



Uttarakhand Association of North America

# Uttarakhand Patrika

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## President's Message

Friends:

Happy New Year. I know it's been a while since we published the Patrika, but we are undergoing a period of transition and I am sure once this transition is complete the Patrika will be published regularly.

Thanks to all of you who participated and attended the Boston Convention. The convention was a resounding success and enjoyed by all. Kudos to the members of Boston area who once again raised the bar for all of us. Every single aspect of the convention was very well planned and organized. The energy and spirit of the convention is well captured in the many photographs posted on the UANA website.

In the Boston convention, the organization set in motion several initiatives including transition of leadership, formation of local chapters, and to update the UANA website. I am happy to report we are making progress in all fronts. In a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup>. January in Fairfax, the Board of Directors drafted a time line for a membership drive and elections of new executive officers. The overwhelming consensus was to make the elections as transparent as possible and encourage wide participation by UANA membership in the process. Dr. Roop Bhakuni kindly volunteered to oversee the election process and will serve as the election coordinator for the upcoming elections. The following resolutions were adopted:

- **Membership Drive:** Since under the bylaws of the Association only paid members can vote in the election, it was first decided to launch a membership drive to collect dues and also update membership lists. Enclosed with the Patrika is the membership form. Please fill in the form and mail it back with your membership dues by the due date. While we are making every attempt to disseminate this information to all Uttarakhandis it may be possible that we might not have the updated address of some. Please share this information with your friends and other relatives. A copy of the membership form can also be obtained from the UANA website. Also note we have free memberships for students, so if you know of any student interested in joining the association please do encourage them.
- **Elections:** Once the membership drive is complete, Dr. Bhakuni will send a call for nominations. After the nomination period comes to a close, a ballot will be sent to all paid members with a profile of all persons nominated for the different posts. We plan to wrap up the whole election process and have a new board in place by the end of April. The details about the nomination and the election process would also be posted on our web site shortly.
- **Website:** We are also redesigning the website: giving it a new look and adding a lot more features. Vijay Sharma has kindly agreed to manage the UANA website. Our special thanks also to Vinod Jakhmola who has been the webmaster for the last several years.

I am excited by the above developments and am very confident that UANA will emerge a much stronger organization after this transition. I urge everybody to participate, let's work together to make UANA grow.

Sincerely,  
Ajay Rawat

## ***Life Membership***

Two years ago, UANA initiated a life membership option. Members could pay a one time life membership dues of \$250. We encourage members to consider the life membership option, this does away with the inconvenience of paying dues every year and greatly reduces administrative work for UANA. So far we have around 20 life members. The yearly membership dues still stand at \$25 per year.

## ***Tsunami Relief Fund***

The scale and magnitude of the human disaster wreaked by the Tsunami disaster touched us all. Thousands of people have lost their lives, thousands made homeless, and the property damage is expected to run into billions of dollars. Like other sister organizations, UANA launched a "Tsunami Relief Fundraising" to aid victims of this mammoth calamity. With the generous support of members, a sum of \$3084.00 was collected by UANA and the money was remitted to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund through the Embassy of India.

## **Promotion of IT in Uttaranchal In the Manner of a Social Mission**

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The Uttaranchal Government has spelt out plans to create an IT culture in the state. 'Project Shikhar', an ambitious plan, is being undertaken with the assistance of the global software giant Microsoft and involves providing computer education to the State's school children. A Hindi Lab has been established by Microsoft in Dehradun for promotion of e-governance in Hindi. This laboratory Project Shikhar was inaugurated by the Chief Minister recently. Computers are the key to enhancing educational opportunities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Chief Minister has exhorted the people of Uttaranchal to be computer savvy and called upon them to be in the forefront of technological progress. He has further emphasized the need for the creation of a "knowledge Bank" through IT with the

