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Dehradun

Dehradun, 3 Mar, 2024

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Garhwal Post 13

Vasantotsav hues with Doon University students - Day 2

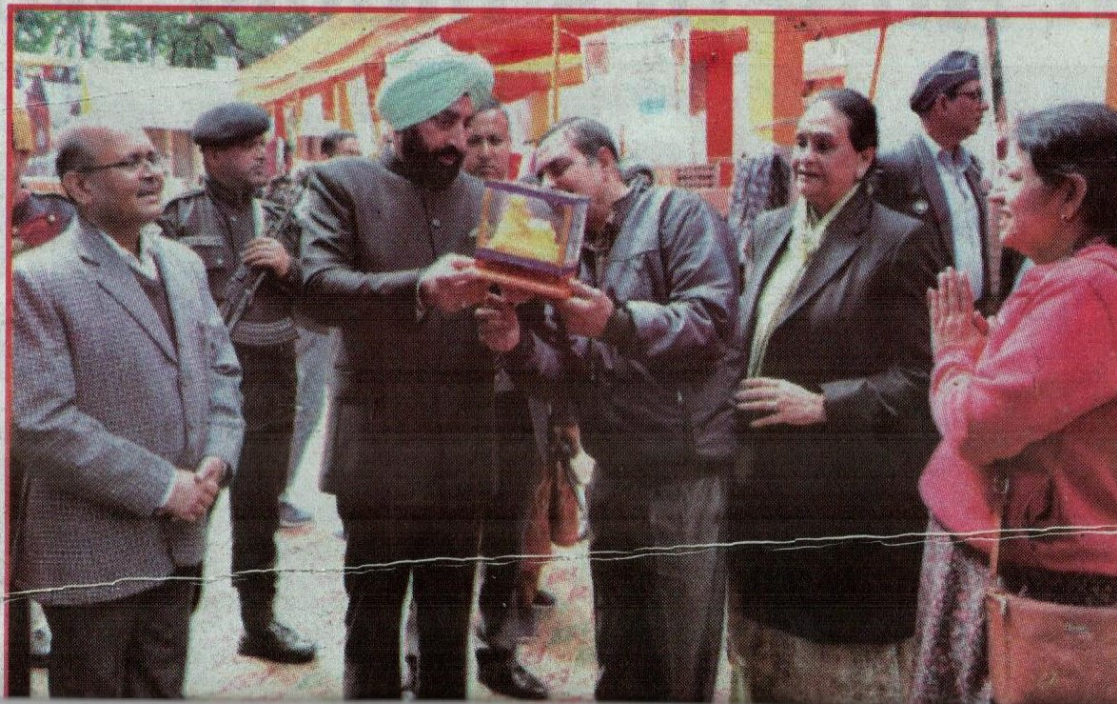
Fragrant Opulence of Flowers, Community, Diversity

By SHREEJAL SEMWAL &
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DEHRADUN, 2 March:

Footfalls kept increasing by the hour, despite the sky intermittently changing colours, almost threatening to pour, throughout the day. The local community made beelines into the lush lawns in thousands to the ethereal, addictive, almost hypotonic fragrance of flowers and soft, moist, green earth. Young and old, men and women, children, school going students, college goers, travelers, passers-by; many of the faces radiating as they would take pictures in the floral backdrop.

Held in the heart of the city, the festival has become a cherished tradition, attracting both residents and visitors alike to celebrate the arrival of spring and revel in the spirit of togetherness. The



Haat, a beacon of empowerment and entrepreneurship for women. With a legacy spanning an impressive 23 years, Gram Haat stood as a testament to the enduring spirit and resilience of women in Uttarakhand. As we spoke to the woman behind the stall of Gram Haat, she said, "For the past 23 years, we have been steadfast in our commitment to women empowerment, a mission that resonates deeply with the spirit of Vasantotsav. As we participate in this vibrant celebration of culture and community, we are honored to contribute to the empowerment of rural women, in harmony with the proactive initiatives undertaken by the government. Together, amidst the colorful festivities of Vasantotsav, we strive to create a brighter and more inclusive future for all."

In the colorful tapestry of

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(Pics courtesy: Doon University students).

Governor, Lt. General Gurmit Singh (Retd) graced the event with his inspiring address, shedding light on the beauty of Uttarakhand's floral landscape. "One thing is certain, Uttarakhand has truly become a land of flowers, and what's remarkable is that the divinity, emotion, and beauty inherent in our flowers are unique from those found anywhere else in the world. When you see these flowers, you'll fall in love.... Their quality, their richness is unparalleled. I invite everyone to come to the Raj Bhawan and enjoy the fragrance of these flowers."

Vasantotsav is not just about seeing, shopping, or eating; it's also a celebration of music, dance, and cultural exchange; But, above all, it's about the splendid display of flowers that serves as a visual delight and highlights Uttarakhand's rich floriculture. This state, blessed with a diverse range of ecosystems and microclimates, nurtures a bounty of floral treasures that have been cherished for generations. From the delicate blooms of rhododendrons to the vibrant hues of orchids, the state is home to a diverse range of floral species that captivate the senses and inspire wonder. One of the most iconic flowers found in Uttarakhand is the rhododendron, known locally as 'buransh'. With its fiery red petals and delicate fragrance, the rhododendron blooms herald the arrival of spring, transforming the landscape into a riot of colour. These flowers hold a special significance in the local culture, symbolizing vitality and renewal, and are often used in traditional rituals and ceremonies. The flower also has rich medicinal value.

One of the most enthralling aspects of Vasantotsav is undoubtedly the plethora of stalls that line the pathways, offering a diverse array of goods and services. From handcrafted jewelry to traditional artworks, each stall showcases the rich tapestry of local talent and craftsmanship. Visitors meandered through the maze of stalls; their eyes alight with curiosity as they explored the offerings on display. Some stalls were adorned with colorful textiles and intricate embroidery, showcasing the timeless beauty of traditional Indian craftsmanship. Visitors gathered around, admiring the skill and dedication of creating each piece. It wasn't just about purchasing goods; it was about connecting with the artisans behind them, hearing their stories, and appreciating the heritage they represented. Another stall, tucked away in a corner, offered a feast for the senses with its tantalizing array of street food. From spicy chaat to sweet jalebis, there was something to tempt every palate. The aroma of sizzling snacks filled the air, creating a mouth-watering temptation that was impossible to resist. Families gathered around tables, sharing laughter and stories as they indulged in the culinary delights on offer.

One stall that captured the most attention amidst the vibrant tapestry of Vasantotsav was Gram Vasantotsav, where music, dance, and cultural exchange intertwine, the second day of the annual spring festival culminated with a resounding celebration of Uttarakhand's rich floriculture. Vasantotsav isn't just a festival; it's a cultural mosaic that unites communities, celebrates diversity, and pays homage to tradition. The Governor eloquently captured the essence of Uttarakhand's floral opulence, inviting all to immerse themselves in the captivating fragrance and unparalleled beauty of the flowers. As the festival unfolds further, it becomes apparent that Vasantotsav is a rich tapestry interwoven with music, dance, and culinary delights. However, it's the magnificent display of flowers that truly steals the spotlight.

News paper - Garhwal Post
Date - 03.03.2024