

**Central Committee endorses digitization of reference books;
review of rules, structure
Panels of language experts, creation of Balti/Shina section approved**

Srinagar, October 8, 2013

The Central Committee of the J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages, the highest decision making body of the institution, that met here under the Chairmanship of the President Academy and Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah on October 8, 2013, approved the proposal for digitization of the Academy's reference books, sanctioning Rs. 35 lakhs for the first phase of the project estimated to cost Rs. 70 lakhs.



This follows close on the heels of completion of digitization of rich collection of the Academy's manuscripts, paintings, miniatures, calligraphy specimen, sculptures and images.

In another important decision, the Committee approved the proposal for a review of the Academy's structure and rules and asked the Secretary to prepare a paper in consultation with experts in art, literature and culture for consideration of the President. The need for the review was felt to assess the existing structure and rules in the light of present requirements.

Minister for Housing, Horticulture & Culture, Raman Bhalla, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, B B Vyas, Commissioner Secretary to Government, Tourism & Culture, Atal Dulloo, senior writers and members of the Central Committee, Nilambar Dev Sharma, Mohammad Yusuf Taing, Chowdhary Iqbal Azeem, Dr. Jahangir Daanish and Thusptan Paldan were present.

The Committee also accorded approval to the establishment of Balti/Shina language section in the Academy with the creation of one post each of Assistant Editor and Research Assistant for the two languages. One post of Assistant Editor for English was also sanctioned.

Approval was also accorded to panels of experts for languages including Kashmiri, Dogri, Pahari, Gojri, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Ladakhi, besides revalidation of various committee of the Academy. Amendments to some schemes were also approved in addition to the approval to the proposed rules for the Best Translation Award scheme and the recently set up Artists & Writers' Welfare Fund.

The Committee also approved composition of Editorial Boards for Dogri-English and Kashmiri-English Dictionary projects. The projects have been already approved by the Central Committee.

Addressing the meeting, Omar Abdullah said that the preservation of the State's rich treasure of art, culture, and literature was the need of the hour. This, he said, would serve as a guide to future generations about their rich and glorious past. He said the Academy has the onerous responsibility to preserve and promote this invaluable heritage and assured that measures taken in this regard would be supported by the government.

The Chief Minister received brief on the construction of the Tehzeeb Mehal, renovation and repairs of the Tagore Hall and the Abhinav Theatre. He also received details of the major activities being undertaken by the Cultural Academy to promote literature, art, culture and heritage.

The Secretary J&K State Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Khalid Bashir Ahmad, presented detailed account of the activities undertaken by the Academy since June 2012 in the areas of art, culture and literature and improve the functioning of the Academy. He said that foundation of Rs. 72 crore Tehzeeb Mehal was laid in January 2013 and the work on the project was underway; digitization of the Academy's treasure-trove of manuscripts etc to electronically preserve these for posterity has been completed. He also mentioned the issuance of 12-page multi-colour news-letter, *Saqafat*, by the Academy exclusively dedicated to art, culture and literary activities and said six issues of the newsletter have so far been issued. He also mentioned the Chief Minister's approval for creation of Corps Fund for welfare of the artists and writers and thanked the Chief Minister for the same.

He gave details of the publications brought out by the Academy in different languages since the past one year. A large number of special publications brought out during this period were also displayed on the occasion.

The Secretary thanked the Chief Minister for his continued support to the Academy in carrying out its mandated activities.