purpose of increasing the employability of the youth of the state. 'Project Shikhar' and 'Project Aarohi' are endeavors initiated to promote easy IT training amongst school children from other than the so-called elite famous schools of Uttaranchal. Soon these measures would begin to show results. This timely endeavor is bound to overcome to some extent the yawning educational divide that exists between the fortunate and the not so fortunate amongst the school going children. This setting up of the first Hindi IT Laboratory by Microsoft constitutes one of the first endeavors by the state government to provide an eco-friendly environment. Undoubtedly, the Hindi software produced here is bound to catapult Dehradun on the IT map in a major way. IT promotion measures were particularly initiated in managing preparations for the Kumbh in Haridwar. Bill Gates accepted an invitation to visit Uttaranchal for the inauguration of the Software Technology Park. He made a public appeal to the government to study the details of the industrial package sanctioned to Uttaranchal and identify projects that could be taken up by Microsoft. Various national and multinational corporations would be encouraged to invest in Uttaranchal, he added. Microsoft has zeroed in on Uttaranchal and Kerala in India for the launch of its 'Project Shiksha'. It envisaged training of 3, 50,000 students and 80,000 teachers in leading edge technologies within three years. The project has been made to dovetail with Uttaranchal government's own 'Project Aarohi', which was designed to provide computer education to children at an affordable cost. This effort is a continuation of the government's commitment towards using the Internet as a catalyst. The State has already achieved 'Computerization' of all girls' inter-colleges and a large number of high schools in the state. Teachers are being trained with the assistance of Intel Corporation. Efforts initiated are also designed to help non-government schools that cater to the disadvantaged sections. Also IT in governance is intended to bring out ease, efficiency and transparency. The first IT Hindi Lab is a major step in that direction. Efforts have been made to remove impediments to connectivity and provide better facilities in the remote parts of the hills. In this context plans are under way to set up cyber cafes in the hills for population clusters of 1000 persons. The government is determined that lack of funds would not be an impediment in the computerization of all schools. The government's 'Project Shikhar', aimed at creating 12,000 MCAs, for which a deal has been linked with APTECH. The state is indeed determined to make computer education affordable, accessible and world class.

## **Book Review: Uttarakhand ki Pratibhayen**

Reviewed by Kundan N. Goswami, DST, New Delhi

The much awaited publication entitled “UTTARAKHAND KI PRATIBHAYEN”, by Chandan Dangi of PAHAR (People's Association for Himalayan Area Research - Nainital) has finally become a proud possession of many Uttaranchalis. The book provides a deep insight into some of the rarest species of the Devbhoomi, Uttaranchal, who took up the challenges and rose to the hilt despite underlying poverty and a host of unfavorable circumstances.

Shri Chandan Dangi has made a grand beginning by creating this vast repository. The maiden issue of the publication consisting of 350 pages and illustrating life and achievements of about 400 personalities was released at the India International Centre, New Delhi on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2003 by a renowned archeologist, Shri M.C. Joshi, Former Director General, Archeological Survey of India at a glittering function that registered wide presence of eminent professionals, intelligentsias, administrators and journalists from the Sacred Land. The function was presided over by Shri M.P. Navani, the first Chairman of the Uttaranchal Public Service Commission & former Secretary, Min of I&B and addressed, inter alia, by renowned journalist Shri Pankaj Bisht and Educationist, Ms. Madhu Joshi. Shri M.C. Joshi, Chief Guest, presented the first issue of this Talent Directory to the 9 year old little genius, Master Parimarjan Negi, who, at this tender age, has already won laurels for his exquisite acumen in the game of chess.

The task, which Shri Dangi assigned to himself in bringing out this prized publication, has been most admirably achieved. It is the reflection of his inimitable personal enthusiasm and an undefeated resolve, unfathomable passion coupled with extensive ground work that enabled him to reach these legends scattered across the globe and collect their credentials for all of us to know and draw inspiration from. This took more than 28 months for him to complete this mammoth task. In the book itself, through various quotes and examples, he has successfully driven home the point that one should face the frowns of life, overcome its hard knocks and act with resolute will.

As indicated by the author in the preface, it is our will-power alone which takes us closer to our goals. Majority of people literally wander in their lives and simply accept whatever fate brings them. In stark contrast to this, there are a very few who take the odds and challenges head on with impeccable courage, devotion, dedication and determination; and eventually emerge

victorious for the whole world to see and emulate. Whether it is the story of Wilma Rudolph, who went on to become the fastest athlete of the world in spite of having suffered from paralysis or the success story of Shri Hari Ram Kohli, an air force personnel, who fell down head-on during an exercise and got crippled. Undeterred by premature retirement by the Force for his disabilities, he picked up the painting brush with his mouth and started drawing shapes and pictures with astonishing perfection, and today, he very proudly finds a place in the Guinness Book of World Records. They have proved that odds, adversities or the disabilities cannot deter a person from achieving what he aspires for, provided there is an honest and uncompromising will-power to rise and excel.

