

Press Release

New Delhi, May 20, 2021

Celebrating Biodiversity: Lockdown 2.0 Special Online Festival

A series of online programs from May 22 to June 8, 2021

On the eve of World Biodiversity Day, CMS VATAVARAN in collaboration with the High Commission of Canada in India, and #LeadtheGreenChange campaign of Delegation of European Union to India (EUDEL), is organizing environmental awareness online festival entitled “**Celebrating Biodiversity: Lockdown 2.0**”. The virtual festival focuses on biodiversity, climate change and environmental issues with the aim to inspire and encourage everyone to take action, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The festival is scheduled from May 22, 2021 until June 8. Beginning on May 22 to mark the World Biodiversity Day, the festival will continue to celebrate World Environment Day on June 5 and will end with commemorating the World Oceans Day on June 8. Based on the learning of similar series of popular online initiatives in 2020, this special online festival focussing on Biodiversity has been specially curated. The **18-days long celebration** will present number of online activities, including daily Award winning film screenings followed by questions and answers sessions with filmmakers and environmentalists; Webinar; Workshop; online Quiz competition and a special Session with the Oscar winner Swati Thiyagarajan.

Highlights:

- **35 award winning national and international films will be screened**
- **Daily online live Q&A session with the Filmmaker** will also be organised at 5pm IST.
- On World Biodiversity day, May 22 at 3 pm, online panel discussion on “**Covid-19 or the pandemic of abused biodiversity**”
- Half day workshop on the topic of “**COVID-19: Understanding the challenges and the solutions of the new world for education’s frontline workers**” is scheduled on 04 June, 2021.
- Celebrate the WED on June 5, 2021, an **online inter-school environmental quiz competition**
- On the eve of World Ocean Day that is 08 June, a **special online session from 3pm onwards, with Swati Thiyagarajan**

“In this COVID era, we are all challenged on various fronts and are struggling to deal with the uncertainty this pandemic has brought to our lives and work. As we all find our respective new normal, non-commercial environmental film festivals and forums like ours becomes very critical for keeping the spirits afloat by turning once again to programs to inspire and encourage everyone during the period of such a global calamity.” emphasized **Dr P. N. Vasanti**, Director General of Centre for Media Studies, parent organisation of **CMSVATAVARAN – Asia’s largest green film festival and forum.**

Further details and information can be found at organization’s website www.cmsvatavaran.org and its social media handles- @CMSVATAVARAN on Facebook and Twitter.

CMS VATAVARAN recognises and appreciates the support of its Partners:

- #LeadtheGreenChange campaign is an outreach and advocacy initiative by the Delegation of European Union to India and Partners, to highlight the potential and appeal of biodiversity conservation and

restoration, in practice, and to promote the socio-economic benefits of Biodiversity. The project is a call to everyone to raise their voice against biodiversity loss and take positive action to conserve the planet.

H.E. Ugo Astuto, Ambassador of the European Union said, *“Our planet is fragile: the international community needs to act cohesively and consistently against climate change and biodiversity loss. We need to act now, for the sake of future generations. The EU Delegation is glad to partner with this film festival to raise awareness and foster debate about these crucial issues.”*

- The High Commission of Canada in India and acknowledges Canada’s continued support towards climate action.

Mr Nadir Patel, High Commissioner for Canada to India said, *“As we work to overcome the challenges of the global COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that we sustain a parallel focus on critical issues related to combatting climate change, preserving biodiversity, and protecting the environment. I encourage everyone to fully engage in these dynamic online activities and take action to build a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable planet for future generations.”*

For media related queries, please contact:

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAM

1. ONLINE FILM SCREENINGS: Daily Film screenings

Daily from May 22 till June 8, 2021, a series of thought provoking and award-winning green films will be screened online. These films will be available free for streaming for 24 hours, and can be watched from anywhere in the world on the Facebook and YouTube page of CMS VATAVARAN. These films will be available daily from 10 am IST onwards.

These national and international award-winning films will not only be dealing with different aspects of biodiversity and ecological, environmental, wildlife and sustainable developmental problems only, will also be addressing the issues related to UNSDGs like Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), Goal 13 (Climate Action), Goal 14 (Life Below Water), and Goal 15 (Life on Land).

