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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN** International Film Festival and Forum took place from **October 3-5, 2024**, at the **Ganga Auditorium, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi**. Organized by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), GIZ, WWF India, National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), All India Radio (AIR), and the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC).

The theme for this year's festival, "**Wetlands for LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)**," seeks to inspire individuals, communities, and organizations to adopt environmentally conscious lifestyles that support the conservation of wetlands. We are proud that, as part of the **Indo-German Technical Cooperation project, "Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection,"** initiated by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, and GIZ**, the "**Wetlands for LiFE**" is an integral part of this 12th edition of CMS VATAVARAN.



The **Wetlands for LiFE** Festival journey began with a grand inaugural event on World Wetlands Day 2024 in Indore, graced by the presence of **Her Excellency Dr. Musonda Mumba, Secretary-General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**, along with other distinguished dignitaries.

Following this, a series of impactful regional festivals took place in Lucknow and Shimla, each dedicated to wetland conservation and engaging local communities, students, and experts. The Lucknow inaugural ceremony was graced by Honourable Shri Arun Kumar Saxena, State Minister (Independent Charge), Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department, who served as the Chief Guest. He was joined by Shri Manoj Singh, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, along with many esteemed guests, including Prof. Neel Mani Prasad Verma, Vice-Chancellor of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, and other distinguished environmentalists and academicians.



In Shimla, the event was honored by Shri Sukhvinder Singh, Honorable Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, with Sh. Prabodh Saxena (IAS), Chief Secretary, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh, Dr. Ravi Chopra, Environmentalist & Founder of People's Science Institute, and Sh. D.C. Rana (IAS), Member Secretary of HIMCOSTE & HPSWA. These regional festivals showcased films, facilitated discussions, and sparked meaningful dialogue on wetland conservation, further emphasizing the importance of protecting these vital ecosystems.



These regional events set the stage for the grand culmination in New Delhi at the **12th CMS VATAVARAN** International Film Festival and Forum. The festival in Delhi was the final leg of the **Wetlands for LiFE Festival**, featuring film screenings, panel discussions, and interactive exhibitions. These activities aimed to educate and inspire participants about the urgent need to protect wetlands as vital ecosystems that support biodiversity, regulate water cycles, and offer climate resilience benefits.

CMS VATAVARAN is Asia's largest environmental film festival and forum has been at the forefront of raising awareness about environmental conservation through the powerful medium of films. The festival not only celebrates cinematic excellence but also utilizes films as a vital tool to drive meaningful change and inspire action.

This year, in its 12th competitive edition, CMS VATAVARAN received over 800 films from 68 countries. Through a rigorous three-tier jury process, 66 films (37 National & 29 International) were selected for nomination. The nomination jury, led by Dr Yash Veer Bhatnagar, Country Representative for the IUCN India Country Office, included 19 esteemed experts and students. The final award jury comprised 9 distinguished individuals from the World Bank India, AFD - Agence Française de Développement, Indo-US Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF), World Food Programme, Aga Khan Agency for Habitat India, Mobius Foundation, Habitats Trust, Royal Bhutanese Embassy in Delhi and Bharat Soka Gakkai.

This eminent jury selected 14 award-winning films in National and International categories. These awards were presented during the culminating Gala Awards Ceremony on October 5, 2024, at this festival. All nominated and awarded films has been showcased during this three day festival and the preceding Green Fete held in 8 colleges and schools in NCR in September 2024.

The festival's programs spanned across diverse themes such as wetland conservation, climate change, wildlife protection, and sustainable development, fostering an engaging platform for dialogue and action on these pressing environmental issues.

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Green Film Fete (Pre-Festival Outreach):** The **Green Film Fete**, held from **September 10-20, 2024**, across *8 educational institutions in Delhi NCR*, served as an important outreach program leading up to the main festival. It reached an audience of *2,000+ attendees*, featured *200+ participants in painting competitions*, and enrolled at least *50 additional Wetland Mitras*. The initiative achieved an *8K online reach*, setting the stage for the main festival by spreading awareness and fostering youth engagement in environmental issues.
2. **Inaugural Ceremony:** The festival opened on *October 3* with a grand inaugural ceremony graced by key dignitaries such as **Dr. Ramesh M**, *Scientist F at MoEF&CC*, who delivered the welcome address, and **Ms. Vasanti Rao**, *Director General of CMS*, who spoke about the festival's mission. **Ms. Taina Dyckhoff**, *Head of Division for Climate and Environment at the German Embassy*, emphasized Indo-German collaboration in environmental conservation, while **Dr. Amandeep Garg**, *Additional Secretary at MoEF&CC*, highlighted community engagement in wetland conservation. The inaugural address by **Mr. Jitendra Kumar**, *Director General of Forest & Special Secretary at MoEF&CC*, emphasized government initiatives like *"One Tree in the Name of the Mother."* **Mr. Kirtiman Awasthi**, *Senior Advisor at GIZ*, delivered the vote of thanks.
3. **Film Screenings:** The festival showcased *30 films* addressing various themes such as *wetland conservation, climate change, biodiversity, wildlife protection, and community-driven initiatives*. The screenings provided participants with a deeper understanding of environmental challenges and solutions, stimulating meaningful discussions. The films drew enthusiastic responses, contributing to the festival's *5K social media reach*.
4. **Panel Discussions and Special Sessions:** The three-day event featured various panel discussions and interactive sessions, including:
 - **"Resilient Wetlands, Resilient Communities: Gender and Climate Adaptation"**, with experts like **Mr. Suresh Babu** (WWF-India), **Dr. Ritesh Kumar** (Wetlands International South Asia), **Dr. Archana Chatterjee** (IUCN India Country Office), **Ms. Gargi Rawat** (NDTV), and **Mr. Kirtiman Awasthi** (GIZ, German International Cooperation) and moderated by **Ms. Vasanti Rao**, Director General of CMS.
 - **"Conservation Stories: A Conversation with the Creators"**, where National Award-winning filmmakers **Mr. Krishnendu Bose** and **Ms. Akanksha Sood Singh**, along with filmmakers **Mr. Sarthak Chawla**, **Mr. Oshank Soni**, and **Ms. Imrana Khan**, discussed the creative process, challenges, and impact of their conservation-focused work.
 - A special session on the topic of **Wetlands for LiFE: Highlighting the Critical Role of Wetlands and Wetland Mitras in Conservation** led by **WWF India** on the role of *Wetland Mitras*, showcasing inspiring grassroots stories from *Uttar Pradesh* and emphasizing the significance of local action for wetland protection.



5. **Total Participation and Impact:** The Delhi festival drew *700+ participants*, including youth, civil society members, and environmental enthusiasts. Over the course of three days, attendees actively engaged in discussions, film screenings, and exhibitions, contributing to the movement for wetland conservation. The festival resulted in the enrolment of *62 Wetland Mitras*, who committed to championing wetland conservation efforts in their communities.
6. **Wetlands for LiFE Painting Exhibition:** The exhibition featured artworks by the *top 15 finalists* from the **Green Film Fete painting competition**, selected from *200+ participants*. The top honors went to **Hritvija Pandey from Kamla Nehru College**, **Sanskriti Singh from Manav Rachna International Institute**, and **Ishaan Nagepalli from TERI School of Advanced Studies**. Their work highlighted the beauty and significance of wetlands, contributing to a greater understanding of the need for conservation.
7. **Youth Participation and Inclusivity:** Youth participation was a core component of the festival, with *more than 600 plus young attendees* and civil society members actively engaging in the sessions. The event attracted participants from *10 educational institutions in Delhi NCR*, as well as international youth representation from *8 African countries* including *Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mozambique, and Benin*. The festival was inclusive, welcoming *differently-abled students* who shared their views and enjoyed the screenings and discussions.
8. **Awards and Recognition:** The closing ceremony on *October 5* recognized the outstanding achievements in environmental filmmaking, with awards presented in multiple National and International categories.



Festival Outcomes:

- **Total Participation:** 700+ attendees
- **Wetland Mitras Enrolled:** 62 new members
- **Films Screened:** 30 films across different themes
- **Social Media Reach:** 5K engagement on festival-related content

Green Film Fete Outcomes:

- **Audience Reached:** 2,000+ attendees across Delhi NCR
- **Painting Competition**
Participants: 200+ young artists
- **Films Screened:** 60 films across different themes
- **Wetland Mitras Enrolled:** 60+ new members
- **Online Reach:** 8K social media engagement

The *Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum* successfully served as a dynamic platform for dialogue, education, and advocacy for wetland conservation and climate resilience. The combination of film screenings, panel discussions, and creative exhibitions fostered a deeper understanding of the importance of wetlands and inspired a collective call to action. Through the festival and its pre-event outreach via the *Green Film Fete*, the festival reached thousands and empowered a new generation of Wetland Mitras, ensuring a lasting impact on environmental conservation efforts.

The festival's resounding success reinforces the need to continue raising awareness about the vital role of wetlands in our ecosystems, making their protection a priority for sustainable development.



