

KU honours celebrated Kashmiri poet Rehman Rahi at national seminar with Sahitya Akademi



Srinagar, Aug 12: Celebrated Kashmiri poet, translator and critic Rehman Rahi (1925–2023)—the only Kashmiri ever to receive the prestigious Jnanpith Award—was the focus of a two-day national seminar jointly organised by the Department of Urdu, University of Kashmir (KU), and the Sahitya Akademi, Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Widely regarded as a major literary voice, Rahi’s Kashmiri poetry and Urdu scholarship bridged regional and national literatures, while his role as a translator, critic, and author of the University anthem cemented his place as a cultural icon.

Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, who was the chief guest at the inaugural session, recalled Rahi’s lasting impact on literary and cultural life and announced a dedicated hall in his name at the University. She urged the Department of Urdu to organise more such scholarly and cultural events to keep literary traditions alive.

“Honouring Rehman Rahi is our duty as an academic community; his work teaches us how literature can bridge languages and shape identity,” she said.

Dr. Madhav Kaushik, President, Sahitya Akademi, in his presidential address, highlighted Rahi’s national stature and the significance of holding the commemoration in Kashmir.

“Rahi’s poetry and critical work occupy a distinct place in Indian letters; celebrating his life here recognises both his art and the region that shaped him,” he said.

The seminar was organised as part of events marking Rehman Rahi’s birth centenary, which brought together eminent scholars and writers to critically examine his

contributions to Kashmiri verse, Urdu criticism, and comparative literature. The event—part literary tribute and part scholarly engagement—featured technical sessions, paper presentations and panel discussions that explored Rahi's legacy and his role as a link between diverse cultural traditions.

Prof. Sandhya Tiwari, Dean, School of Languages, Central University of Kashmir, and Prof. Shad Ramzan, Convener, Kashmir Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi, spoke on Rahi's literary reach and cultural plurality. Prof. Aejaaz Muhammed Sheikh, Head, Department of Urdu, noted the department's role in promoting comparative and cross-linguistic scholarship.

The inaugural session was attended by leading literary personalities including B. N. Betab, Manshoor Banihali, Ayaz Rasool Nazki, Majrooh Rashid, R. L. Talashi, Mohammad Amin Bhat, and Shafi Simbli, along with faculty, research scholars and students of the campus.