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Governor Calls for Global Study of Ancient Indian Knowledge

Udaipur: Rajasthan Governor HaribhauKishanraoBagde called for wider research and study of India's ancient knowledge systems across the world at the valedictory session of a two-day international seminar on "Ancient Indian Knowledge Tradition: Modern Dimensions of Knowledge and Science" at Pacific Academy of Higher Education and Research University.

Organised by the Department of History, Pacific University, in association with the Global Sanskrit Forum and Global History Forum, the seminar featured discussions on the relevance of traditional Indian knowledge to contemporary science, technology and innovation.

Bagde said India's knowledge tradition represented an enduring intellectual legacy, citing its contributions to philosophy, linguistics and scientific thought. He also referred to historical accounts associated with Bappa Rawal and his resistance to foreign invaders.

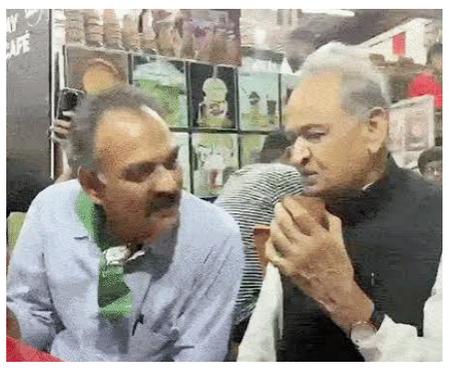
Pacific University Kul Guru Prof. Hemant Kothari stressed the need to view indigenous knowledge as a living resource for scientific innovation and emerging fields such as artificial intelligence. Group President Prof. B.P. Sharma highlighted the continuing relevance of Sanskrit literature and traditional knowledge in modern research.

Rebecca Taylor, representing the University of Alberta and Portugal, spoke about the influence of ancient Indian sculpture and temple traditions on contemporary artistic expression.

The seminar featured 222 research papers over two days. Prof. Ajatshatru Singh Shivrati served as organising secretary, while Prof. T.P. Ameta proposed the vote of thanks. Prof. Dilendra Hiran and Prof. Hemant Pandya also contributed to the event's organisation.

Gehlot Meets Congress Workers in Udaipur

Udaipur: Former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot was warmly welcomed by Congress leaders and workers at Dabok Airport on his arrival in Udaipur.



Pankaj Kumar Sharma, Pradesh Congress Committee General Secretary and spokesperson, welcomed Gehlot by presenting him with a traditional Mewari turban and a tricolour thread garland. Former District Collector and Lok Sabha candidate Tarachand Meena, Mahendrajit Malviya, Preeti Shaktawat, Dinesh Khodaniya, Fateh Singh Rathore, Asrar Ahmed, Subhash Chittora, Firoz Ahmed Sheikh, Bhagwati Prajapat and other party workers were present.

Later, Gehlot met Congress workers over tea at the Fateh Sagar Lake promenade. City Congress president Fateh Singh Rathore and workers from different parts of the district participated in the informal interaction.

The discussions focused on local political developments, organisational matters and preparations for the upcoming municipal elections in Rajasthan. Workers shared their concerns and feedback with the former chief minister.

Gehlot stressed the need for Congress workers to remain active at the grassroots and strengthen the party organisation ahead of the civic polls.

Dr. Deepak Srivastava Advances Modern Public Libraries

Kota: Dr. Deepak Kumar Srivastava, educationist and Library and Information Science expert, has emerged as an advocate of technology-driven and inclusive public library services. Born on November 26, 1974, in Anta, Baran, he holds qualifications including PhD, M.Phil., M.Lib. &I.Sc., M.Tech. and M.Sc. in Information Technology, besides UGC-NET.

With 16 books, 140 research papers and over 28 research scholars guided, he has contributed to library research and digital transformation. His initiatives include e-Granthalaya 4.0, Web-OPAC and cataloguing nearly 75,000 books.

His work also focuses on inclusion, including technology-enabled services for visually impaired readers, home delivery for persons with disabilities and specialised services for transgender and nomadic communities.

Dr. Srivastava has served as an INELI India Innovator and INELI South Asia Mentor and features on the IFLA Wall of Fame. He serves on the IFLA Government Libraries Section Standing Committee (2025–2029).

Currently Divisional Librarian and Head of the Government Divisional Public Library, Kota, he continues to promote libraries as centres of knowledge, technology and social inclusion.

NITI Aayog Report Calls for New Skilling Model; Udaipur Can Lead with District Skill Hub

Udaipur: India's skilling strategy needs to move from simply training people to creating employable, income-generating skills, according to the latest NITI Aayog report, Reimagining Skilling for Viksit Bharat@2047. The report proposes a fundamental restructuring of the skilling ecosystem around shared infrastructure, flexible education pathways, stronger industry participation, apprenticeships, affordable access and measurable employment outcomes.

For Udaipur, the recommendations could provide a blueprint for creating a District Skill Hub that connects the infrastructure and expertise already available across ITIs, polytechnics, colleges, universities and industries.

Vidya Bhawan Polytechnic Principal Dr. Anil Mehta said the central idea should be that every institution need not own every laboratory, but every student should have access to the facility required for learning. Such a district-wide network could allow students to use specialised laboratories and workshops without each institution having to make large capital investments.