September 10, 2024	Birla Vidya Niketan School, Pustp Vihar, New Delhi
September 11, 2024	Modern Public School, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi
September 12, 2024	NGF College of Engineering and Technology, Faridabad-Palwal, Haryana
September 13, 2024	Sharda University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh
September 16, 2024	Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies (MRIIRS), Faridabad, Haryana
September 17, 2024	TERI School of Advanced Studies, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi
September 18, 2024	Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Dwarka, New Delhi
September 19, 2024	Bennett University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh
September 20, 2024	Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi, New Delhi



THE GREEN FILM FETE

The Green Film Fete was a crucial outreach program of the Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum, aimed at engaging youth across Delhi NCR to foster environmental awareness, specifically on wetland conservation. The event took place from September 10th to 20th, 2024, and featured a series of screenings, discussions, and creative activities in schools, colleges, and universities. The program successfully reached a wide audience, spreading the festival's message in the lead-up to the main event in October.

Objectives

- To create awareness among students and educators about the significance of wetlands in biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.
- To foster discussions on environmental issues through films, engaging participants in meaningful conversations.
- To encourage youth participation in conservation efforts by highlighting inspiring stories of action and change.
- To complement the main festival's theme, "Wetlands for LiFE," by building momentum and anticipation.

Program Overview

The Green Film Fete took place at eight institutions across Delhi NCR, including schools, colleges, and universities, involving students and educators in interactive sessions with award-winning environmental films, painting competitions, and discussions led by experts. Each day focused on a specific environmental topic, with films covering themes such as wetlands, wildlife conservation, water management, and climate change.

Schedule:

- September 10, 2024 in **Birla Vidya Niketan School, New Delhi,**
- September 11, 2024 in **Modern Public School, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi,**
- September 12, 2024 in **NGF College of Engineering and Technology, Faridabad - Palwal, Haryana,**
- September 13, 2024 in **Sharda University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh,**
- September 16, 2024 in **Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies (MRIIRS), Faridabad, Haryana,**
- September 17, 2024 in **TERI, School of Advanced Studies, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi,**
- September 19, 2024 in **Bennet University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh,**
- September 20, 2024 in **Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi.**



Participation and Reach

- **Audience:** The event reached over 2,000 students and educators from various institutions, creating an atmosphere of learning and active participation.
- **Painting Competition:** Approximately 200 students took part in painting competitions, expressing their artistic interpretation of the theme, “Wetlands for LiFE.” The top artworks were later displayed at the main festival.
- **Wetland Mitras Enrolled:** The program saw the enrolment of 60+ new Wetland Mitras, individuals committed to advocating for wetland conservation.
- **Social Media Reach:** The Green Film Fete generated an 8K online reach through social media engagement, including event highlights, discussions, and participant testimonials.

Key Highlights

1. **Inspiring Film Screenings:** The Green Film Fete showcased 60 plus films, including both award-winning and nominated environmental films from 12 CMS VATAVARAN editions and new productions. Notable screenings included “**Guardians of Wetlands: Women as Stewards of Wetland Conservation**” and “**Green Renuka Ji Fair,**” which resonated with the audience and inspired thoughtful discussions.
2. **Creative Expression through Art:** The painting competitions were a significant draw, encouraging young participants to creatively express their perspectives on wetland conservation. The top 15 paintings from the competitions were exhibited during the Wetlands for LiFE Festival at Indira Paryavaran Bhawan.
3. **Interactive Discussions and Expert Talks:** These event featured talks from environmental experts and screenings followed by interactive Q&A sessions. Topics covered included the role of wetlands in urban ecosystems, climate change impacts, and community-driven conservation efforts.
4. **Institutional Involvement:** The program witnessed the active participation of 10 institutions, including prestigious universities such as Sharda University, TERI School of Advanced Studies, and Kamala Nehru College. This not only broadened the festival’s reach but also established lasting partnerships with educational institutions for future initiatives.



5. Differently Abled Student Participation: The event was also marked by the enthusiastic involvement of differently-abled students, who engaged deeply with the films and discussions, bringing diverse perspectives to the conversations on conservation.

The Green Film Fete set the stage for the main Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum, generating enthusiasm and fostering a culture of environmental stewardship among youth in Delhi NCR. By integrating film screenings, creative expression, and interactive discussions, the program made a significant contribution to the festival's goal of inspiring a collective movement towards wetland conservation and sustainable living.

Outcomes and Impact

- The Green Film Fete succeeded in creating a platform for young minds to connect with pressing environmental issues, providing them with the knowledge and motivation to advocate for wetland conservation.
- The enrolment of additional 60+ Wetland Mitras expanded the network of grassroots-level advocates, ensuring continued support for wetland initiatives.
- The painting competition helped in nurturing environmental consciousness among students, translating creative expression into actionable conservation efforts.
- The social media coverage extended the event's impact beyond the venues, with 8K online engagements ensuring that the message reached a broader audience.



PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

DAY 1: OCTOBER 03, 2024

Slot	Ganga Auditorium
10:00 - 10:30	Registration and arrival of the guests
INAUGURAL CEREMONY	
10:30 - 11:45	Screening of the Inaugural Films Mission LIFE, 00:02:25 English MoEF&CC India Guardians of Wetlands: Women as Stewards of Wetland Conservation 00:05:00 Hindi GLZ India Sikenderpur: The Revival of a Waterbody 00:06:16 English Chandramouli Basu India
11:45 - 12:00	Inauguration of 'Wetlands for LIFE' Painting Exhibition
12:00 - 13:00 SCREENING	Green Renuka Ji Fair - A collective Endeavour at Renuka Lake Hindi 00:12:55 Karwan Films Waste Warriors and GLZ India Biodiversity and Beyond: The Story of Point Calimere English 00:15:02 GLZ and Mahakaal Productions India Uttarakhand's Young Water Scientists: How Students are Leading Spring Conservation Hindi 00:05:22 Shawn Sebastian India Adapting to climate change: focus on biodiversity in the Western Himalayas 00:15:02 English Dr Shahid Rasool Bhat India Bin Boy 00:03:43 Hindi Buddhayan Mukherji India Mustafa - true story of a Tiger 00:26:33 Hindi Anushree Shukla India
13:00 - 14:00	LUNCH BREAK
14:00 - 15:30 SCREENING	Loosing Ground 00:45:00 Bengali and English Angelo Loy and Martino Mazzonis ITALY Screening of "Wetlands For Life Festival" Participatory Videos Kanh: A River or Sewage 00:04:28 Hindi Indore Group 2 Billawli a story of magnificence 00:04:28 Hindi Indore Group 5 Adrabhumi Aur Ghatte Bhujal Star 00:02:48 Hindi Lucknow Group 5 The Echoing Waters of River Gomati 00:03:22 English Lucknow Group 6 Wetlands for Life 00:03:45 Hindi Lucknow Group 10 Air Pollution 00:03:25 Hindi Lucknow Group 3
15:30 - 17:00 PANEL DISCUSSION	"RESILIENT WETLANDS, RESILIENT COMMUNITIES: GENDER AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION"
17:00 - 17:30	Tea and Closing of the day



DAY 2: OCTOBER 04, 2024

10:00 - 10:30	Registration and Tea
10:30 - 11:05 SCREENING	Dhanauri Wetlands as Ramsar Site & Sarus Sanctuary 00:34:56 English Anand Arya India
11:05 - 12:30 DISCUSSION	Wetlands for LIFE: Highlighting the Critical Role of Wetlands and Wetland Mitras in Conservation by WWF India
12:30 - 13:00 SCREENING	Pong Dam: A safe haven for migratory birds 00:04:53 Hindi Ankush, Diksha, Anvesha and GLZ India Rejuvenating the Mangroves of Bhitarkanika 00:05:54 Odia Gopal Chandra Mahapatra, Sudam Bera, Samir Kumar Predhan and GLZ India Women Leadership in Pond Conservation 00:09:41 Marathi and Hindi CEE Pune India
13:00 - 14:00	LUNCH BREAK
14:00 - 15:45 SCREENING	Spirit of the Mountains 00:59:56 English Nareesh Bedi India The Rebirth of Mangalejodi 00:05:54 English Biont and RoundGlass Sustain India Creating an Oasis How a Rajasthan village is reviving traditional water management practices 00:05:15 Rajasthan Shawn Sebastian India FROM TRASH TO TREASURE: turning negatives into positives in Lesotho 00:24:30 English Lara Lee USA
15:45 - 16:00	Wetland Mitra Oath Taking Ceremony
16:00 - 17:00 CONVERSATION	CONSERVATION STORIES: CONVERSATION WITH THE CREATORS
17:00 - 17:30	Tea and Closing of Day 2

DAY 3: OCTOBER 05, 2024

10:00 - 10:30	Registration and Tea
10:30 - 13:00 SCREENING	Ganga Ke Do Kinare 00:08:27 English Asna Jamal, Archana Singh and Avikal India BLOODLINE 00:58:00 English Shriharsh Gajbhiye India One for Change 00:04:00 English Akanksha Sood India No Water No Village 00:29:00 English, Hindi, Tibetan and Urdu Munmun Dhalana India Shade 00:10:02 Malayalam Sudheesh Sivasankaran India Jhum - The Shifting Landscape 00:20:23 English Imrana Khan India
13:00 - 14:00	LUNCH BREAK
14:00 - 15:00 SCREENING	P for Pyaaz (Onion), P for Paissa (Money), P for Paani (Water) 00:56:14 Hindi Laxminarayan Devda India
15:15 - 16:30	AWARD CEREMONY
16:30 - 17:30	High Tea and Closing of the festival



RSVP only, Please Register to attend

www.cmsvalavaran.org



DAY ONE: 3 OCTOBER 2024

Day One of the *Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum* marked a significant start to the three-day event, focusing on the crucial theme of “*Wetlands for LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)*.” The opening day brought together an array of environmental experts, filmmakers, students, policymakers, and conservation enthusiasts to celebrate and advocate for wetland conservation. The festival’s first day was filled with impactful sessions, film screenings, and engaging discussions, setting the tone for the days ahead.