Shri Dangi believes that success is the result of failure and each failure poses challenges for us to succeed. Failure, in itself, is not a crime, but low aim is. Many failures have their purposes better than the most brilliant successes and many successes have proved far more ruinous than the most disastrous failures. He opines that people often fail to identify the opportunities that come their way because the opportunities are normally enveloped by difficulties and hardships. Each one of us is bestowed upon with a sublime and godly inspirational power but a few can realize it, and whoever realizes it, emerges victorious. Inspiration sends waves of self-confidence into us and self-confidence is the biggest asset that helps us reach our goals and targets. He also feels that bigger goals require bigger dreams, bigger dreams require bigger efforts and it is these bigger efforts that enable us to reach bigger heights. For him, struggle and hard work are a common phenomenon, talent and qualification are natural and providential and recognizing the talent is a social responsibility.

He feels that money is not all that one needs in life. It has got many virtues with it but on some occasions even the most useful tool of the world is rendered useless since it cannot buy the natural bliss that we so commonly know as bed with sleep, food with appetite, house with a decent family, companions who can be termed as true friends, et. el. He believes that the true service of the humanity is to groom an individual to be the most ideal human being who achieves his goals within the parameters of honesty, morality and objectivity. We must accept the challenges posed by constant failures and tread on the path of success with all the more grit and resolve. Initially, we have to struggle and work hard but slowly the path of development comes into view. Struggle is a continuous process of everybody's life and the experience that comes from the struggle and hard work often opens up new vistas of success and development. Change is the path of development. Henry

Ford, the owner of the biggest car company in the US, was immensely pleased when he saw his workshop being gutted in the fire, thinking that he will have a new design and technology to replace the useless and outdated machinery. Today, it is for the whole world to see that Ford is the number one car company globally.

Purity of thoughts is the easiest way to success. We end up becoming what we think of ourselves, he says. We should always think positive that harms none but brings joy to everyone. Our thoughts change our desires, desires change our ambitions, ambitions change our Karma, Character, Fate and Fate changes everything.

I would rather term this wonderful creation as the Treasure Hunt of Uttarakhand. It contains biographical sketches achievements of about 400 living legends of Kumaon and Garhwal and gives a set of crisp information on them, viz. date of birth, place of birth, parental village, district, marital status, spouses, education (starting from elementary level), major achievements, turning point of their lives, present address/Tel/E-mail, area of specialization and more importantly an inspiring message to the youths.

These personalities, who can be role models for all of us, have gained expertise in almost all departments of life. If I go on naming these personalities, I would be making the reading quite monotonous. We can enlighten ourselves only by going through the book and having an in-depth study. It becomes all the more interesting when we find people from our respective villages making it to this book. The book has amply proved that our knowledge about our own Uttarakhand, or rather our own surroundings, is scant and limited.

In totality, the book is a masterly creation capable of providing some novel insights into the persistent hard work, deep commitment, resolute will and the highest order of devotion with which these individuals worked in their respective fields and rose to the commanding heights. It would, undoubtedly, go a long way in realizing the dreams of Chandan Da, a dream of motivating the youths and inculcating the values of hard work, promise, perseverance, and aggressiveness into the younger generations of the Hills and inspire them to emulate the glittering path of success shown by these stalwarts. And this exactly is the vision with which he moved ahead on this long journey 28 months back.

## **Contemplation for holistic development through rejuvenation and empowerment of education and technology in Uttarakhand**

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Education, awareness, broadness of vision and ethical integrity, strong character, value-based citizenship, freedom and scientific temperament are necessary to lead any social system on the path of development. Uttarakhand being a nascent state needs an ideological and technological impetus. To serve our people better, we need industrious leaders with a grip on appreciation of people's need and enough acquaintance with regional resources and their effective management. Our institutions, industries, agencies and other structures must retain financial viability for long-term sustenance and we should be able to develop experimentally feasible and reasonably stable models which could be transformed into reality in terms of their developmental output. Government machinery needs to be guided by such forces which could imbibe transparency and accountability in administrative and public services. The spirit of volunteerism needs to be encouraged by our role-modeling leaders.