A total **35 award winning national and international films will be screened during these 18 days**. Apart from film screenings, **daily online live Q&A session with the Filmmaker** will also be organised at 5pm IST.

2. PANEL DISCUSSION

On the occasion of World Biodiversity day that is May 22 at 3 pm, an online panel discussion on the topic of **“Covid-19 or the pandemic of abused biodiversity”** will be organised. This discussion will try to understand the connection of the pandemic with the blatant and shameless destruction of the biodiversity. It will also try to find the answers of some of the most relevant questions of these times, like other major epidemics (AIDS, Ebola, SARS, etc.), is the emergence of the Corona Virus is not unrelated to the climate and biodiversity crises we are experiencing? What do these pandemics tell us about the state of biodiversity? Is there any connection between the blatant destruction of the biodiversity and Covid-19?

Some of the most prominent biodiversity and environmental experts like **Abi Tamim Vanak**, Senior Fellow (Associate Prof), Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), **Anish Andheria**, President & CEO, Wildlife Conservation Trust and **Siddharth Edake**, Fellow & Convener, Centre for Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services, Land Resources Division, TERI will participate as distinguished panel members. The discussion will be moderated by P N Vasanti, Director General, Centre for Media Studies.

The panel discussion will be screened live at the Facebook and YouTube page of CMS VATAVARAN.

3. TEACHER'S TRAINING WORKSHOP

Post COVID, the challenges for teaching and learning outside the traditional classroom have risen, especially for environment education and reconnecting with nature. The need of the hour is to innovate and implement alternative educational system and assessment strategies. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to pave the way for introducing digital learning. This pandemic has forced us (teachers) into a virtual world of teaching through different apps and devices.

A half day workshop on the topic of “**COVID-19: Understanding the challenges and the solutions of the new world for education's frontline workers**” is scheduled on 04 June, 2021. It seeks to provide a hand on training to these educational frontline workers by focusing on different innovative strategies so that they can be a part of the post covid education scenario and equipped with the the skill sets needed to become responsible and productive members of teaching world.

This workshop will discuss about challenge faced day-to-day by our teachers and will try to find out its solutions too. We will also try to understand that how central and state governments are trying to support teachers and educators (specially for environment education) to continue to provide quality education to overcome COVID-19 related school closures.

4. UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS: SPECIAL SESSION WITH OSCAR WINNER SWATI THIYAGARAJAN

Swati Thiyagarajan is a conservationist, documentary filmmaker and environmental journalist, and is a core team member of the highly acclaimed Sea Change Project in South Africa. She is the associate producer and production manager of the documentary film “My Octopus Teacher”, which won the best documentary feature award at the 93rd Academy Awards.

On the eve of World Ocean Day that is 08 June, a special online session from 3pm onwards, with Swati Thiyagarajan will be organized. This will be an invite only session exclusively for the film-making, journalism and mass-communication students. This session will help these participants to understand the process of making a social and environmental conscious film.

5. CELEBREATING WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY: ONLINE QUIZ COMPETITION

To celebrate the WED on June 5, 2021, an online inter-school environmental quiz competition will be organized and the winners and the participants obtaining more than 50% score will be provided appreciation certificate.

ABOUT: CMS VATAVARAN is India's premier environment and wildlife film festival and forum – it is aimed towards enhancing understanding, appreciation and shift in attitudes towards the natural world and to increase space for environmental issues in mass media and evolve a nationwide environment outreach framework. The festival reaches out to people from all walks of life including filmmakers, civil society groups, government organizations, environmentalists, researchers, conservationists, policy makers, activists, public and private sector organizations and students of all ages and is recognized as a calendar event amongst filmmakers, environment, wildlife and conservation sector. Its unique twin track approach of organizing competitive and traveling film festivals and environment forum has positioned it as one of the most prestigious film festivals across the globe. Since its inception in 2002, ten competitive and 54 travelling festivals in 41 cities of 25 Indian states have been organized. www.cmsvatavaran.org