Inaugural Ceremony

The *Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum* commenced with a grand inaugural ceremony, celebrating the significance of wetlands in the ecosystem and marking the beginning of a three-day event dedicated to environmental awareness.

Several esteemed dignitaries, environmental experts, filmmakers, and young participants who gathered to support the cause of wetland conservation graced the inaugural ceremony.

The dignitaries present included:

- **Dr. Ramesh M**, *Scientist F, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)*.
- **Ms. Vasanti Rao**, *Director General, CMS*.
- **Ms. Taina Dyckhoff**, *Head of Division for Climate and Environment, German Embassy, New Delhi*.
- **Mr. Amandeep Garg**, *Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)*.
- **Mr. Jitendra Kumar**, *Director General of Forest & Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)*.
- **Mr Kirtiman Awasthi**, *Senior Advisor, GIZ*

The inaugural ceremony began with a symbolic watering of plants, emphasizing the festival’s commitment to nurturing nature and sustainable living. This was followed by the felicitation of the distinguished guests, honouring their contributions and support for environmental conservation, setting a positive and inspiring tone for the event.





Opening Remarks

Dr. Ramesh M, Scientist F, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), delivered the welcome address, highlighting the importance of wetlands in maintaining biodiversity and climate resilience. He emphasized the need for coordinated efforts across all sectors to ensure the preservation of these crucial ecosystems.



Ms. Vasanti Rao, Director General of CMS, shared insights into the festival's mission, stressing the role of visual storytelling in driving change and inspiring action. She stated, "This year's festival is more than just a platform for screening films; it is a call to action for wetland conservation and a celebration of nature's resilience."

Unveiling of the Festival Directory

A significant moment of the ceremony was the inauguration of the 12th CMS VATAVARAN Festival Directory, which was unveiled by the dignitaries present. The directory provides a comprehensive guide to the films, programs, and panel discussions featured in the festival, serving as an essential resource for attendees to navigate through the event.

Special Address and International Perspective

Ms. Taina Dyckhoff, Head of Division for Climate and Environment at the German Embassy, New Delhi, delivered the opening remarks, emphasizing the strong collaboration between India and Germany in addressing environmental challenges. She spoke about the Indo-German Technical Cooperation project, "Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection," and the role of the Wetlands for LiFE project as a key component of this partnership. Ms. Dyckhoff noted, "This festival is a testament to the power of international cooperation in advancing sustainable solutions for wetland conservation and climate resilience."





Mr. Amandeep Garg, Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC, presented a special address that reaffirmed the government's commitment to wetland conservation. He discussed various government-led initiatives, including policies, action plans, and community-driven programs aimed at preserving and restoring wetlands. Mr. Garg stressed the need for integrating local communities into conservation efforts, as they are often the most affected by environmental degradation.

Inaugural Address

The Chief Guest, Mr. Jitendra Kumar, Director General of Forest & Special Secretary, MoEF&CC, delivered the inaugural address, where he discussed the government's strategic focus on combining policy measures with grassroots initiatives to tackle wetland degradation. He highlighted the "One Tree in the Name of the Mother" campaign as an example of community-led environmental action aimed at wetland restoration. He also appreciated the festival's efforts to engage diverse stakeholders, including youth, civil society, and government representatives, to take concerted action towards wetland protection.

The Vote of Thanks

The Vote of Thanks at the opening ceremony was delivered by Mr. Kirtiman Awasthi, Senior Advisor at GIZ, who expressed his heartfelt gratitude to all the dignitaries, partners, and participants for their presence and support. He acknowledged the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, CMS, and other partners like WWF-India, NMNH, and IUCN CEC in making the festival a reality.

Mr. Awasthi highlighted the importance of collective action in wetland conservation and climate resilience and thanked the distinguished speakers for their valuable insights. He concluded by encouraging everyone to actively engage in the discussions and activities throughout the festival to make a meaningful impact on the journey towards environmental sustainability.



Screenings of Opening Films

The first day of the Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum was marked by a captivating lineup of film screenings that resonated deeply with the audience. The films selected for the day brought attention to the crucial role wetlands play in sustaining biodiversity and supporting community resilience, particularly in the face of climate change. Each screening added a layer of understanding to the broader narrative of wetland conservation, emphasizing the need for urgent action to protect these ecosystems.

The first opening film was **‘Mission LiFE,’** a powerful short film produced by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), India. The film highlighted the government’s ambitious “Lifestyle for Environment” initiative, which encourages individuals to adopt sustainable lifestyles to reduce environmental impacts. It set the stage for the festival, showcasing how small lifestyle changes can collectively have a significant impact on the preservation of natural resources, including wetlands.

Following ‘Mission LiFE,’ the audience was treated to **‘Guardians of Wetlands: Women as Stewards of Wetland Conservation,’** a short film produced by GIZ in Hindi. This compelling documentary focused on the pivotal role that women play in the conservation and management of wetlands. It shared stories of women across India who have taken up the mantle of protecting these vital ecosystems, often overcoming social and cultural barriers. The film served as an inspiring reminder of the power of grassroots action and community-led conservation efforts, showcasing how women are at the forefront of safeguarding wetland ecosystems.

The opening film screenings concluded with the third short film **‘Sikanderpur: The Revival of a Waterbody’** directed by Chandramouli Basu. This documentary took the audience on a journey through the restoration efforts of the Sikanderpur waterbody in Haryana, India. It demonstrated the collaborative efforts of local communities, environmental groups, and government authorities in reviving a once-neglected waterbody. The film highlighted the tangible benefits of wetland restoration, including improved water quality, biodiversity revival, and enhanced community well-being, reinforcing the message that proactive wetland management can yield significant ecological and social rewards.



‘Wetlands for LiFE’ Painting Exhibition

The inaugural day of the festival also featured the opening of the **‘Wetlands for LiFE’** Painting Exhibition, which beautifully showcased the artistic interpretations of wetland ecosystems created by young artists from Delhi NCR. The exhibition highlighted the top 15 paintings, carefully selected from a painting competition held during the Green Film Fete, and reflected the youth’s creativity and growing awareness towards wetland conservation.

The dignitaries at the event expressed admiration for the talent and insight displayed in these works, praising the young artists for their vivid portrayals and understanding of the importance of wetlands. The exhibition served not only as a visual treat but also as a powerful reminder of the role of art in inspiring environmental consciousness and action.



Panel Discussion: “Resilient Wetlands, Resilient Communities: Gender and Climate Adaptation”

The day concluded with a high-profile panel discussion on “**Resilient Wetlands, Resilient Communities: Gender and Climate Adaptation,**” where experts discussed the intersection of wetland conservation, climate change, and gender equality. Esteemed panellists included:

- **Mr. Suresh Babu**, *Director, Rivers, Wetlands & Water Policy, WWF-India*
- **Dr. Ritesh Kumar**, *Director, Wetlands International South Asia*
- **Dr. Archana Chatterjee**, *Programme Manager, IUCN-India Country Office*
- **Ms. Gargi Rawat**, *Senior Environmental Journalist, NDTV*
- **Mr. Kirtiman Awasthi**, *Senior Advisor, GIZ*

The discussion was moderated by **Ms. Vasanti Rao**, Director General, CMS.

The session brought together experts to explore the relationship between wetlands, gender, and climate change, focusing on how resilient wetland ecosystems can strengthen communities, and why gender-sensitive approaches are crucial in this context. Ms. Rao set the stage by introducing the panellists and guiding the conversation with a series of questions that delved into the critical aspects of wetland conservation.

Dr. Ritesh Kumar, Director at Wetlands International South Asia, began by defining wetlands as diverse ecosystems essential for maintaining biodiversity, regulating water cycles, and mitigating climate change impacts. He emphasized that resilient wetlands can better adapt to environmental challenges, ensuring the provision of vital ecosystem services like flood regulation and water purification. Mr. Kirtiman Awasthi from GIZ and Ms. Archana Chatterjee from IUCN-India discussed the role of gender in wetland resilience, noting that women play a crucial role in wetland management, especially in rural communities where they are involved in resource-dependent activities. They highlighted that incorporating gender perspectives leads to more sustainable solutions for wetland conservation and enhances community adaptation.





