

SKUAST-K, Mission Poshan sign MoU to boost Nutrition through Poshan Vatika

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, SEP 14

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) and Mission Directorate Poshan, Jammu and Kashmir, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote nutrition-sensitive agriculture and establish sustainable Poshan Vatika at Anganwadi Centres across the Union Territory, supporting the implementation of Mission Poshan 2.0, aimed at improving nutritional outcomes among children aged 0–6 years, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, who said the collaboration will leverage SKUAST-K’s expertise in agriculture, horticulture and nutrition with the government’s extensive nutrition outreach network to provide technical guidance and capacity building on nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

The event was attended



by Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Director Extension; Prof. Irfan Bisati, Directorate of Research; Prof. Massarat Shafi, Head, Community Science; Prof. Ishfaq Abidi, Head, Vegetable Sciences; Dr. Sajad Bhat, Head, Food Science and Technology; and Dr. Iffat Ganai, Community Science, along with various officers of the University.

Officials from Mission Poshan/ICDS present on the occasion included Sajad Hussain, Mission Director, Poshan/ICDS; Bureeda Majeed, District Programme Officer,

Poshan/ICDS, Srinagar; Sobia Fatma, CDPO, Srinagar; and Aqeel Ahmed, CDPO, Batwara.

Speaking on the occasion, Sajad Hussain, Mission Director, Poshan/ICDS, said, “SKUAST-K’s expertise will provide valuable technical support for establishing and sustaining Poshan Vatika at Anganwadi Centres, while helping promote access to fresh and nutritious local produce for children.

“We are hopeful that this collaboration will strengthen efforts to address malnutrition and nu-

tritional deficiencies among children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers,” the Mission Director said.

The MoU, signed for a period of three years, provides a framework for collaboration to establish and sustain Poshan Vatika, provide technical guidance and capacity building on nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and enhance awareness regarding balanced diets, micronutrient-rich crops and local food diversity. It will also facilitate research, innovation and mentorship in nutrition gardening.

BIG Premier League 2026 Jerseys, Trophy Unveiled in Srinagar

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The jerseys and trophy of the much-awaited 92.7 BIG FM’s BIG Premier League 2026 were unveiled today at The Country Side Resorts, Srinagar, marking the formal launch of the cricket tournament.

The tournament is being organised in collaboration with the Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council, with Greenlam Laminates as the Title Partner and the Excise Department, J&K as the Powered By Partner. J&K Forest Department, Qureshi Kabab Corner and Kanwal Spices are the Co-Powered By Partners, while J&K Bank is the Official Banking Partner. Arsh Autos is the Auto Partner, Le Delice the Food Partner, JK Sports Time the Streaming Partner, Rising Kashmir the Print Partner, The Country Side Resorts the Hospitality Partner and Team Ideation the Event Partner.

The unveiling ceremony was attended by Mr. Haseeb Ul Rehman, IPS, DIG Traffic Kashmir, along with team owners, captains, coaches, officials, sponsors, partners and members of the media.

The ceremony was hosted by RJ Amir from 92.7 BIG FM.

Speaking on the occa-



sion, Vikrant Sharma, Cluster Head, Rest of North 1, 92.7 BIG FM, extended a warm welcome to the Chief Guest, team owners, captains, coaches, officials, sponsors, partners and media representatives and expressed gratitude for their collective support in making the BIG Premier League possible.

“A league of this scale is not created by one organisation alone. It is created by a collective belief in sport, in our young talent and in the power of cricket to bring people together. The BIG Premier League is an effort to provide a meaningful platform to emerging cricketers and bring the sporting community together through the spirit of competition and teamwork,” said Vikrant Sharma.

Mr. Haseeb Ul Rehman, IPS, DIG Traffic Kashmir, appreciated the initiative and congratulated the organisers, participating

teams and players for coming together for the tournament. He said that sporting events of this nature provide young people with a positive platform to showcase their talent, discipline and competitive spirit. He expressed hope that the BIG Premier League would encourage more youngsters to take up cricket and contribute to strengthening the sporting culture of Jammu and Kashmir.

