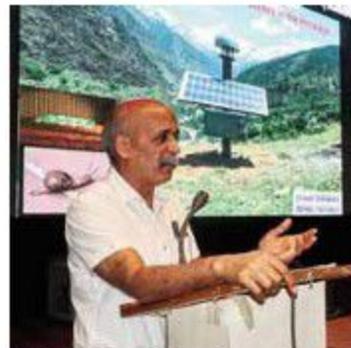


Garhwal and Kumaon region long overdue for a great earthquake: Gahalaut Himalayan Discourse series begins at VMSBUTU to focus on important issues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The Himalayan regions of Garhwal and Kumaon are long overdue for a great earthquake as there has been no significant release of tectonic strain since 1344. The Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology director Vineet Kumar Gahalaut said this while speaking at the Himalayan Discourse 1.0 on the subject of exploring Himalayan significance, challenge and strategies, organised by Veer Madho Singh Bhandari Uttarakhand

now. The Garhwal and Kumaon region is the only sector in the Himalaya which has not had a big earthquake in about 700 years. Stating that poor structures kill people, not earthquakes, he stressed on the need for raising awareness and developing resilience. Speaking about plate tectonics he said, "Plate tectonics has helped bring life on earth. It created the Himalaya and without this mountain range, we would not have had the monsoon, the civilisation on the Indo-Gangetic plain and rich biodiversity. The Himalaya breathes through earthquakes and other geological processes. Earthquakes have long term benefits and short term losses. We must acknowledge the long term benefits while also focusing on mitigating the damage and loss caused by quakes." He also stressed on the need to treat the Himalaya respectfully and worship it like the Ganga and Yamuna rivers are venerated.



WIHG director Vineet Kumar Gahalaut speaks at the Himalayan Discourse on Friday **Pioneer photo**

Technical University (VMSBUTU) along with Himalayan Environment Studies and Cultural Organisation (HESCO) at the university on Friday.

Addressing the gathering, Gahalaut said that it is foolish to think that a major earthquake will not take place in this region as it hasn't occurred for a long time

Padma Bhushan recipient and HESCO founder Anil Prakash Joshi said that it is important for students and researchers to know more



VMSBUTU VC Onkar Singh presents a memento to HESCO founder Anil P Joshi at the Himalayan Discourse **Pioneer photo**

about the Himalaya while faculty members should also include it in studies. He said, "The Himalaya contribute a lot but are also highly vulnerable. We get water and fertile soil from the Himalaya along with clean air which helps make the air in places like Delhi less toxic. Unfortunately, most universities talk only partially about the Himalaya instead of delving deep into it. Schools and colleges should talk more on this subject," he said while appreciating the VMSBUTU for initiating the Himalayan Discourse.

The university vice chan-

cellor Onkar Singh said that though the youth may not consider the issue of the Himalaya vital today, it will be a serious issue for them too in a few years. He said, "The Himalaya must be a point of concern for every youth as it affects humanity at large. We can create resilient structures considering earthquakes but we should not be part of the factors causing disasters. As a mechanical engineer, I know that there is no mechanism to reverse the melting of glaciers. We need to check global warming. The youth must ensure that the earth is not exploited indiscriminately so that it remains

undamaged for future generations too. We must not take civilisation to the point of no return," he said. Addressing the university students, Singh said that they should come up with AI-based applications, adding that the university will facilitate them for such works on the Himalayan ecology.

The Pioneer was the media partner for the Himalayan Discourse 1.0 with the second in the series slated to be held on the subject of "Preserving the Himalayan heritage: A journey through culture and history".