Ms. Archana Chatterjee also highlighted the slow progress in including women in decision-making roles, emphasizing how this delay is hindering efforts toward gender upliftment. She pointed out that the lack of female representation in leadership positions within conservation and wetland management limits the potential for implementing more inclusive and effective strategies, ultimately impacting both gender equality and environmental sustainability.

Addressing the impacts of climate change on wetlands, Mr. Suresh Babu, Director of River Basins & Water Policy at WWF-India, described how altered rainfall patterns, increased temperatures, and extreme weather events disrupt wetland ecosystems, affecting water availability and biodiversity. He emphasized the need for adaptive management strategies to protect these vulnerable habitats. Ms. Gargi Rawat, Senior Environmental Journalist at NDTV, and Dr. Ritesh Kumar elaborated on how climate change disproportionately affects women, particularly in marginalized communities, due to their roles in water collection and agriculture. They stressed that empowering women in conservation efforts not only addresses gender inequality but also strengthens environmental resilience.

The panellists collectively agreed on the vital role women play in wetland management, citing examples of successful women-led initiatives in wetland restoration and sustainable practices. They called for the development of gender-inclusive policies to support women's participation in decision-making and access to resources.

The session also saw active engagement from the audience, including youth, conservation professionals, and civil society members, who raised questions on indigenous knowledge, community involvement, and climate impacts on wetland biodiversity. The discussion highlighted the need for inclusive strategies that empower women and protect critical ecosystems, reinforcing the festival's message on sustainable development and environmental stewardship.



Key Takeaways from the Panel Discussion:

- 1. Importance of Wetland Resilience:** Wetlands play a crucial role in maintaining biodiversity, regulating water cycles, and mitigating climate change. Resilient wetlands can better adapt to environmental challenges, ensuring the continued provision of vital ecosystem services like flood control and water purification, which are essential for both nature and human communities.
- 2. Gender's Critical Role in Conservation:** Including gender perspectives in wetland conservation leads to more sustainable outcomes. Women, especially in rural areas, are key stakeholders due to their roles in resource-dependent activities such as agriculture and water collection. Empowering women in decision-making enhances conservation efforts and strengthens community resilience.
- 3. Impact of Climate Change on Wetlands and Women:** Climate change is significantly altering wetland ecosystems through changes in rainfall patterns, increased temperatures, and extreme weather events. These shifts affect water availability and wetland biodiversity. Additionally, climate change disproportionately impacts women, particularly in marginalized communities, as they often bear the responsibility for securing resources like water and fuel. This makes them more vulnerable to environmental changes.
- 4. Need for Gender-Inclusive Policies:** The slow progress in including women in leadership and decision-making roles hampers gender equality and limits the potential for effective wetland management. Developing gender-inclusive policies that support women's participation in conservation efforts is crucial for achieving sustainable development goals.
- 5. Empowering Women as Key Conservation Stakeholders:** Women bring valuable traditional knowledge and a deep understanding of their local environments, making them vital contributors to wetland management. Successful examples of women-led conservation initiatives underscore the importance of engaging women in restoration and sustainable practices.
- 6. Community-Driven Conservation Efforts:** Grassroots conservation efforts led by local communities, such as the Wetland Mitras, have proven to be effective in protecting wetlands. Engaging communities in conservation work not only strengthens environmental resilience but also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility.
- 7. Inclusive Strategies for Sustainable Development:** The discussion reinforced the need for strategies that empower women, incorporate indigenous knowledge, and engage multiple stakeholders in wetland management. Such inclusive approaches can drive meaningful action towards protecting vital ecosystems and adapting to climate change.

The session provided valuable insights on the interconnectedness of wetlands, gender, and climate adaptation, emphasizing the need for collective action to achieve both environmental and social sustainability.



Film Screenings:

On the first day of the Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum, the film screenings set the stage for the festival's focus on wetland conservation and environmental awareness. The screenings began with three impactful short films that captured the audience's attention. **"Mission LiFE,"** a brief 2-minute film by the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), highlighted sustainable lifestyle practices, emphasizing the need for environmentally responsible behavior. This was followed by **"Guardians of Wetlands: Women as Stewards of Wetland Conservation,"** a 5-minute film produced by GIZ, which showcased the significant role women play in protecting wetland ecosystems. **"Sikanderpur: The Revival of a Waterbody,"** directed by Chandramouli Basu, demonstrated community efforts to restore and conserve the Sikanderpur wetland in a 6-minute film.

The screenings continued with **"Green Renuka Ji Fair - A Collective Endeavour at Renuka Lake,"** that illustrated local efforts in preserving the Renuka Lake through collaboration with Karwaan Films and Waste Warriors. **"Biodiversity and Beyond: The Story of Point Calimere"** explored the rich biodiversity of the Point Calimere wildlife sanctuary and its conservation initiatives. **"Uttarakhand's Young Water Scientists"** highlighted youth-led conservation efforts for reviving springs in the mountainous state, while **"Mustafa - True Story of a Tiger"** provided insights into tiger conservation and its challenges.

Post lunch, the festival featured the impactful documentary **"Losing Ground"** by Angelo Loy and Martino Mazzonis from Italy. The film, presented in Bengali and English, about the climate migrants, explored the challenges faced by communities living along the eroding riverbanks in Bangladesh.





The first day of the festival also featured the screening of participatory videos created as part of the “Wetlands for Life Festival,” which highlighted community-driven efforts for wetland conservation. These short films, produced by various groups, captured the essence of local environmental challenges and initiatives. The lineup included “**Kanh: A River or Sewage**” by Indore Group 2, which explored the severe pollution issues facing the Kanh River. “**Bilawli: A Story of Magnificence**” by Indore Group 5 showcased the beauty and significance of the Bilawli wetland and the efforts to protect it.

From Lucknow, three powerful videos were presented: “**Adrabhumi Aur Ghatta Bhujal Star**” by Lucknow Group 5, which addressed groundwater depletion; “**The Echoing Waters of River Gomati**” by Lucknow Group 6, highlighted the cultural and ecological importance of the Gomati River; and “**Wetlands for Life**” by Lucknow Group 10, focusing on the need for wetland conservation. Additionally, “**Air Pollution**” by Lucknow Group 3 offered a critical look at the impact of air quality on the environment and human health. These participatory videos underscored the crucial role of communities in raising awareness and taking action to protect local wetlands and ecosystems.

The first day of the *Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum* successfully set the stage for the rest of the event, creating an inspiring and engaging atmosphere. The focus on wetland conservation, coupled with diverse perspectives from experts and participants, underscored the festival’s commitment to fostering a collective movement towards sustainable wetland management. The day’s programs laid a strong foundation for the discussions and activities to follow, ensuring that the message of wetland preservation resonated throughout the event.

DAY TWO: 4 OCTOBER 2024

Day Two of the Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum continued the momentum set by the inaugural day, offering an array of engaging activities, discussions, and screenings dedicated to fostering awareness about wetlands, climate resilience, and conservation efforts. The day saw vibrant participation from youth, conservation professionals, civil society members, and environmental enthusiasts, all eager to learn and contribute to the festival's mission.

Wetlands for LiFE: Highlighting the Critical Role of Wetlands and Wetland Mitras in Conservation

The day began with a special session on the topic of “Wetlands for LiFE: Highlighting the Critical Role of Wetlands and Wetland Mitras in Conservation” led by WWF-India, which focused on the incredible efforts of Wetland Mitras, local community champions who are driving grassroots action for wetland conservation.

Mr. Suresh Babu, Director of River Basins & Water Policy at WWF-India, kicked off the session by introducing various wetland conservation programs and underscoring the vital importance of wetlands in maintaining ecological balance. He emphasized the critical need for active community participation in wetland management.

The session also featured inspiring stories from three Wetland Mitras from Uttar Pradesh—**Mr. Cheeda Lal**, **Mr. Omprakash**, and **Mr. Gireesh Singh**—who shared their experiences in leading successful wetland conservation initiatives. Their stories of resilience and community-driven efforts highlighted the significant role that grassroots stewards play in protecting these vital ecosystems. The session underscored the importance of empowering local communities to take charge of wetland conservation efforts.





Following this, **Dr. Amit Dubey**, Head of Wetlands at WWF-India, delivered a presentation on the importance of wetlands in urban spaces and the role of local youth in their conservation. He encouraged the participants to get actively involved in safeguarding these ecosystems, particularly in rapidly urbanizing areas where wetlands are under increasing pressure. Naturalist **Mr. Rajesh Kumar** then spoke about the complex interdependencies within wetland ecosystems, further deepening the audience's understanding of the topic.

The Wetland Mitra's Oath Ceremony

The Wetland Mitra Oath Ceremony was a momentous occasion during the second day of the festival, where newly registered 62 Wetland Mitras, along with all participants, came together to take a solemn oath to protect and conserve wetlands. The ceremony underscored the festival's commitment to empowering individuals and communities in the fight for wetland preservation. Led by environmental leaders, the oath emphasized the responsibilities and actions needed to safeguard these vital ecosystems for future generations. This collective pledge not only symbolized the dedication of the newly inducted Wetland Mitras but also inspired the broader audience to actively contribute to wetland conservation efforts, fostering a united movement for environmental stewardship.