The BIG Premier League 2026 will open tomorrow, September 15, at Bakshi Stadium, with cricket lovers set to witness exciting contests featuring teams from across the region.

The league stage will see 12 matches played from September 15 to 20, before the tournament moves into its decisive phase with the quarter-finals on September 21, semi-finals on September 22 and the grand finale on September 23.

The participating teams are Cyber X Strickers, Asian Warriors, Bhatt Lions Kupwara, The Real Sultan Summerbagh, Valley Fresh Cold Chain, United Imports Srinagar, Sultan Warriors Baramulla and Royal Goodwill Cricket Club.

From tomorrow, Bakshi Stadium will become the stage where talent meets opportunity, competition meets passion and every run, wicket and catch adds a new chapter to the BIG Premier League 2026.

Vikrant Sharma further thanked all the sponsors, partners, participating teams, officials and media representatives for extending their support to the league and making the event possible.

With the jerseys and coveted trophy unveiled, the stage is now set for an action-packed cricketing spectacle at Bakshi Stadium from September 15 to 23.

CADD Jammu team visits HP to study modern irrigation practices

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, SEP 14

A 2-member team of officers of Command Area Development Department (CADD) Jammu undertook an exposure visit to Himachal Pradesh and Punjab to study modern irrigation practices.

The team, comprised of Project Officer Soil and Water Management Ram Gopal Sharma and ASCO Sarore Dr Aadil Rashid, visited different installations in Himachal Pradesh and Talwara in Punjab to study innovative and efficient irrigation systems and explore their replication in the Command Areas of Jammu province.

During the visit to Himachal Pradesh, the team visited Nadaun Medium irrigation projects of HP’s Jal Shakti Department, wherein water is lifted from the Beas River and conveyed to otherwise dry ar-

reas for irrigation. The project has facilitated irrigation over approximately 3,000 hectares through a Pressurized Pipe Irrigation Conveyance (PPIC) system, providing assured irrigation to agricultural fields that were earlier dependent on limited and uncertain water sources. The project demonstrated the potential of lifting water from perennial river sources and efficiently conveying it to dry command areas.

The team also visited the HP Shiva project, executed by the Horticulture department where micro-irrigation systems with SCADA/IoT have been created for efficient utilization of available water. The system demonstrates the benefits of controlled and efficient application of irrigation water at the field level, with potential for improving water-use efficiency and agricultural productivity. The Project focuses on high-value sub-

tropical fruit crops instead of traditional low-value crops. The Project is providing higher income to farmers by shifting to profitability through high value fruit production, utilizing barren lands, assured irrigation and seed to market support.

At Talwara in Punjab, the team visited Kandi Community Micro irrigation project where Solar PV energy is being used for pumping water from the canal through a pressurized pipe irrigation conveyance (PPIC) system to irrigate area under command with micro irrigation both by sprinkler and drip. The project provided useful insights into the integration of conventional canal water sources with modern pressurized conveyance and field-level irrigation systems. The exposure visit provided the officers with an opportunity to study the planning, design, water-lifting arrangements, con-

veyance systems, pressurized irrigation infrastructure and community centric water management being adopted under these projects to enable the Command Area Development Department to examine the feasibility and adapting these successful irrigation models in Jammu province, particularly in areas where conventional irrigation facilities are inadequate or where suitable water sources can be harnessed through lifting and pressurized conveyance systems.

Such interventions shall bring additional agricultural land under assured irrigation, introduction of the micro-irrigation system with SCADA/IoT at cluster level for improving water-use efficiency, reducing conveyance losses and community ownership and management of these assets ultimately enhancing agricultural productivity and farmers’ income.

Traffic Police Rural Jammu’s 2-Week special drive concludes, 8675 violators booked

JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 14: In view of the significant involvement of two-wheelers in road accidents across the districts of Kathua, Samba, Rajouri and Poonch, Traffic Police Rural Jammu had started a two-week intensive Awareness-cum-Enforcement Drive against traffic violations involving two-wheelers. The Drive continued from September 1, 2026 to September 14, 2026.

