

Udaipur Tales : A Kaleidoscope of Stories

"Udaipur Tales," a vibrant festival of stories, celebrated its sixth edition (10-12 Jan. 2025) with a medley of local, regional, Indian, and international narratives. This unique event brought storytellers from diverse geographies together, showcasing the rich tapestry of tales they had to share. At a time when mobile phones have made life increasingly isolating, this festival rekindled the collective joy of listening to stories, transforming every listener into an unwitting storyteller. Whether they narrated stories on stage, wrote them down, or simply absorbed them, participants were inspired to bring these

tales to life in their homes and among friends.

As they say about stories:

"Andhere kitne bhi ho, roshni kahaan dara karti hai; kiradar rahen na rahen, kahani kahaan mara Karati hai."

("No matter how deep the darkness, light remains fearless; characters may vanish, but stories never die.")

The sixth edition of Udaipur Tales presented innovative storytelling experiences. The morning "Sunshine" sessions featured for children from various schools and, on the final day, families of soldiers



immersed themselves in diverse flavors of storytelling. Each entertaining story carried the fragrance of regional culture, skillfully woven by the storytellers through their magical voices, expressions, and distinctive styles. Themes ranged from valor and compassion to humor and wonder, offering listeners a refreshing new perspective.

Designer Neha's story painted a vivid picture of the lives and challenges of people residing in the hills of Uttarakhand. Through the casual conversation with a

senior citizen sitting next to her in local bus, she highlighted the rich culture of the region and urgent need to preserve the environment. Neha's tale reminded the audience to set their phones aside during travel and let nature's beauty fill their eyes.

"Kahaniwala" Rajat took the audience to Mandu, where he unfolded the story of Sultan Baz Bahadur, a brave ruler, skilled musician (rubab vadaq), and ardent art lover. His spiritual bond with singer and poet Roopmati resonated deeply, as did his thoughtful gesture of

ensuring Roopmati could view the Narmada River from his palace before marrying her.

The evening sessions, packed with enthralling tales, explored mythology, history, society, and contemporary issues. Storytellers enriched their narratives with elements like poetry, music, and a variety of theatrical expressions—angika (gestures), vachika (speech), aharya (costume), and satvika (emotional expression).

The midday segment, Jamghat, offered open mike sessions, group discussions,

extempore storytelling and various competitions and workshops. A notable highlight was the Braille Storytelling Workshop, where Sanjana Sarkar shared her experiences of crafting stories for visually impaired children under Alliance Franchise. Stories truly know no boundaries. Rachel Smith and Niharika Aggarwal shared their experience and new dimensions to storytelling during their workshop. As the saying goes, no theatrical performance succeeds unless it moves its creator. This sentiment found validation in a haunting tale by Ahmed Faraz. His horror story, "Maano Toh Sach, Na Maano Toh Rahasya" (Believe it or not, it's a mystery), left the audience spellbound during the evening Kahani Ganj session. Faraz kept the stage dimly lit, eschewed musical effects, and relied solely on his skilled voice modulation and vocal sound effects, gripping the audience with his artistry. He shared later that a horror story only works if it scares even the storyteller during its creation.

Ajay Kumar, a professor from the National School of Drama, masterfully enacted "Rizak Ki Maryada," a story by Vijaydan Detha, featuring traditional folk artist Shankar Bhand.

With traditional music, singing, dancing and captivating acting, Ajay Kumar brought the tale to life, leaving the audience in splits with lines like, "Hothon ki baat hawa se

bhi tez chalti hai" ("Words spoken travel faster than the wind").

Devdutt Pattanaik enchanted the audience with the mythological story of Sati Savitri, engaging them with insightful Q&A sessions. Actor-director Makrand Deshpande's "Pa-Girl" celebrated the strength and sensitivity of womanhood, leaving a lasting impression with the line, "Lad lad kar jo banti hai, woh ladki kehlati hai" ("Fighting her way forward is what defines a girl").

Aditya and Shilpa Kothakota from South India tracing the roots through folklore narrated the tale of Goddess Yellamma in a traditional folk style, blending their storytelling with melodious singing and musical instruments like the tuntune, chavandka, and taal. The festival saw participation from international storytellers like Juliana Marin (Colombia), Laurence Hugues (France), Niharika Aggarwal, and Rachel Smith (Hong Kong). Representing India were Priyanka Chatterjee, Shweta Nadkarni, Sanjana Sarkar, Vicky Ahuja, Ahmed Faraz, Debjani, Shilpa Mehta, Nisha Sinha, and Shona Malhotra. Sukhamani Kohli's troupe entertained children with the antics of Ferdinand Foolchand.

While Sayed Agha presented Jumlebaazi, Fouzia Dastango mesmerized the crowd with "Dastaan-e-Ghalib," Samir Rahat charmed the audience with his Urdu Blues.

Musical evenings featured Junior Manganiyar group, Qutbi Brothers, Swaraj Jail Band, and Shreya Paliwal, adding rhythm to the storytelling magic. Panel discussions on storytelling brought together notable figures like Dr. Laique Hussain, Ajay Kumar, Prithvi Raj Choudhary, Shashank Shekhar, and Amitabh Srivastava, alongside enthusiastic participants.

Founders Salil Bhandari and Sushmita Singha added innovative activities like storytelling competitions for children and women, workshops, and musical events to this year's edition and even storytelling sessions by inmates in the Central Jail, Udaipur.

The festival honored Shyam Kanhai for his traditional Manipuri tale "Wari Leeba" and Geeta Ramanujam, founder of Kathalaya Academy, Bangalore, for her invaluable contribution to preserving storytelling traditions.

The ambience of the venue, Park Exotica resort, near Shilpgram, Udaipur was carefully designed. The art and craft exhibition, creative stalls, book and food stalls with colorful decoration attracted school children as well as culture connoisseurs.

Shilpgram Utsav, made Udaipur popular in the cultural world. Similarly Udaipur Tales holds the promise of making the city the storytelling capital in the years to come.

- Vilas Janve

"Vilas Janve's Tribute to Chetak: A Tale of Loyalty and Courage"

Vilas Janve has been a pillar of Udaipur Tales since its inception, weaving captivating narratives that resonate deeply with audiences. The festival commenced with his enthralling story, "Chetak Ki Kahani," which took the young minds on a remarkable journey through the legendary loyalty and courage of Chetak, the iconic warhorse of Mewar. With his evocative storytelling, Janve not only immortalized the valiant spirit of this noble steed but also urged the children to visit the historic battlefield of Haldighati, to pay homage to the undying legacy of the great warrior horse. Through this tale, he instilled a sense of pride and reverence for Mewar's rich heritage, ensuring that the story of Chetak will live on in the hearts of the next generation. - Virendra shrivasta



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विश्वस्तरीय इलाज का नया आयाम

गीतांजली हॉस्पिटल, उदयपुर

की अत्याधुनिक एवं दक्षिणी राजस्थान की सबसे बड़ी हेमोडायलिसिस यूनिट

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- + आरामदायक बिस्तर, इलेक्ट्रिक रिक्लाइनिंग कुर्सियाँ, टीवी और परिवेशीय सेटिंग + आपातकालीन रोगियों की आईसीयू देखभाल + फिस्टुला बनाने की सुविधा



मुख्यमंत्री आयुष्मान
आरोग्य योजना



राजस्थान
गवर्नमेंट हेल्थ
स्कीम (RGHS)

सभी सरकारी, निजी, टी.पी.ए. (TPA) व इन्श्योरेंस से अधिकृत।

गीतांजली मेडिकल कॉलेज एण्ड हॉस्पिटल, उदयपुर (राज.)

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