Panel Discussion: Conservation Stories: A Conversation with the Creators

The panel discussion, **“Conservation Stories: A Conversation with the Creators,”** was one of the standout sessions on the second day of the festival. Moderated by Ms. Vasanti Rao, Director General of CMS, the discussion brought together a panel of leading environmental filmmakers who delved into the inspirations, challenges, and creative processes behind their conservation-focused films. The panel included:

- **Mr Krishnendu Bose**, National Award Winner Film Maker, Earthcare Foundation
- **Ms Imrana Khan**, Award Winner Environmental Filmmaker and Partner-Director, Dusty Foot Production
- **Ms Akanksha Sood**, National Award Winner Film Maker & Founder - Women of The Wild
- **Mr Oshank Soni**, Film Maker and Co-founder Karwaan Films private limited
- **Mr Sarthak Chawla**, Filmmaker and Creative Director, Mahakaal Productions

The filmmakers each shared their unique approaches to making films that resonate with audiences while raising awareness about pressing conservation issues. Mr. Krishnendu Bose spoke about the long journey of crafting documentaries that tell compelling stories of nature and wildlife. He explained that while immediate impacts are hard to measure, the goal is to foster a long-term change in perceptions and attitudes towards nature. He also emphasized the importance of persistence in telling environmental stories, even when the outcomes are not immediately visible.

Ms. Akanksha Sood highlighted the challenges faced in creating films on underrepresented environmental issues, such as the lesser-known species and ecosystems. She shared anecdotes from her filmmaking journey and discussed how the process of researching and filming has often revealed unexpected stories that add depth to the film’s message. According to her, the real impact comes from inspiring people to change their behaviors and attitudes toward the environment, which can take years to manifest.



Mr. Sarthak Chawla reflected on the difficulties of engaging a wider audience through conservation films, especially when competing with mainstream entertainment. He discussed strategies for making environmental films more appealing, such as incorporating personal stories or local perspectives that resonate with the viewers. He stressed that creating an emotional connection with the audience is crucial for a film's success in driving environmental awareness.

Mr. Oshank Soni shared his experiences of working closely with communities while making his films, which allowed him to capture local voices and concerns authentically. He talked about how the participatory approach in filmmaking helps not only in creating a more impactful narrative but also in empowering the communities to be advocates for their ecosystems. He suggested that the inclusion of community stories adds a powerful dimension to conservation films.

Ms. Imrana Khan addressed the long-term nature of measuring the impact of conservation films. She acknowledged that while it is challenging to see immediate results, the process of storytelling can create a ripple effect that influences policymakers, educators, and the general public over time. She shared an example of how some films have sparked policy discussions or been used as educational tools in classrooms, suggesting that the true impact of a film may unfold over several years.



The discussion also included a lively Q&A session where the audience engaged the panellists with various questions, including one particularly interesting question about how filmmakers measure the impact of their conservation films. The panellists unanimously agreed that it is difficult to gauge immediate outcomes, citing examples like Mike Pandey's "The Silence of the Sore," which led to a policy change, as rare instances. They emphasized that most films contribute to a gradual shift in public consciousness rather than direct, measurable impacts in the short term.

Overall, the panel discussion was not only informative but also inspiring, as the filmmakers shared the joys and struggles of capturing the essence of conservation through the lens. Their stories, filled with anecdotes from the field and reflections on the long process of creating meaningful content, offered valuable insights into the world of environmental filmmaking and its role in driving change.

The second day also saw a packed audience, with over 170 youth and civil society members participating in various sessions. The screenings of award-winning films continued to draw attention, with each film serving as a powerful medium to convey the pressing need for wetland conservation and climate action. The interactive nature of the sessions, including the panel discussion and the Wetland Mitras' experiences, resonated deeply with the participants, who actively took part in discussions and asked insightful questions.



As the day concluded, the festival had not only provided an educational experience but also fostered a sense of community and shared responsibility among participants for the protection of wetlands and the environment. The impactful conversations and inspiring stories shared throughout the day strengthened the festival's mission to engage diverse audiences in the pursuit of sustainable development and ecological preservation.

Film Screenings:

On Day 2 of the Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN Film Festival and Forum, the screenings showcased a diverse array of films that highlighted the importance of wetland ecosystems and conservation efforts. The day began with **“Dhanauri Wetlands as Ramsar Site & Sarus Sanctuary”** by Anand Arya, which brought attention to the Dhanauri wetlands and the Sarus cranes, underlining the necessity for Ramsar designation to safeguard the site.

Following this, the festival emphasized the critical role of wetlands and grassroots conservation through a special session, **“Wetlands for LiFE: Highlighting the Critical Role of Wetlands and Wetland Mitras in Conservation.”** After the session the film screening resumed with the screening of the short film **“Pong Dam: A Safe Haven for Migratory Birds,”** which depicted the sanctuary's role in protecting bird species, **“Rejuvenating the Mangroves of Bhitarkanika,”** focusing on mangrove restoration, and **“Women Leadership in Pond Conservation,”** which showcased inspiring stories of women driving pond conservation in rural India.



In the afternoon, **“Spirit of the Mountains”** by Naresh Bedi captivated the audience with its breath taking visuals and exploration of the elusive Snow Leopards of the Himalayan region. The screening continued with **“The Rebirth of Mangalajodi,”** a film that chronicled the revival of wetland habitats in Odisha, **“Creating an Oasis,”** which narrated a village’s efforts to revive traditional water management practices, and **“From Trash to Treasure,”** a compelling story about turning negatives into positives in Lesotho.

The films screened on Day 2 highlighted diverse conservation stories, underscoring the festival’s theme of wetland preservation and the role of communities and individuals in environmental stewardship. The audience engaged with these narratives, gaining insights into different approaches to conservation and the multifaceted nature of wetland ecosystems.

The festival continued to uphold its role as a vital platform for dialogue and action, ensuring that the message of wetland conservation reached far and wide, setting the stage for an exciting final day.



DAY THREE: 5 OCTOBER 2024:

Celebrating Award-Winning Films and Honouring Achievements

The third and final day of the Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum was a memorable occasion, marked by the screening of award-winning films, inspiring talks, and the much-anticipated Award Ceremony. The day began with a vibrant atmosphere as participants and guests gathered at the Ganga Auditorium, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi, for the closing day's events.

Film Screenings:

The morning kicked off at 10:00 AM with registration and tea, setting a welcoming tone for the day. This was followed by the screenings of selected national award-winning films from the 12th CMS VATAVARAN festival. The line-up included captivating films such as “**Ganga Ke Do Kinare**” by Asna Jamal, Archana Singh, and Avikal, which highlighted local perspectives, on water conservation, and “**Bloodline**” by Shriharsh Gajbiye, which delved into the intricate relationship between humans and wildlife.





The screenings continued with “**One for Change**” by Akanksha Sood, a short film emphasizing individual efforts in conservation, and “**No Water No Village**” by Munmun Dhalaria, which presented the stark realities of climate change impacts in rural areas. Other films showcased included “**Shadae**” by Sudheesh Sivasankaran, exploring environmental challenges in local communities, and “**Jhum - The Shifting Landscape**” by Imrana Khan, focusing on the complexities of traditional agricultural practices and their environmental implications.

After a lunch break the screenings resumed with “**P for Pyaaz (Onion), P for Paisa (Money), P for Paani (Water)**” by Laxminarayan Devda, which examined the intricate link between agriculture, economy, and water resources. The film screenings were a testament to the creative storytelling and passionate advocacy of the filmmakers, each bringing unique insights into India’s environmental challenges.

Award Ceremony:

During the award ceremony of the Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum, a significant highlight was the award presentation for the Wetlands for LiFE Delhi NCR Painting Competition. The competition saw participation from over 200 young artists across various schools, colleges, and universities in Delhi NCR, showcasing their creative interpretations of wetland ecosystems.

The top 15 finalists' paintings were displayed in an exhibition throughout the festival, drawing admiration from dignitaries and attendees alike for their artistic expression and commitment to the cause of wetland conservation. The top honours went to **Hritvija Pandey** from Kamla Nehru College, **Sanskriti Singh** from Manav Rachna International Institute and **Ishaan Nagepalli** from TERI School of Advanced Studies.

The awards were presented by **Dr. Ramesh M**, Scientist F, MoEF&CC, **Dr. N Bhaskara Rao**, Chairperson CMS, and **Mr. Utkarsh Lal**, Advisor, GIZ. The recognition of these young artists added a meaningful dimension to the festival, emphasizing the importance of youth engagement in environmental conservation.





A short film titled “Glimpses of CMS VATAVARAN” was screened, offering a retrospective look at CMS VATAVARAN’s journey over the years. Following this, **Ms. Vasanti Rao**, Director General, Centre for Media Studies (CMS), delivered a welcome address and provided an overview of the festival, outlining the significant achievements and highlights of the three-day event.

