

UTTARAKHAND: A PHOTOFEATURE

By Pooja Oak

Uttarakhand was formed on the 9th November 2000 as the 27th State of India, when it was carved out of northern Uttar Pradesh. Located at the foothills of the Himalayan mountain ranges, it is largely a hilly State, having international boundaries with China (Tibet) in the north and Nepal in the east. On its north-west lies Himachal Pradesh, while on the south is Uttar Pradesh. It is rich in natural resources especially water and forests with many glaciers, rivers, dense forests and snow-clad mountain peaks. Char-dhams, the four most sacred and revered Hindu temples of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri are nestled in the mighty mountains. It's truly God's Land (Dev Bhoomi). Dehradun is the Capital of Uttarakhand. It is one of the most beautiful resort in the submountain tracts of India, known for its scenic surroundings. The town lies in the Dun Valley, on the watershed of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers.

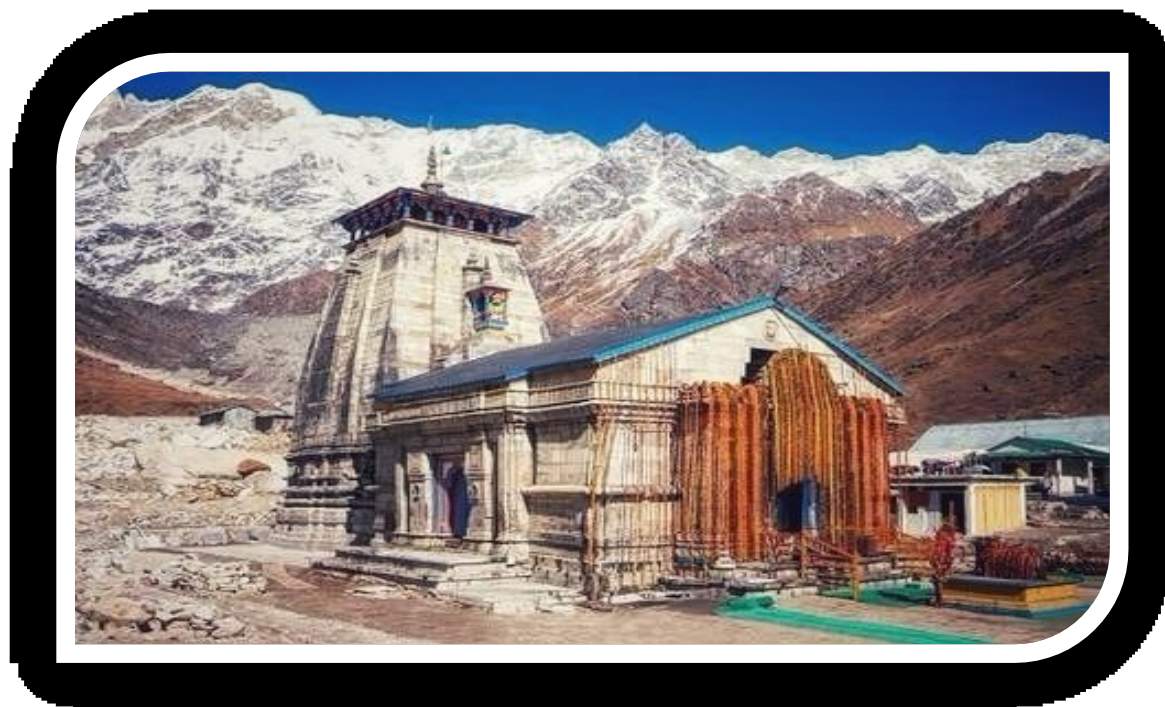
Here are the important places to highlight in the state.

1. Badrinath



The picturesque town of Badrinath is where divinity meets with the serenity of nature. Located in the Chamoli district in Uttarakhand at the height of 3,133 meters, the pre-eminent abode of Lord Vishnu is one of the holiest of the holy shrines of Char Dham pilgrimage in India. Other Char Dham sites include Dwarka, Puri and Rameswaram.

2. Kedarnath



Among the glorious mountain peaks that are covered with nothing but snowstorm, lies one of the holiest pilgrim sites of northern India - "Kedarnath". Famous for the ancient shrine devoted to Lord Shiva, it tends an unflustered ambience with its colorful rhododendron woods, snow covered mountains and splendid sights of nature.