According to an analysis of road accident data from January 01 to July 31, 2026 by Traffic Police Rural Jammu, a total of 699 road accidents were reported in the four districts, resulting in 88 fatalities and injuries to 1,001 persons. The analysis revealed that two-wheelers were involved in

309 accidents, accounting for 44 per cent of the total accidents reported during the period.

The data further showed that two-wheelers were involved in 39 fatal accidents, constituting 44 per cent of all fatal crashes. As many as 384 persons were injured in accidents involving two-wheelers, while 144 cases were single-vehicle accidents involving two-wheelers. On National Highways, 102 accidents (41 per cent) involved two-wheelers, while on other roads, 210 accidents (47 per cent) were linked to two-wheelers. Significantly, 27 per cent of accident victims were below the age of 26 years. Out of total 699 road accidents during the relevant period, 445(64%)

were those in which single vehicles were involved.

To address the growing concern, Traffic Police Rural Jammu launched a comprehensive awareness and enforcement campaign across all four districts. During the drive, 267 awareness programmes were conducted at educational institutions, tuition centers, bus stands, playgrounds, libraries and other public places to educate citizens, particularly youth, about road safety norms and provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act.

Four Mega Awareness programmes on road safety were personally conducted by SSP Traffic Rural, Jammu one in each Govt. Degree College of all four Districts in which Sympo-

siums/Power Point presentation were held/given to create awareness among students.

Traffic personnel also organized special interaction sessions with road users, made regular public announcements through PA systems and distributed pamphlets containing accident statistics and road safety guidelines.

Alongside awareness activities, strict enforcement action was carried out against violators. A total of 8,675 challans were issued during the drive. Among them, 5767 riders were booked for riding without helmets, while 1152 pillion riders were penalized for not wearing helmets. Another 1106 violations were recorded for triple riding.

Residents of Mubarak Mandi demand immediate restoration of access, relief from prolonged hardships

JAMMU, SEP 14: President of the Ward No. 2 Welfare Committee, Atul Sharma, today addressed a press conference and voiced serious concern over the prolonged hardships being faced by residents living in and around the Mubarak Mandi Heritage Complex, alleging that the slow pace and manner of ongoing restoration works have effectively confined thousands of residents to a highly difficult and unsafe environment.

Sharma said that more than 5,000 people residing in the area have been struggling for years due to the absence of a proper access road and the repeated closure and digging up of existing passages. He said that although the heritage restoration project was initiated nearly two decades ago, instead of making life easier for residents, the situation has deteriorated considerably in recent years.

He emphasised that the residents have a deep emotional and historical connection with Mubarak Mandi and its surrounding areas. According to him, many families living in the locality are descendants of people who served in the erstwhile royal establishment, including cooks, tailors and other employees who were settled in the area during the Maharaja’s time. “Our homes have existed here since the time these palaces were built. Our ancestors lived here and people could move freely. But ever since the project started, we feel completely shut in and confined,” Sharma said, expressing anguish over the present circumstances. He recalled that during the Maharaja’s era, the gates and passages remained open for movement. “The only requirement was that peo-

ple passing through the royal area had to cover their heads as a mark of respect, but the passage was never closed for ordinary movement,” he said.

Sharma alleged that today several gates remain closed while roads and passages are frequently dug up without providing a viable alternative route. He said the residents are being forced to use extremely narrow lanes where even two people cannot comfortably walk side by side, while scooters and other vehicles face difficulty in passing.

The Welfare Committee president expressed particular concern over the absence of adequate emergency access, saying that the situation could become extremely dangerous in case of a medical emergency, fire or other crisis. “If someone falls seriously ill, how will an ambulance reach the house? We are living in a place where even emergency movement has become a major challenge,” he said.