Statehood should not lead to living in isolation and marginalization of intellectual values but should help people prosper in a direction to become a welcoming community with a proportional share in global partnership for catalyzing social, educational and scientific exchange. Exact predication and futuristic planning of the state's needs and resources in current cultural and social limits of the state need urgent address. This will strengthen confidence and will create a bond of trust between people and government. Alliances between financial communities in state and outside will further provide platforms for discussions leading to opportunities of investment. A rapid scientific and economic growth will provide hope for state's adaptation to new and emerging technologies with a definite place for everyone to contribute in the process of development.

Education is the main guiding force unlike 20-25 years ago; there is no dearth of schools providing primary, secondary and tertiary education. Ironically as the teacher-student ratio has become far better than before the standard and quality of all-primary, secondary and tertiary education has fallen considerably. There is an obvious paucity of hope in the

teachers who are presumed to spread light. Teaching is now considered as a remote career among intellectuals and is supposed to be left for those who could not pursue higher scientific studies or who could not get into administrative or state public and health services. People with superior qualities of teacher ship seldom come forward to take up teaching as a profession unless there is an economic or family constraint. As a result, mediocrity persists in the educational systems. There is hardly any viable indication of encouragement for valued and quality education at home. Home environment of students is intricately connected to economic condition of the family and does not always support the concept of effective education. In the wake of social and mere economic gain most teachers are just gap-fillers devoid of their responsibilities as a teacher. They have forgotten that they are instrumental in the process of learning and are central in maintaining the valuable heritage of education. If the teachers were actually dedicated to teaching and inspiring children in the classroom and not to lining their pockets with the money from students able to pay for private lessons they would deserve respect and not the hatred they are receiving presently. They have become like any other consumer or bargain goods that can be bought and in turn have lost their strength and value. Due to this entire crisis in education, it has ironically succeeded in training students to believe that money is the key to happiness instead of becoming educated people with high moral standards and behaviors.

School curriculum has a pivotal role in shaping a student's career. It's a major stimulating force in primary and secondary school education. Curriculum should be planned and designed in such a manner to exert maximum impact on student's physical, mental and moral growth. It should be balanced with physical activity and sports, academic learning exercises and materials for ethical imbibitions. State education department should carefully decide what should be included in school curriculum to benefit students. Information regarding regional geography, history and culture should be included in curriculum and supplemented by religion, science and technology. The overall impact of curriculum development should be to strengthen national integration and feelings of patriotism. Different religious philosophies may be welcomed in state education but without a trace of cultism, which could disintegrate the goal of education-freedom. State should not underestimate the importance of philosophy and intellectual essence in education. We necessarily need intellectuals who could create channels for cultivation of new ideas and hope for everyone. Teachers have part of this role but profession is not an obstacle in the advancement of ideas and creative thinking. Visionaries with expertise in education, science and philosophy

should be included in the state education commission to guide state schools. Education and humanities departments of the universities of the state should be encouraged to do diverse research on school curriculum and value oriented education for opening new avenues in educational activities of the schools.

Adults who missed the opportunities of formal education should be given a chance to study informally. State needs to establish open universities and schools to take care of the needs of the rising aspirants. Voluntary organizations can help state agencies in this regard and can channel the flow of informal education in the state.

Minimum economic sustenance is a must for a family to support its children right up to college education and for additional intellectual fulfillment. Statehood should ensure that every child in the state gets quality education and settle in a career of his choice. Every member of the family should be literate but literacy should not anymore be the measure of our growth. Now education should replace literacy and we can become a state of educated, creative, productive and learned citizens.

State education ministry should realize that primary, secondary and higher education is linked and should be equally valued. Teachers at the primary level should make sure that a strong foundation in conventional culture and language and moral-social-academic wisdom is achieved by the child. This would enable him to express his ideas comfortably and intelligibly. Secondary education should be successful in broadening the horizon of children to prepare them for career choices and societal trends. A secondary school teacher should be of great help in easing acclimatization of child to the changing and complex social norms and their realistic understanding. At the tertiary level, students should be able to comprehend subjects in greater depth and appreciation and make a meaningful and practical use of the skills achieved during the whole academic career. The whole course of education should equip students with moral and ethical integrity and a reasonably wide socio-scientific, cultural and spiritual understanding so as to become a productive citizen and a good human being.