3. Yamunotri



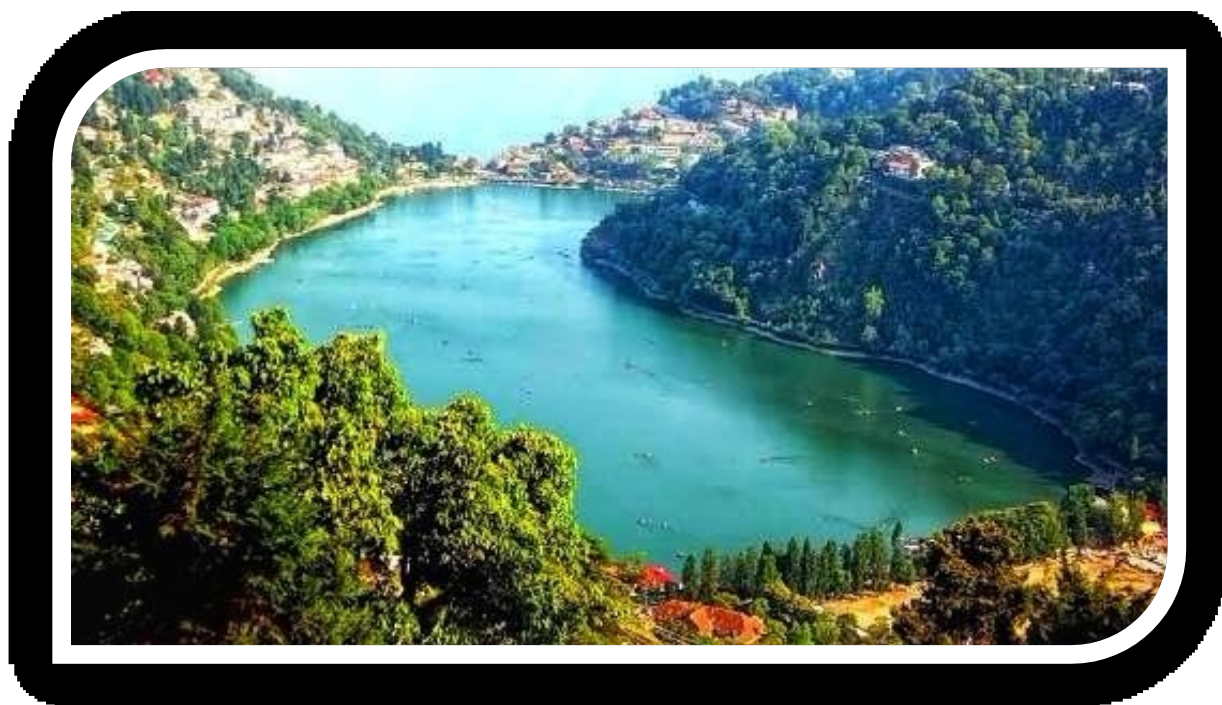
Situated amidst the Garhwal Himalayas, Yamunotri in the state of Uttarakhand is naturally bestowed with abundant beauty and charm. At a hovering altitude of 3293 meters, Yamunotri lies adjacent to the Indo-Chinese border and is encircled by the lofty peaks on all sides. One of the holiest centers in the Hindu pantheon, this sacred abode of the Asti muni boast of so many unparallel vistas of nature.

4. Gangotri



One of the main religious places among the four Char Dham pilgrimage areas, Gangotri, situated in Uttarkashi, is closely related to Goddess Ganga, the river that we know as Ganges. The history of Gangotri dates back to centuries when Goddess Ganga transformed herself into a river to dissolve the sins of King Bhagirath's forefathers, following his penance.

5. Nainital



Nainital is a glittering jewel in the Himalyan necklace, blessed with scenic natural splendour and varied natural resources . Dotted with lakes , Nainital has earned the epithet of ‘ Lake District ‘ of India . The most prominent of the lakes is Naini lake ringed by hills . Nainital has a varied topography . Nainital is an example of awe-inspiring and pristine Mother nature.

ET

6. Rishikesh



Apart from spirituality now Rishikesh is also hub for the adventure activities such as rafting, camping, trekking and bungee jumping. Rishikesh is full of tourist every time. There are also big ashrams, centers for Yoga, Meditation, Ayurvedic Massage and astrology are here. Rishikesh is also known as the white water rafting capital of India.

7. Haridwar



Haridwar is one of the primary areas where river Ganges emerges from the mountains and enters to the plain areas. Lush green forests and crystal clear water of river Ganges and background of mountains create the charming beauty of this holy city. In the evening ghats looks beautiful as hundreds of diyas (lamps) and marigold flowers float and light up the river Ganges.