Sharing a personal experience, Sharma said that when his mother fell ill, the family had to face severe difficulty in bringing her out of the locality and eventually had to carry her outside on a chair because proper access for emergency vehicles was unavailable. He urged the authorities to understand the seriousness of the issue before a major tragedy occurs.

Sharma also raised concerns over the health impact of prolonged construction activity. He said residents have been exposed to dust for years and claimed that many people, particularly children and elderly residents, are suffering from problems such as coughing and breathing diffi-



culties. He pointed out that around ten schools are located in the surrounding area and that the affected passages were traditionally used by schoolchildren travelling between the lower and upper portions of the locality.

“Children have to take a long detour to reach their homes. During the intense summer heat, this becomes particularly difficult for them,” he said. He also criticised the sanitation situation near the closed gates, alleging that garbage has accumulated because municipal sanitation vehicles are unable to reach the affected areas. “The municipality says its vehicle cannot reach the area, and because the vehicle cannot come, the garbage is not being lifted. Look at the filthy and stinking conditions around the gate. Residents are being forced to live amid this mess,” Sharma said.

The Ward 2 Welfare Committee president alleged that construction and excavation works have created several serious safety hazards. He said exposed reinforcement bars and

other construction material can be seen around drains and excavated portions. Referring to a recent incident, he said a child riding a bike narrowly escaped a serious accident after coming dangerously close to exposed reinforcement steel. “By God’s grace, a major accident was avoided. But we cannot wait for someone to suffer a serious injury before the authorities wake up,” he said. Sharma further alleged that several areas become completely dark at night due to inadequate lighting. Residents are forced to pass through the park or narrow lanes where, according to him, there is mud and standing water and an increased risk of encountering snakes and other reptiles. He also referred to an incident involving a food-delivery worker who reportedly fell into standing water in the area at night and had to be rescued by local residents.

Sharma said residents are not opposed to the preservation and restoration of Mubarak Mandi’s heritage. Rather, they strongly support

the conservation of the historic complex, but demanded that development should be carried out in a planned manner without making thousands of residents suffer indefinitely. “We welcome the preservation of our heritage, but development cannot become a punishment for the people who have lived here for generations,” he said.

He questioned the pace of restoration work, alleging that work often appears fragmented, with structures being opened or dismantled and then left incomplete while attention shifts to other locations. “Such a huge heritage complex cannot be restored by laying a couple of stones and then leaving the site. One worker comes, does a small amount of work and disappears. This is causing tremendous inconvenience to the public,” he alleged.

Sharma referred to the original plan formulated in 2007, saying that a dedicated corridor was envisaged to facilitate movement of construction material and debris before major restoration work was undertaken. He said such an approach could have prevented the public from being repeatedly disturbed by construction activity.

“The idea was that a dedicated corridor would first be developed and construction material and debris would be moved through that route, so that the public would not suffer. But today residents are being forced to use a tiny lane where even two adults cannot walk comfortably together,” he said.

The Committee president said the prolonged disruption has also severely affected local businesses and

shopkeepers. He pointed out that establishments dependent on visitors and customers are facing difficulties because access to the area remains restricted. “If customers cannot reach the shops and establishments, how are local businesses expected to survive?” he questioned, adding that the livelihood concerns of residents and traders must also be taken into account while planning heritage conservation works.

He said even social and family life has been affected, with relatives and visitors finding it difficult to reach homes in the area. He particularly referred to the difficulties faced by residents during festivals such as Raksha Bandhan, when sisters and relatives faced difficulties to visit their families. Sharma also expressed disappointment over what he described as the absence of adequate intervention by the local elected representative.

He said repeated protests and representations by residents had failed to produce a satisfactory solution. “People have repeatedly raised their voice and held protests, but the problems remain. Who should the residents approach when their genuine grievances continue to be ignored?” he asked.

Sharma made a strong appeal to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to personally visit Mubarak Mandi and see the conditions of the residents. “We appeal to the Hon’ble Lieutenant Governor to come here and see for himself how people are living. Let him see the closed gates, narrow passages, garbage, standing water, darkness and the difficulties faced by elderly and sick people,” he said.