Reflecting on the success of the event she said; “This year’s theme, ‘Wetlands for LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment),’ has resonated deeply with filmmakers and audiences alike. Through these powerful visual narratives, we’ve seen how wetlands are not just ecosystems, but lifelines for communities and wildlife. The festival has once again proven to be a crucial platform for environmental discourse and action.”

The ceremony then proceeded with the announcement of the 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Category Awards. After International Category the National Category Awards were presented. In the National category, the winners included:

1. Amateur & Students Films: “Ganga Ke Do Kinare” by Asna Jamal, Archana Singh, and Avikal
2. Livelihoods & Sustainable Technologies: “Jhum: The Shifting Landscape” by Imrana Khan
3. Climate Change – Adaptation & Mitigation: “No Water, No Village” by Munmun Dhalaria
4. Environment Conservation: “SHADE” by Sudheesh Sivasankaran
5. Wildlife Conservation: “BLOODLINE” by Shriharsh Gajbhiye
6. Water Conservation: “P for Pyaaz, P for Paisa, P for Paani” by Laxminarayan Devda
7. Special jury mention in Water Conservation: “All Day and All of the Night” by Priya Naresh
8. Short Films for Conservation: “One for Change” by Akanksha Sood



The first set of four awards in the Indian category were presented by **Dr. Amandeep Garg**, Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC, **Dr. Yashveer Bhatnagar**, Head of IUCN India Office and Nomination Jury Head, and **Dr. Vasanti Rao**.

A special address by **Dr. Yashveer Bhatnagar** underscored the role of CMS VATAVARAN in fostering a global dialogue on conservation and the impact of these films in inspiring change. While sharing his experience he said, “it has been an absolute privilege to lead the nomination jury for this year’s CMS VATAVARAN. The films we reviewed have not only showcased great storytelling but also highlighted the urgency of wetland conservation and the broader environmental challenges we face today. The creativity of filmmakers from India & across the globe have reinforced my belief that visual media is a powerful tool for change.”

The second set of four Indian category awards was announced by **Dr. Amandeep Garg**, **Mr. Vivek Menon**, and **Dr. Vasanti Rao**. **Mr. Vivek Menon**, Founder of the Wildlife Trust of India and IUCN Councillor, delivered a compelling special address during the closing ceremony, emphasizing the pivotal role of storytelling in conservation efforts. He highlighted how powerful narratives can bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and public understanding, making complex environmental issues accessible and engaging to diverse audiences.

Mr. Menon underscored that storytelling has the unique ability to evoke empathy and inspire action, which is crucial in building widespread support for conservation initiatives. Drawing on his extensive experience, he shared examples of how well-crafted stories have led to policy changes and increased awareness about the plight of endangered species and habitats. He encouraged filmmakers and conservationists to continue using their platforms to bring attention to lesser-known conservation stories, stressing that each story has the potential to create ripples of change and inspire a collective commitment to preserving our natural heritage.

The ceremony concluded with a powerful address by the **Chief Guest, Dr. Amandeep Garg**, who highlighted the government's unwavering commitment to wetland conservation and the essential need for collaborative efforts across various sectors to tackle pressing environmental challenges. He emphasized that wetlands are not just crucial ecosystems for biodiversity, but also vital for climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods.

Dr. Garg praised the Wetlands for LiFE and CMS VATAVARAN festivals as essential platforms for meaningful dialogue and exchange, fostering a deeper understanding of the steps needed to safeguard these invaluable natural resources. He noted that the films showcased during the festival serve not only as tools for raising awareness, but as catalysts for action, motivating individuals and communities to actively participate in conservation efforts. Dr. Garg urged everyone to recognize the power of storytelling in inspiring real change and underscored the importance of initiatives like these in driving a collective movement towards a sustainable future.





The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by **Dr. C.R. Magesh**, Scientist-D at the National Museum of Natural History, MoEF&CC, who expressed gratitude to all the participants, partners, and filmmakers for their contributions to making the festival a grand success.

The day ended with a group photo session and high tea session, allowing attendees to reflect on the festival's achievements and network with fellow environmental advocates. The Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum successfully concluded, leaving a lasting impact on all who attended and reinforcing the need for continued efforts in conservation and sustainable development.



Conclusion and Outcomes of the Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum

The Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum concluded as a landmark event, successfully bringing together diverse stakeholders to celebrate and advocate for environmental conservation through the medium of film. Held from October 3-5, 2024, at the Ganga Auditorium, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan in New Delhi, the festival showcased the vital role of wetlands in biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable development. Organized by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), GIZ, WWF India, All India Radio (AIR), and IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), the event resonated deeply with its participants, marking significant milestones in environmental advocacy.

Festival Highlights and Achievements:

The festival attracted over 700 participants, including youth, conservationists, policymakers, filmmakers, and members of civil society. This included representatives from 10 colleges, universities, and schools across Delhi NCR, as well as international participants from more than eight African countries, such as Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mozambique, and Benin. The involvement of differently-abled students further emphasized the inclusive spirit of the event.

More than 30 national and international award-winning films were screened, with over 15 focused specifically on wetland conservation. The films provided not just a visual treat but also an educational experience that underscored the importance of preserving wetland ecosystems.

The festival saw the active participation of over 700 youth and civil society members, who engaged in various activities, including panel discussions, painting exhibitions, and interactive sessions. Notably, the Wetlands Mitra oath ceremony witnessed the enrollment of 62 new Wetlands Mitras, who pledged their commitment to wetland conservation.

The inaugural day featured the watering of plants as a symbolic gesture of nurturing the environment, and the unveiling of the festival directory by dignitaries. The opening ceremony set the tone for the three-day event, with thought-provoking films like “Guardians of Wetlands: Women as Stewards of Wetland Conservation” captivating the audience.



The second day was marked by a special session led by WWF India on the role of Wetlands Mitras, and a panel discussion with renowned filmmakers who shared insights into the impact of storytelling in conservation.

The final day was dedicated to showcasing the 12th CMS VATAVARAN award-winning films, followed by an award ceremony honouring outstanding contributions in environmental filmmaking. Awards were given across various categories, including Climate Change, Water Conservation, Livelihoods, and Wildlife Conservation. The 'Wetlands for LiFE' Painting Exhibition highlighted the creativity and awareness of youth, with top prizes awarded to young artists from Delhi NCR.

Outcomes:

Raising Awareness and Inspiring Action: The festival succeeded in raising awareness about the critical role of wetlands in environmental sustainability and climate adaptation. The films screened served as educational tools, inspiring attendees to take individual and collective action toward wetland conservation.

Youth Engagement and Empowerment: With over 2700 youth participants across the Green Film Fete and the main festival, the event provided a platform for young people to learn about environmental issues and participate actively in discussions. The Wetlands Mitra program was particularly successful, enrolling over 100 new volunteers committed to supporting wetland conservation efforts across India.

Strengthening Partnerships: The festival brought together various stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions, and international organizations. The collaboration with partners such as MoEF&CC, GIZ, NMNH, AIR, IUCN-CEC and WWF India underscored the importance of joint efforts in addressing environmental challenges.

Social Media and Online Reach: The festival's online presence helped extend its impact beyond physical attendance. Social media campaigns reached approximately 13,000 people, with around 8,000 online interactions during the Green Film Fete and 5,000 during the main festival. The content shared on social media platforms generated significant engagement, raising the profile of wetland conservation efforts and CMS VATAVARAN's mission.

Art as a Catalyst for Conservation: The Wetlands for LiFE Painting Competition and exhibition showcased the power of art in promoting environmental awareness. Over 200 young artists participated in the competition, with the top 15 paintings displayed at the festival. The creativity demonstrated by the participants served as a reminder of the potential for art to inspire environmental stewardship.

Policy Influence and Future Directions: The festival's discussions and panel sessions highlighted the need for policy-level interventions in wetland management and conservation. The event underscored the role of gender-responsive strategies, community engagement, and collaborative efforts in achieving sustainable development goals. The insights gathered from the discussions are expected to inform future programs and initiatives in wetland conservation.

The Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum has emerged as a vital platform for environmental advocacy, education, and action. It has successfully united diverse stakeholders in a shared mission to protect and conserve wetlands, which are essential for maintaining biodiversity, supporting livelihoods, and building resilience against climate change. As the festival concluded, the message resonated loud and clear: the protection of wetlands is not merely an environmental issue, but a fundamental necessity for securing a sustainable future for all.

Social Media

In today's digital landscape, social media serves as an essential tool for sharing information and connecting with audiences. Acknowledging this, the Festival strategically harnessed the power of social media to maximize its reach and engagement. The Festival's presence was strongly promoted across key platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, ensuring widespread visibility and interaction.



Facebook, with its extensive user base, emerged as the central platform for our digital outreach efforts. We also leveraged Instagram, a Facebook affiliate, to create a cohesive and impactful promotional campaign. By using a mix of dynamic content—including festival previews, behind-the-scenes glimpses, and timely updates—we effectively captured and maintained the audience's interest throughout the event.

