

 **Academy holds 2-day Punjabi Conference**
Writers deliberate upon challenges and opportunities for language

JAMMU, MAY 30

As part of a series of language conferences recently launched by J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages, a 2-day conference on 'Punjabi Language; Challenges & Opportunities with Special Reference to J&K' began here today with speakers highlighting the need for making the language more relevant to the present times. Earlier, the Academy held similar conferences on Kashmiri and Dogri languages.

The conference was inaugurated by Minister for Housing, Horticulture & Culture, Raman Bhalla while Vice chancellor, University of Jammu, Dr. Mohanpal Singh Isher from different presided the inaugural session. The highlight of the conference was that writers and intellectuals from different parts of the State and from outside were participating during which they would present papers on different issues and have discussions and deliberations on the theme of the conference.



The conference will have four sessions, besides the inaugural. The keynote address was presented by Prof Rajinderhpal Sinigh Brar of the Punjabi University Patiala. In the first session today, four papers were presented by Kanwal Kashmiri, Dr. Rajnesh Singh Bahadur, Dr Baldev Singh Dhaliwal and Dr. Sharma.

In the evening, a scintillating cultural programme was presented by the students of Punjabi University Patiala who had been specially invited for the occasion. The audience was delighted by the high voltage Punjabi cultural programme.

A Book Exhibition of the Academy's Punjabi publications was also organized at the venue.

On the second day of the conference tomorrow, three more papers will be presented by Dr. Baljit Singh Raina, Prof Rattan Singh Kanwal and Swami Anter Neerav. In the second session prominent Punjabi short story writers including Khalid Hussain, Harbajan Singh Sagar, Balbir Parwana and Kamal Deep Singh.



In his inaugural address, Minister for Housing, Horticulture & Culture, Raman Bhalla said that the government was keenly involved in the promotion of different languages including Panjabi that are spoken in the State. He said Punjabi language is spoken not only in several states of India but also in different countries. He said conferences such as these help a great deal in identifying issues and finding solutions and asked the writers and intellectuals to link the language with employment opportunities to ensure its further growth.

The Vic Chancellor spoke at length about the richness of Punjabi language and its role in creating awareness among masses. He said Punjabi writers of Jammu & Kashmir have made a niche in the larger Punjabi literary circles.

Welcoming the participating writers, Secretary Academy, Khalid Bashir Ahmad said that the Academy is actively engaged in the promotion of various languages including Punjabi. He said besides a huge publication programme in different languages, seminars, conferences and poetic and short story sessions are held regularly to promote languages and literature. The Punjabi Conference, he said, was held after a gap of six years even as the Academy has now started a series of language conferences to

identify challenges and opportunities for these languages. The Pahari Conference, he said, is now next in the Academy's schedule.

With special reference to Punjabi language that he described as sweet with enriching literature, Khalid enumerated various measures taken by the Academy since its inception in 1958 for the promotion of the language including regular publication of literary journal, Sheeraza, Sada Sahit and umpteen number of publications on various topics besides special numbers on important personalities and literary and social issues. He said like in other languages, there is an annual Best Book Award given to the best Punjabi book, carrying a cash prize of Rs. 51,000, a memento, shawl and citation. In addition, writers are given subsidy on publication of their books.

Among others, prominent writers and intellectuals of Punjabi languages including Dr. Jagbir Singh, Dr. Satish Verma, Sardar Saran Singh, Dr. Rajnesh Bahadur, Dr. Sukhdev Singh, Dr. Deepak Manmohan, Prof. Tejinder Kour, Dr. Lalit Magotra, Prof. Archana Kesar, Khalid Hussain, Baljit Raina, Arsh Sehbai, Sham Taalib, Chand Deepika Kour, students and staff of Punjabi Department of Jammu University were present.