8. Kausani



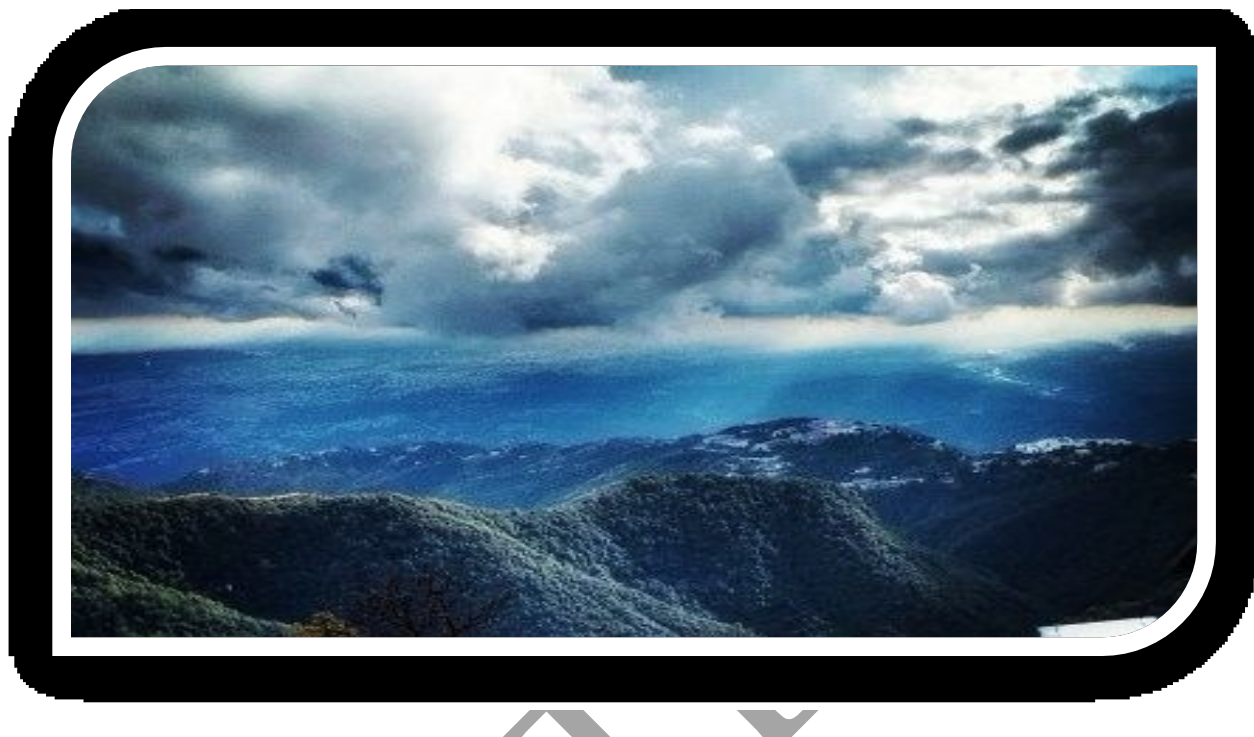
Kausani is a window to the snow-crested Trishul, Nanda Devi, Nandakot and Panchchuli peaks, there are very few places in the Himalayas whose beauty can be compared to that of Kausani - a picturesque hill station famous for its scenic splendor, its spectacular 300 km-wide panoramic view of the Himalayas and unimaginable sunset viewing experience.

9. Jim Corbett



Jim Corbett National Park, which is a part of the larger Corbett Tiger Reserve. The magical landscape of Corbett is well known and fabled for its tiger richness. Corbett has the glory of being India's oldest and most prestigious National Park. This unique tiger territory is best known as the father who gave birth of the Project Tiger in India to protect the most endangered species and the Royal of India called Tigers.

10. Mussoorie



Mussoorie, Queen of the Hills, is among the most popular hill stations of the country. It is a captivating paradise for leisure travellers and honeymooners. From this vantage point, Mussoorie offers superb scenic view of peaks of the Himalayas in western Garhwal. Mussoorie. boasts of some of the most spectacular views of the Himalayas.

Bio:

Pooja Oak is working as Assistant Professor in Bharat College of Arts and Commerce, Badlapur, Maharashtra. She can be contacted at poojaoak26@gmail.com