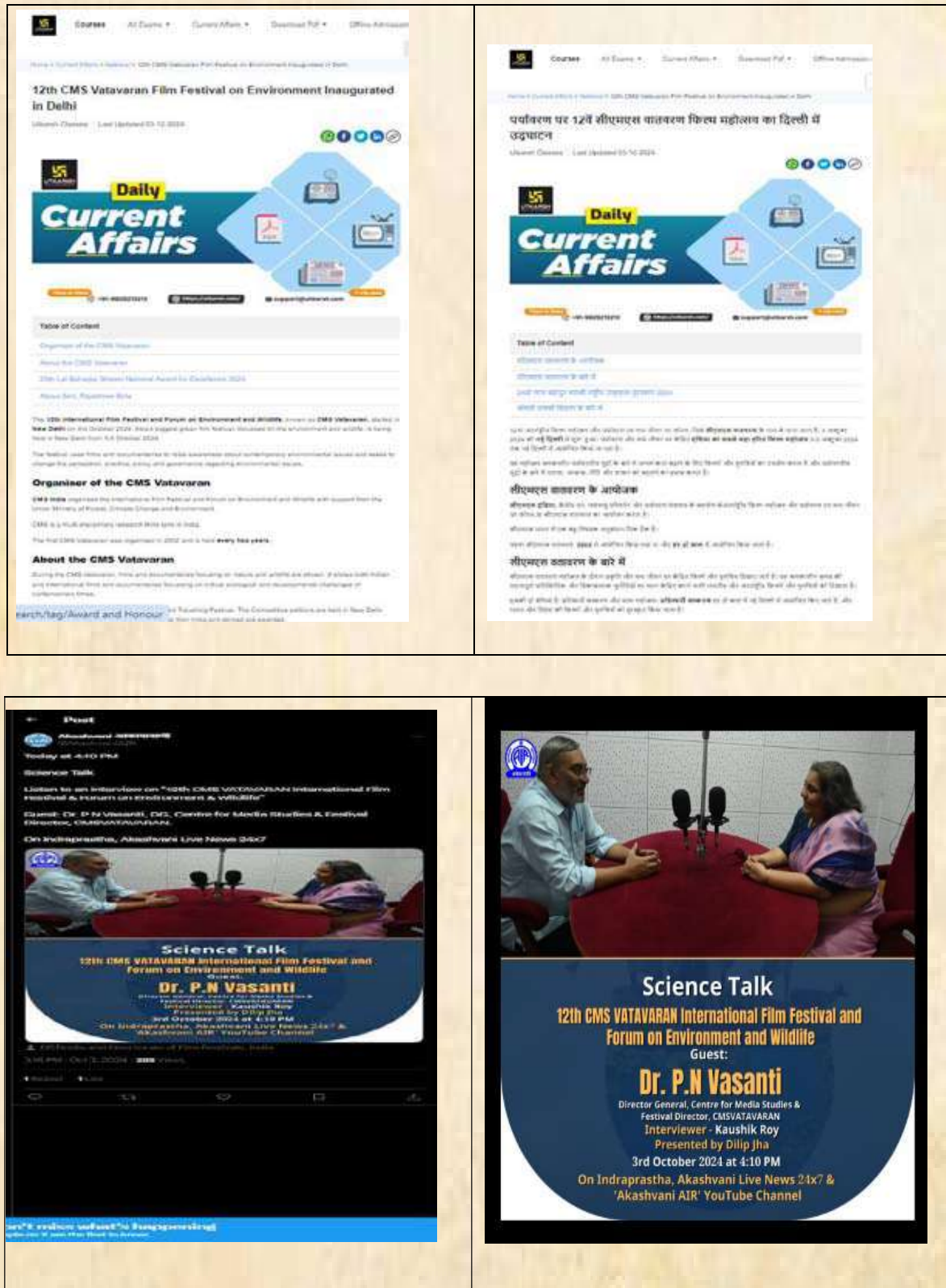
The results of these efforts were impressive, with significant organic reach achieved across platforms. Without any paid advertising, our Facebook posts alone reached over 8,000 people, while Instagram posts connected with more than 760 users. This substantial reach, accomplished purely through organic means, highlights the festival's relevance and the widespread appeal of its theme, resonating strongly with the online community.



Overall, the success of our social media campaign significantly enhanced the Festival's visibility, contributed to meaningful audience engagement, and played a crucial role in the event's overall impact.

Media Coverage

The Festival and Forum garnered substantial media attention, with extensive coverage across various channels. The event was featured prominently in several newspaper dailies, which provided detailed reports on the festival's activities and programs. The collective media coverage across print, television, and digital platforms significantly contributed to raising awareness about the festival's objectives and successfully disseminated its key messages to a diverse audience.





Wetlands For LIFE-12th CMS VATAVARAN Film Festival Ends With Strong Call For Conservation

New Delhi (India) October 7: The Wetlands for LIFE-12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum concludes on 5th October at the Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi, marking the end of a three-day celebration of environmental awareness and conservation through the powerful medium of film.

Organized by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS), this festival is part of the Indo-German Technical Cooperation project, "Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection," implemented by GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), along with the International Climate Initiative (ICI), in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

ANI (Updated: Oct 07, 2024 16:52 IST)

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PNN

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Greater Noida university hosts international film fest on environment

The event concluded with screenings of films showcasing both environmental challenges and success stories.

Sharda University on Friday hosted the International Film Festival on wildlife, environment, and sustainability at the Sharda University in Knowledge Park II, Greater Noida.

The festival opened with a master class by international film laureate and Peabody Award-winning producer Caroline Elbertson, along with a panel discussion with the deputy director of NGO CMS Vatavaran, Satyakash Bhatnagar.

12th edition of CMSVATAVARAN International Film Festival & Forum on Environment & Wildlife commences with 'Green Fete' in NCR Schools & Colleges

New Delhi: Leveraging the power of films, CMSVATAVARAN is Asia's largest film festival and forum exclusively on environment and wildlife. For its 12th competitive edition, it received 800 films from 60 countries and 35 states in India. All films have gone through multiple layers of scrutiny to short list nominated films and select award by eminent film and environment experts. All nominated films will be showcased in the 'Green Fete' starting September 9, 2024. The grand finale of the 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum on Environment & Wildlife will be held at Ganga Auditorium, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, from October 5-5, 2024.

The Girls Vidya Niketan School of Pusa Vihar, New Delhi will be the epicentre of environmental awareness as it hosts the 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum on September 10. The programme is part of a city-wide 'Green Fete' series running from September 10 to September 20, 2024, across New Delhi's following prestigious educational institutions.

Young Eco-Warriors Take the Lead in Wetland Conservation at CMS VATAVARAN Event in Modern Public School, Shalimar Bagh

Published: September 10, 2024 / 5:45 pm
Pooja Singh



New Delhi: The 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum on Environment and Wildlife continued its successful journey today with an inspiring event at Modern Public School, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi. More than 340 students from classes 4 and 5 gathered to engage in thought-provoking film screenings, creative art competitions, and lively discussions on the critical importance of wetland conservation.

Inspiring Film Screenings:

Students were captivated by a selection of powerful environmental films on wetlands, wildlife, and water conservation. Aligned with the festival's theme "Wetlands for LIFE," these films emphasized the vital role wetlands play in maintaining ecological balance and



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NATIONAL NEWS

PM Modi Launched Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan in Guwahati, Assam, on 04th October 2024.

Prime Minister Modi went on a day-long visit to Jarakhand, where he laid foundation stones and inaugurated projects worth Rs 55,000 crore.

It included Chikara Model Residential Schools and the foundation stone of various developmental projects under the Pradhan Mantri Janajati Arogya Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAB), targeting the tribal communities.

The Abhiyan aims to focus on rural infrastructure, health, education, and livelihood through 25 government schemes implemented by 17 central government Ministries and the Department of Government of India.

The scheme's total expenditure is Rs 74,155 crore. The Abhiyan will cover around 6,100 villages in 549 districts and 2748 blocks across 35 States and Union Territories.

It is expected to benefit more than 7 crore tribal people in the targeted areas.

Prime Minister Modi also inaugurated 61 Chikara Model Residential Schools (CMRS) and laid the foundation stone for 25 CMRS worth over Rs 2,801 crore.

The Chikara Model Residential Schools (CMRS) were launched in 2007-08 by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs to provide quality education to Scheduled Tribal children to remove social.

CMS Vatavaran Film Festival on Environment

The 12th International Film Festival and Forum on Environment and Wildlife, known as CMS Vatavaran, started in New Delhi on 03rd October 2024.

Asia's largest green film festival, focused on the environment and wildlife, is being held at New Delhi from 3-5 October 2024.

The festival aims to raise awareness about contemporary environmental issues and seeks to change the perception, practice, policy and governance regarding environmental issues.

CMS India organizes the International Film Festival and Forum on Environment and Wildlife with support from the Union Ministry of Forest, Climate Change and Environment.

It has two categories: Competitive edition and Traveling Festival. The Competitive edition is held in New Delhi every two years, and films and documentaries from India and abroad are awarded.