Technological advancements will decide the future of the state. To strengthen cooperation and interaction among state scientists and to formulate policies for scientific development, it is reasonable, at this point, to propose the formation of the "Uttaranchal Academy of Sciences." Uttaranchal, at birth, has an agricultural, and technological university, three academic universities, one institute of technology, a forest and a wildlife institute, a vaccine, an environment and petroleum institute,

respectively. State government is recognizing the impact of biotechnology and has initiated state biotechnology programs which aim at establishment of several biotech ventures along with a biotechnology park in the state. The proposed "Uttaranchal Academy of Sciences" will link the scientific heritage of all these institutions and establishments.

To further catalyze scientific developments in the state and to make state self-sufficient in science and technology, we need more institutions and laboratories to exploit and manage our educational, energy, water and power, and environmental resources. Growth of pure and applied science institutions will help make state a developed state in the country.

To materialize these institutions, please come forward to advance ideas, opinions and strategies. Please e mail to: dharabdhulkhandi@yahoo.co.in

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Press Release

The foundation stone for the IT Park, Sahastradhara Road was laid by Mr. Narayan Datt Tiwari, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttaranchal. This is being developed by the State Industrial Development Corporation of Uttaranchal Limited (SIDCUL)- which is the nodal agency of the state for developing industrial parks and estates. The foundation stone laying ceremony was attended amongst others by Mr. Hira Singh Bisht, Hon'ble Transport Minister, Mr. Manavendra Shah, Hon'ble Member of Parliament besides senior government functionaries and representatives of the IT majors like Microsoft, Intel, Oracle, IBM, HP, HCL, Wipro and TCS to name a few.

Mr. Amarendra Sinha, Secretary IT, informed that the IT park

would have a total built up area of 30 lac square feet consisting of 2 cyber towers having 'plug & play' facilities of over 2.5 lac square feet, an Software Technology Park of India (STPI) Incubation center having a built-up area of about 1.0 lac square feet and independent plots which will have an approximate built-up area of 2.75 lac square feet spread over 40 acres of land. In addition roads, water bodies, green areas, common facilities etc. will constitute 15 acres of land.

Mr. Sanjeev Chopra, Secretary Industrial Development, informed that SIDCUL has been entrusted with the responsibility of developing industrial parks and estates at Pantnagar, Haridwar and Sitarganj, besides the IT Park. He further pointed out that M/s Feedback Ventures had been appointed as the Project Manager to this park and that the first phase work has already been awarded at a cost of Rs. 5.30 crore. Site work and mobilization has already commenced. The target date of completion is October 2005. The target date of beginning of marketing initiative is April 2005.

The vision is to develop a Technology Park, a property based development which has a high-quality physical environment (basic & support infrastructure) in a park like setting and emphasizes on activities promoting growth of research, technology, and knowledge based enterprises. The commitment is to be a business space provider that takes care of all business needs in a community like setting and ambience, not just sell/ rent space by providing plots and buildings.

This Information Technology Park is envisioned as an integrated and the self-contained development to match similar projects elsewhere with "best in class" features and amenities. The product mix has been configured to achieve this desired positioning. Speaking on the occasion Mr. Narayan Datt Tiwari reiterated the resolve of the Government to make Uttaranchal a leading destination of knowledge based industries. He exhorted everybody concerned with the project to fully commit them to the timely and successful completion of the project.

For more information please contact:

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## **The GYAN [Golakote Youth Academic Network]**

### **Project**

#### **From Dream to Reality**

It had been a long cherished dream of Dr. and Mrs. Roop Bhakuni to establish the GYAN project aimed at providing village children with the tools and skill necessary to succeed in today's environment. More specifically, the objective of GYAN is to help village kids gain sufficient proficiency in English and computers and help develop their self-confidence and esteem so that they can confidently compete in various entrance examinations and other career opportunities. GYAN started in April 2005 with enrollment of 24 children, in nursery,

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