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Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN Film Festival to Highlight Wetland Conservation and Climate Resilience

The **Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN International Film Festival and Forum** is set for a grand inauguration on **October 3, 2024, at the Ganga Auditorium, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi**. Running from *October 3 to 5*, the festival will focus on the critical theme “*Wetlands for LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)*,” emphasising the essential role that wetlands play in biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.

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 (IKI), in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

The journey of the *Wetlands for LiFE* initiative began with a grand event in *Indore* on *World Wetlands Day 2024*, which was attended by *Dr. Musonda Mumba*, Secretary-General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, along with other dignitaries. After successful regional festivals in *Lucknow* and *Shimla*, the festival is now set for its culmination in New Delhi, raising national awareness on wetland conservation. The Delhi festival is also supported by NMNH, WWF India and the IUCN CEC.

The inaugural ceremony on *October 3* will bring together leading environmental experts and thought leaders. **Dr. Ramesh M**, Scientist F from MoEF&CC, will deliver the welcome address, followed by **Ms. Vasanti Rao**, Director General of CMS, who will share insights into the festival’s mission and the critical importance of wetlands in the global sustainability agenda. Highlighting the international collaboration central to the festival, **Ms. Taina Dyckhoff**, Head of Division for Climate and Environment at the German Embassy in New Delhi, will deliver the opening remarks. **Mr. Amandeep Garg**, Additional Secretary at Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India., will present the special address, underlining the government’s commitment to wetland conservation. The inaugural address will be delivered by **Mr. Jitendra Kumar**, Director General of Forest & Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India.

Attendees will also witness the screening of the festival's *opening film*, “*Guardians of Wetlands: Women as Stewards of Wetland Conservation*,” which explores the role of women and wetlands. Additionally, ‘*Wetlands for LiFE*’ *Painting Exhibition* will be inaugurated, displaying artistic interpretations from the selected paintings from the Delhi NCR ‘*Wetlands for LiFE*’ *Painting Competition*.

A key feature will be the screening of six participatory films produced during the previous film festivals in the *Wetlands for LiFE* series, reinforcing the focus on education and capacity-building in environmental stewardship. The first day of the festival will conclude with a high-profile *panel discussion* on “***Resilient Wetlands, Resilient Communities: Gender and Climate Adaptation.***” Esteemed experts participating in this discussion include **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) and moderated by **Ms. Vasanti Rao**, Director General of CMS.

Over the three-day event, *30 national and international award-winning films* will be screened, with more than *15 films* focusing on various aspects of wetland conservation. The festival will conclude with the screening of the *12th CMS VATAVARAN award-winning films* on the final day. This year's edition of the festival received *over 800 film submissions from 68 countries*, positioning CMS VATAVARAN as a significant global platform for environmental advocacy.

The *Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN Film Festival* is not only a celebration of environmental films but a platform for bringing together experts, scholars, students, and the public to raise awareness about the critical importance of wetlands in biodiversity conservation and climate protection. By presenting films that address pressing environmental challenges and showcase innovative solutions, the festival aims to inspire action towards sustainable wetland management and climate resilience.

Speaking about the festival, *Ms. Vasanti Rao* emphasised, *"This year's CMS VATAVARAN is more than just a film festival – it's a rallying cry for wetland conservation. Through visual storytelling, we aim to inspire collective action to protect these vital ecosystems. Wetlands are the unsung heroes in the fight against climate change, and it's time we bring them into the spotlight."*

The *Wetlands for LiFE & 12th CMS VATAVARAN Film Festival* continues to push the boundaries of environmental advocacy, offering a platform for global dialogue and meaningful action towards the conservation of wetlands and the resilience of our planet.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India, The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) is the nodal agency in the administrative structure of the Central Government for the planning, promotion, co-ordination and overseeing the implementation of India's environmental and forestry policies and programmes. **Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)** is an India-led global mass movement to nudge individual and community action to protect and preserve the environment by adopting simple eco-friendly practices in daily life across seven key domains: saving energy and water, avoiding single-use plastics, reducing waste and e-waste, adopting sustainable food systems, and promoting healthy lifestyles. It aims to mobilize at least one billion Indians and other global citizens to become "Pro Planet People" committed to sustainable living by 2028.

Website: <https://moef.gov.in>

GIZ, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH, often simply shortened to GIZ, is the main German development agency. It is headquartered in Bonn and Eschborn and provides services in the field of international development cooperation and international education work. GIZ has been working jointly with partners in India for sustainable economic, ecological, and social development for over 60 years.

Website: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/368.html>

Centre for Media Studies (CMS), Established in 1991, and the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) (www.cmsindia.org) is an independent, not-for-profit multi-disciplinary organization. CMS endeavors to conduct path-breaking Research, Capacity Building and Advocacy in Social Development, Environment, Communication, Media and Transparency issues to work towards a vision of Responsive Governance & Equitable Development.

CMS VATAVARAN is a pioneering green movement harnessing the power of films, forums and other creative expressions for inspiring environmental conservation and sustainable lifestyles. This movement uses the interactive mode of film festivals to engage wide range of stakeholders to impact policy, reshape perceptions and encourage practices for preservation and conservation of nature. It creates innovative, curated spaces and programs to highlight and discuss contemporary environment and wildlife issues. www.cmsvatavaran.org

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