Ashok Tandon Dornare with Elvina

Current Affairs Today 5th October 2024 Daily GK Update

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Daily Current Affairs 5th October 2024 Daily GK Update

Current Affairs Today 5th October 2024 Daily GK Update is a daily update of current affairs and general knowledge for the month of October 2024. It is a comprehensive guide for the month of October 2024, covering all the important events and news of the month. It is a must-read for all the aspirants of the UPSC and other competitive exams.

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Wetlands for LIFE-12th CMS VATAVARAN Film Festival Ends with Strong Call for Conservation

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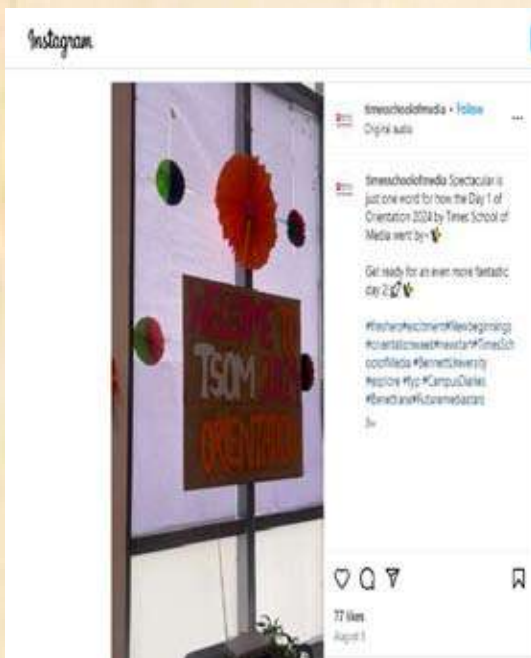
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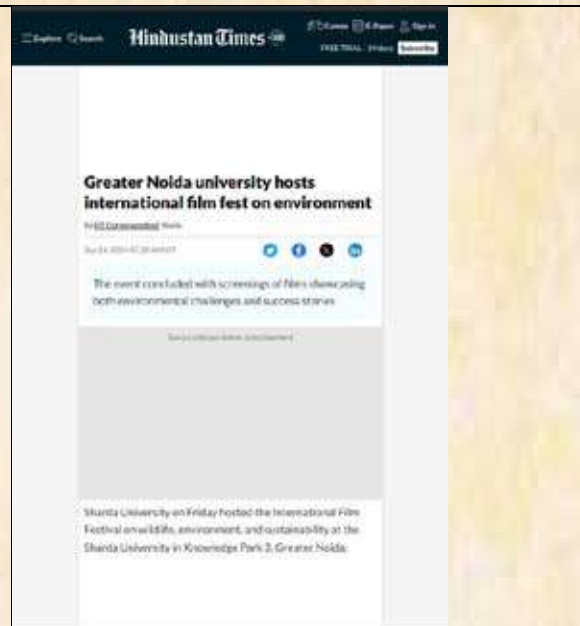
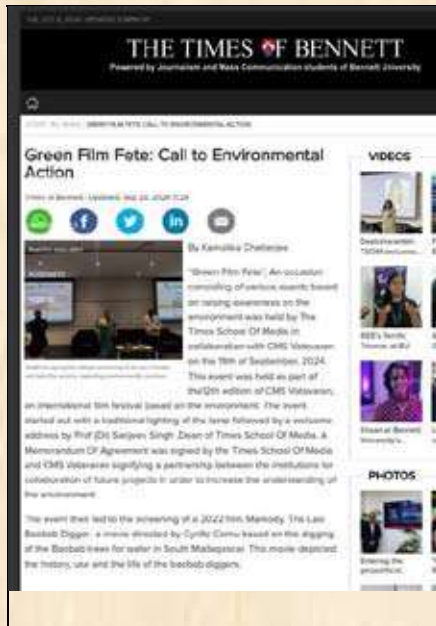
By Nandan / October 03, 2024 (Wed)



PHN

New Delhi, India, October 3: The Wetlands for LIFE, 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum concluded on 31st October at the Indra Prastha Bhawan, New Delhi, marking the end of a three-day celebration of environmental awareness and conservation through the powerful medium of film. Organised by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS), this festival is part of the Indo-German Technical Cooperation project, "Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection," implemented by GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), along with the International Climate Initiative (ICI), in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).





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Promotional Materials and Designs

The Film Festival was extensively promoted through various channels, including eye-catching posters, banners, and a detailed program schedule. The organizers designed and strategically placed these promotional materials across multiple venues and locations to reach a broader audience.

The festival posters and banners were designed in a way that effectively conveyed the message of environmental conservation and highlighted the importance of the event. The bright and vivid colours used in the designs not only caught the attention of passer-by but also created a sense of excitement and anticipation among the audience.

Additionally, the program schedule for the festival was thoughtfully designed to include a diverse range of events and discussions that catered to different interests and age groups. The schedule featured a line-up of renowned speakers, interactive workshops, and engaging activities, making it an ideal platform for learning and sharing knowledge about environmental issues.

Through the promotion of the festival, including the use of banners, posters, and program schedules, the organizers successfully spread the word about the event to a vast audience. This led to a heightened level of awareness and anticipation for the festival, ultimately contributing to its success in generating interest and involvement in environmental conservation efforts.



12th CMS vatavaran
International Film Festival and Forum on Environment & Wildlife
INDIA | FEBRUARY 2024

festival theme
LIFE
Wetlands for Our Common Future

CALL FOR ENTRIES

AWARDS & PRIZES
14 Awards in 8 Indian and 6 International Categories
₹ 25,000 to 1,00,000

Calling Filmmakers, Media, Creative Professionals & Nature Enthusiasts to submit film entries for 12th Competitive CMS VATAVARAN Asia's Largest Environment and Wildlife Film Festival and Forum.

Last Entry Deadline: 31 OCTOBER 2023 (World Clock, IST)

www.cmsvatavaran.org

Wetlands for LIFE
A SERIES OF FILM FESTIVALS & MEDIA INITIATIVES

February 2, 2024 | World Wetlands Day
Launched by Hon'ble Environment, Forest & Climate Change Minister, Government of India

FILM FESTIVAL & FORUM
The Wetlands for LIFE Film Festival & Forum serves as a platform for artists and professionals to showcase their talent and ideas for wetland conservation. By showcasing inspiring films such as 'Ramsar Lake: Nature's Hidden Treasure' and 'Wetlands of the Mind Project', the festival emphasizes the role of wetlands in biodiversity and climate resilience. The festival's social impact includes awarding winners, showcasing their work, and providing a platform for them to share their vision and experiences. Through engaging discussions, interactive sessions with filmmakers and conservationists, the festival not only inspires action but also facilitates a deeper understanding of wetland ecosystems, ultimately contributing to a collective commitment to their preservation.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME
The Wetlands for LIFE Media Engagement Programme is a series of initiatives for media professionals and nature journalists. The programme includes a dedicated workshop on wetland conservation, a media kit, and a press conference. The media kit is designed to provide journalists with the latest news and information on wetland conservation. The press conference is held at the festival venue, where media professionals can meet with the festival organizers and the filmmakers. The programme also includes a series of interviews with the festival winners and the conservationists. The programme is designed to provide media professionals with the latest news and information on wetland conservation, and to provide a platform for them to share their vision and experiences.

www.wetlandsforlife.cmsvatavaran.org

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Celebrating Wetlands for Our Common Future

Wetlands for LIFE is a series of initiatives aimed at raising awareness and inspiring action on wetland conservation by involving citizens through storytelling and participatory photography, while also building capacity for the scientific and research community on wetland ecosystems.

Organized by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS), this initiative is part of the 'Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection' project, implemented by GIZ in India, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMU), with support from the International Climate Initiative (ICI) and in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

FILM FESTIVAL & FORUM
Film Showcase
Social Impact
Interactive Workshop
Panel Discussions / Seminars

Wetlands for LIFE Engagement
Workshop
Media Kit
Press Conference

2,705 Participants from 30 countries and 150 organizations
347 Wetlands identified
168 Wetlands in India
70+ Wetlands in India
50,000+ Wetlands in India

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12th CMS vatavaran
International Film Festival and Forum on Environment & Wildlife
NEW DELHI, INDIA | SEPTEMBER 2024

Meet our Winners

NO WATER NO VILLAGE
Climate Change - Adaptation & Mitigation (National)

Munmun Dhalaria

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NEW DELHI, INDIA | SEPTEMBER 2024

Meet our Winners

NATIONAL
Jyoti Chavhan
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh

INTERNATIONAL
Jyoti Chavhan
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh
Anshu Singh

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12th CMS vatavaran
International Film Festival and Forum on Environment & Wildlife
NEW DELHI, INDIA | OCTOBER 2-3, 2024

PANEL DISCUSSION
"Resilient Wetlands, Resilient Communities: Gender and Climate Adaptation"
October 3, 2024 | 03:30 pm - 05:00 pm

Panelists:
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh

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International Film Festival and Forum on Environment & Wildlife
NEW DELHI, INDIA | OCTOBER 2-3, 2024

PANEL DISCUSSION
"Conservation Stories: A Conversation with the Creators"
October 4, 2024 | 04:00 pm - 05:00 pm

Panelists:
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
Dr. Anshu Singh
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