotta Sculpture Camp at Srinagar for the first time. He said the Best Book Award and the Best Film Competition Award are also scheduled to be given away at Srinagar even as State Art Award and Children's On the Spot Painting and Music Competition Awards were given away recently at Jammu. He said the Urdu Conference and the Pahari Conference are also being held in Srinagar during the summer. These events, he said were besides the Academy's routine literary activities including its extensive publication programme in different languages. He said the treasure of the Academy's manuscripts, paintings, calligraphy specimen and miniatures was being digitized the work on which would start immediately.

Khalid dispelled the impression sought to be created by a news report published in a local daily that not much activity was witnessed in Kashmir during the past six months. He said while there was always room for improvement such an impression was misleading and far from the facts. He said 63 big and small functions were held across Kashmir division, excluding Ladakh, since June 2012 including the mega

Kashmiri Conference, seminars, folk festivals and music programmes. He said as many as 20 events were held since the Kashmiri Conference itself as against 'none' as suggested by the news report. A major cultural bonanza- Octave- of the north eastern states was held in Kashmir last August with including e collaboration of the NZCC in which over one hundred artists from north east performed along with the Kashmiri folk artists. Similarly folk music and theatre festival was held at Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Mansbal, Zabarwan Park and Nigeen Club followed by a major Ghazal Evening at SKICC. Likewise, he said seminars, symposia and music programmes in different languages were held in Kashmir during the period. He said that improvement in the functioning of the Academy was a goal constantly being pursued.

Referring specifically to the Kashmiri language publications, the Secretary said that as many as 11 publications including the periodical *Sheeraza* were published during the past six months as against the 'only two' suggested by the news report. These include monographs on Akhtar Mohiuddin, Iqbal Nath Wanpoh, Ahmad Ullah Haakbari, Kaeshir Conference Number of *Sheeraza* and Mehr o Maah. He said two more Kashmiri publications including the voluminous Nishat Ansari Number are in the press. He said the under print issues of Kashmiri *Sheeraza* clears the backlog up to February 2013.

The spokesman further said that apart from the Kashmiri language specific events, the cultural and literary activities of the Academy have increased manifold since last year. He said all the sub offices of the Academy in the State have been actively holding events which are reflected through the *Saqafat*. He said many major events including Folk Music Festival, Kashmiri and Dogri conferences, Akbar Hyderi Memorial Lecture, seminars, mushairas, ghazal programmes, painting and sculpture camps and exhibitions were held. As regards publications, the spokesman said that a number of publications in other languages including Dogri, Pahari, Gojri, Hindi, English, Urdu and Punjabi were published and many more were in the press. The Academy's comprehensive website and the multi-colour newsletter, *Saqafat*, were launched keeping the viewers and readers abreast of the activities of the academy.

The Secretary described as misplaced the suggestion that financial assistance to NGOs had been stopped. He reminded that any case of such nature has to go through a procedure including verification and approval by the competent authority. He said the approval was received last week and the funds have been released for distribution.

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