The scale of the challenge is substantial. The NITI Aayog report notes that more than 7.67 crore people have been trained since 2014-15, with about ₹34,000 crore allocated towards skilling-related expenditure in the 2025-26 Union Budget. Yet training numbers alone have not translated uniformly into employment and livelihood outcomes, making employability and progression the new benchmarks for the skilling ecosystem.

From Degree to Employability

The report's larger message is that a degree can no longer be treated as the endpoint of education. Dr. Mehta said higher education needs to combine academic qualifications with employable skills, internships or apprenticeships, industry projects and recognised credentials.

A BCom student, for instance, could combine the degree with digital marketing or analytics, while a BSc student could pursue data analytics and a BA student could acquire tourism and hospitality skills. Technical students could specialise in areas such as EV technology, solar energy, CNC, robotics and automation.

Udaipur's District Skill Hub Opportunity

The proposed shared infrastructure model could be particularly relevant for Udaipur. The NITI Aayog report calls for mapping existing facilities and enabling their shared use through a State or National Shared Skills Infrastructure Network, with implementation beginning at the district level.

Udaipur could bring together ITI workshops, polytechnic and engineering laboratories, university facilities, private institutions and industrial infrastructure. A CNC laboratory at one institution, an EV facility at another and robotics or automation infrastructure elsewhere could collectively serve students across the district.

The approach would address one of the biggest barriers to modern skilling: cost. Smaller institutions may struggle to invest ₹1-2 crore in advanced laboratories and meet recurring technology-upgradation costs. A shared model could spread that investment across a larger student base.

Industry Needs a Bigger Role

NITI Aayog also places greater emphasis on industry co-ownership of the skilling ecosystem. Government can provide capital support, scholarships and viability-gap funding; educational institutions can contribute infrastructure and faculty; while industry can bring technology, equipment, trainers, curriculum inputs, apprenticeships and employment opportunities.

Udaipur already has an example of this approach in the Saraswati Mechatronics Centre at Vidya Bhawan, which offers training in CNC, automation, robotics and mechatronics with scholarship support.

The next step, Dr. Mehta suggested, is to scale such initiatives into a district-wide system.

Measure Jobs, Not Certificates

Perhaps the sharpest shift proposed by NITI Aayog is in measuring success. The question should move from "How many people were trained?" to "How many got jobs, increased their incomes, remained employed, became entrepreneurs or progressed to higher skills?"

The report also proposes introducing employability and entrepreneurship skills at the school level, creating flexible pathways between certificates, diplomas and degrees, and recognising prior learning and workplace experience.

For Udaipur, Dr. Mehta suggested beginning with a District Skill Demand Map to identify the skills industries will require

over the next five to 10 years in sectors such as tourism and hospitality, engineering, MSMEs, mechatronics, solar energy, digital technology, cybersecurity, agriculture and allied activities.

The larger NITI Aayog vision is a transition from "Training India" to "Learning-to-Earning India"—an ecosystem in which education does not end with a certificate or degree, but creates a continuous pathway from learning to skills, skills to employment and employment to a dignified livelihood.

Former Professor Seeks Inquiry into Vidyapeeth Governance

Udaipur: Questions have been raised over the governance of Janardan Rai Nagar Rajasthan Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), with former professor Hemendra Chandalia calling for an independent inquiry into the institution's administration and the approximately 14-year tenure of its former Vice-Chancellor.

Chandalia, who joined the Vidyapeeth in 1986 and later served as Vice-Chancellor of Haryana Central University, said the prolonged tenure warranted examination in light of the UGC regulations he referred to, which, according to him, limit a Vice-Chancellor to two terms at the same university.Recalling the institution's origins, Chandalia said the Vidyapeeth was established with a strong focus on taking education to working people and disadvantaged sections. He said its earlier participatory administrative structure gradually gave way to greater centralisation of decision-making.He argued that transparency, decentralisation and institutional checks and balances were essential to prevent administrative and financial irregularities. He suggested giving appropriate financial and administrative powers to heads of individual institutions rather than concentrating authority at the top.

Chandalia has called for a three-member independent inquiry committee to examine the university's functioning over an extended period. He said such an inquiry could establish facts and recommend corrective measures.

He also advocated a comprehensive audit of the university's financial and administrative processes. At the same time, he cautioned against judging the Vidyapeeth solely through the former Vice-Chancellor's tenure, stressing that its decades-long legacy was built through the contributions of many individuals.

Chandalia said the new leadership faces the larger task of restoring transparency, accountability and participatory governance, while ensuring that the institution's future is guided by strong systems rather than concentration of authority.

Sewage Threatens Udaipur's Historic Water System

A study flags contamination in lakes and Ayad River

Udaipur: Udaipur's historic water system is facing a growing pollution challenge, with sewage and wastewater entering the Ayad River and several major lakes, according to a study by Professor Devendra Singh Chauhan of Mohanlal Sukhadia University (MLSU).

