

SKUAST-Kashmir to sign MoU with MAIL, Afghanistan

Vice-Chancellor and scientists participated in 5th National Saffron Conference

A delegation of SKUAST-Kashmir headed by Prof. Nazeer Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor SKUAST-Kashmir participated in the three days 5th National Saffron Conference at Kabul, Afghanistan during November 6-8, 2017. This conference was organized by Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, (MAIL) Government of Afghanistan.

On the inaugural function of the programme, while speaking Prof. Nazeer Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor thanked the organizers for inviting the scientists of the university to Kabul. He highlighted the importance of quality research conducted on this important crop at the global level and role played by SKUAST scientists in this behalf. He also assured of all possible help that university could render in extending expertise to the farmers and the departmental personnel in Afghanistan. Vice-Chancellor informed that university has also been giving trainings and skill development in saffron to the Extension officers, stakeholders of Agriculture Ministry of Afghanistan with an objective to facilitate scientific cultivation of saffron. A team of officers of MAIL Afghanistan had recently visited the University for exploring possible collaborations in this regard.



During this three days Conference, Prof. Nazeer Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor presented a lead paper power point presentation on **“Recent Advances on Biological and Biotechnological interventions in saffron improvement”** and was also one of the panellist at the concluding session. Other scientists who participated in the Conference were Dr. M. Y. Zargar, Director Research and Dr. F.A Nehvi, Professor

and Head, Saffron Research Centre, Konibal, Pampore. They also gave presentations on “**New findings on nutrient and disease management in saffron for yield gains**” and “**New findings on post harvest processing**” respectively.

The delegation also visited Advance Centre of Horticulture, MAIL at Badam Bagh, Kabul and University of Kabul where Prof. Nazeer Ahmad also presented a talk to the Agriculture Faculty and students of the university on “**Horticulture for Livelihood Security**”.

The delegation of SKUAST led by Vice-Chancellor had also a separate meeting with Director General of Extension, MAIL which was also participated by delegate scientists from Iran, Consultant to the Ministry besides other Directors of the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Afghanistan. Director General requested the Vice-Chancellor for moving forward for signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by SKUAST-Kashmir with Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Government of Afghanistan for facilitation of trainings and extension of expertise and skill development to extension officers in the field of saffron, horticulture and other fields besides students’ and scientist exchange programme. Vice-Chancellor assured them of all possible help in conduct of research on saffron and facilitation of capacity development to extension functionaries and stakeholders of Government of Afghanistan for which a MoU with Ministry of Agriculture is required under bilateral cooperation. He informed them that necessary measures for signing this MoU will be worked out through Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Government of India. On the sidelines of this three days Conference programme, Dean Faculty of Agriculture University of Kabul and Chancellor, Agriculture University, Kandhar also desired similar MoU with SKUAST-Kashmir.