The study examined water samples from Fateh Sagar, Pichola, Doodh Talai, Badi Talab, Udai Sagar, Govardhan Sagar and Swaroop Sagar, besides multiple locations along the Ayad River. Samples were tested for 12 parameters, including pH, TDS, turbidity, alkalinity, sulphate, iron, chloride, E. coli and faecal coliform.

Udai Sagar emerged as the most serious concern. According to the study, faecal coliform levels there exceeded 1,600 per 100 ml, while the permissible level cited in the study discussion was zero. Professor Chauhan attributed the deterioration largely to the movement of sewage through the Ayad River towards Udai Sagar, with pollution levels increasing as the river passes through the urban area.

The Ayad River itself showed a progressive rise in faecal coliform, E. coli, TDS and turbidity at sampling points extending from near the Chikalwas feeder towards Sukha Naka. Field observations also recorded visible pollution, including soap foam and waste along sections of the river.

Swaroop Sagar was another major concern.

According to Chauhan, wastewater from surrounding residential areas is entering the lake, while inadequate drainage and outflow arrangements may be contributing to pollution accumulation. Dead fish were also reportedly observed during the field visit. The study further points to concerns involving the lake's catchment, construction activity and marble slurry dumping.By comparison, Fateh Sagar and Pichola recorded relatively better results on several parameters, with no faecal coliform detected in the samples collected from these two lakes.

However, the study stresses that surface-water quality should not be considered in isolation.A further concern is the possible impact on groundwater. In areas where households depend on borewells and hand pumps, prolonged seepage of polluted surface water could create additional risks. Regular groundwater testing in vulnerable locations has therefore been suggested.

The findings assume significance because Udaipur's lakes are not merely scenic attractions. They form part of a centuries-old interconnected water-management system developed under the rulers of Mewar to support the city's water needs.

The study raises a larger question for the City of Lakes: whether its historic water network can withstand increasing pressure from sewage, waste, construction and degradation of catchment areas.

The findings underline the need to move beyond lake beautification towards scientific monitoring, effective sewage treatment, protection of catchment areas and regular water-quality assessment. For Udaipur, protecting its lakes and the Ayad River is not only an environmental imperative but also a matter of safeguarding the ecological and cultural system that has shaped the city's identity.

- Dr. Munesh Arora

Former IAS Officer Raises Questions on Governance

Udaipur: Former IAS officer Ram Niwas Mehta, who retired as Secretary of the Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC) on July 31, 2026, has raised questions on politics, administration, the judiciary and higher education in his book Dar, Sahas Aur Bhi Bahut Kuch..., published on August 19, 2026.

Drawing on his administrative career, Mehta questions whether elected representatives are increasingly behaving like modern-day rulers, whether government employees are fulfilling their responsibilities as public servants and whether declining social values are affecting governance.

He advises bureaucrats, particularly young officers, to maintain political neutrality and transparency during elections, saying adherence to professional and ethical principles is essential even under pressure.

The book also highlights delays in the judicial system, arguing that prolonged proceedings and repeated hearings can deny citizens timely justice and underline the need for systemic reforms.

Mehta raises concerns over private universities in Rajasthan, referring to alleged cases involving fake degrees and PhDs awarded in unusually short periods. He questions whether regulatory authorities are using their available powers effectively to investigate such matters.

He also recounts a Udaisagar Lake hotel construction case from his tenure as UIT Secretary. According to his account, he rejected renewal of permission after finding violations of wetland regulations. After the project owner approached the Supreme Court, Mehta writes that on October 29, 2014, the court imposed a ₹1 lakh fine on him, following which he renewed the permission.Mehta further recounts an alleged February 3, 2005, incident in Manohar Thana, Jhalawar, when BJP leader Kanwarlal Meena allegedly pointed a pistol at him during a dispute over repolling in a deputy sarpanch election.The book, Mehta says, seeks to acquaint young administrators with the realities of public service and stresses that integrity, accountability and courage must remain central to governance.

Paritosh Chandra Dugar Wins Legacy of Literature Award for Best Microfiction Book

Leaves of Life: A Collection of Flash Fiction recognised for literary excellence and creative storytelling

Udaipur: Author 'Paritosh Chandra Dugar' has been honoured with the *Legacy of Literature Award* in recognition of his outstanding contribution to literature. He received the award in the 'Best Microfiction Book' category for his book Leaves of Life: A Collection of Flash Fiction.

The award, presented by 'The Literature Times', recognises excellence, creativity and the impact of literary works on readers and the wider literary community.

According to the certificate of achievement, Dugar was selected as the winner for his contribution through compelling storytelling and authentic expression. The recognition also acknowledges the cultural and literary value of his work and its contribution to creating an enduring literary legacy.

Leaves of Life: A Collection of Flash Fiction is a collection of short-form fiction that showcases the author's engagement with the microfiction genre. The recognition places the book among the works acknowledged for creativity and literary expression in the Best Microfiction Book category.

The certificate was presented under the Legacy of Literature Awards, with 'Zinnia A. Laha, Panel Head, LLA Awards, and "Vikram Singh Thakur", Editor, The Literature Times, associated with the recognition.

The award is expected to further encourage Dugar's literary pursuits and his contribution to contemporary short-form storytelling.