



Report

“CMS VATAVARAN Lockdown Special Online Film Festival”

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 like ours becomes very critical for keeping the spirits afloat by turning once again to the environmental films to inspire and encourage everyone during the period of such a global calamity.

Taking this into consideration, CMS VATAVARAN team has discussed about various experimental initiatives, while working from home in a national lockdown since March 21, 2020. After much discussion the team came to this conclusion that in the time of social distancing online/social media platforms will be the safest and best way to reach a large number of audiences around the globe. Taking this in to consideration, the CMS VATAVARAN team thought of organising an online film festival of thought-provoking films by some of the most prominent environmental filmmakers of our time.

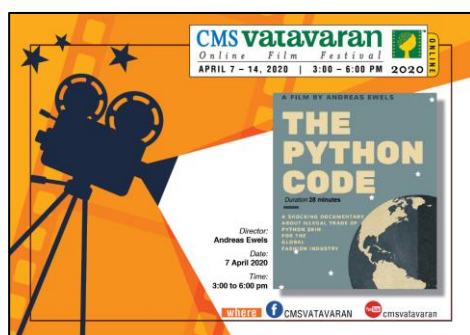
With this in mind, we reached out to the CMS VATAVARAN nominated filmmakers and requested them to allow us to screen their films for a fixed duration, free for all, available online on the CMS VATAVARAN social media sites i.e. the Facebook page and YouTube page for the “Lockdown Special Online Film Festival”.

The response from these socially conscious filmmakers has been overwhelmingly positive, although some, justifiably, were unable to share their films due to contractual compulsions but most of them were more than eager to use their films for a cause during these adverse situations. We are deeply grateful to these filmmakers who rallied to our request.

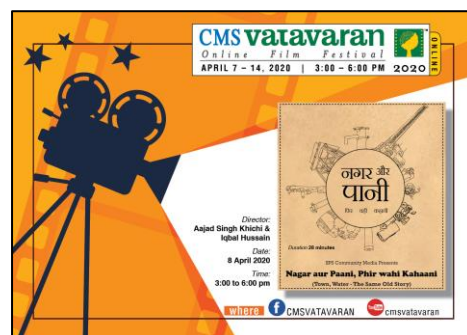
This lockdown special online film festival was divided in two phases and both the phases has received good response.

The first phase of screening was scheduled a curated selection of 8 environmental films - available free for streaming from anywhere in the world every day from April 7 to 14, 2020, daily from 3 to 6 pm IST.

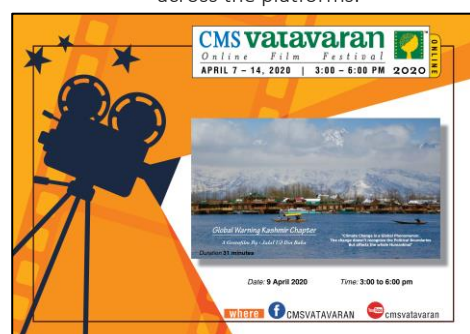
The films screened during the first phase of screening are:



7 April 2020: **The Python Code** by Andreas Ewels; more than 550 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



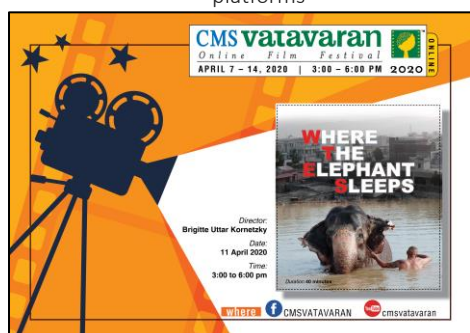
8 April 2020: **Nagar Aur Pani** by Iqbal Hussain and Aajad Singh Khichi; more than 950 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



9 April 2020: **Global Warning - Kashmir Chapter** by Jala Ud Din Baba (Jalal Jeelani); more than 1020 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms



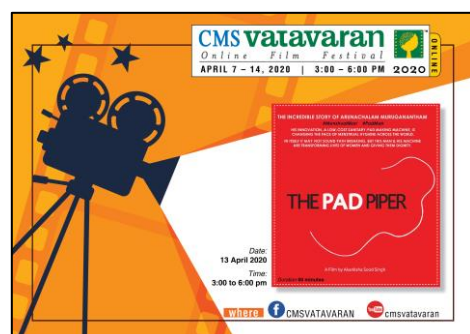
10 April 2020: **The Golden Thread** by Anoop Khajuria; more than 1000 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



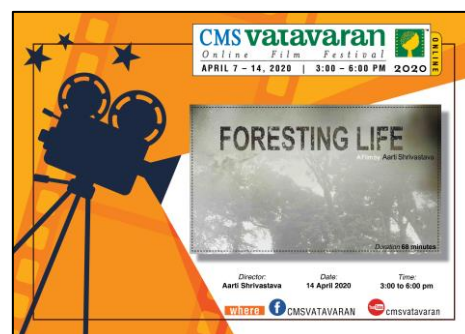
11 April 2020: **Where The Elephant Sleeps** by Brigitte Uttar Kornetzky; more than 875 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



12 April 2020: **Kotibanal** by Shrinivas Oli; more than 475 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



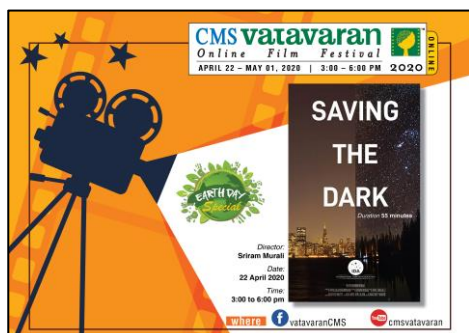
13 April 2020: **The Pad Piper** by Akanksha Sood Singh; more than 800 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



14 April 2020: **Foresting Life** by Aarti Shrivastava; more than 1575 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.

The second phase of screening was scheduled from April 22, 2020 to May 1, 2020. A curated selection of 10 environmental films were screened every day daily from 3 to 6 pm IST on the Facebook page and YouTube page of CMS VATAVARAN.

The films screened during the second phase of the “Lockdown Special Online Film Festival” were:



22 April 2020: **Saving The Dark** (an Earth Day Special) by Siram Murali; more than 750 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



23 April 2020: **Golden Toilet!** by Umesh Malan; more than 525 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



24 April 2020: **Gyamo Queen of the mountains** by Gautam Pandey and Doel Trivedy; more than 800 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



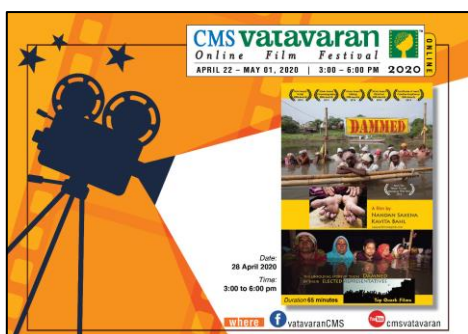
25 April 2020: **Thumbelina: The Story of an Xmas Frog** by Ashwika Kapur; more than 1025 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



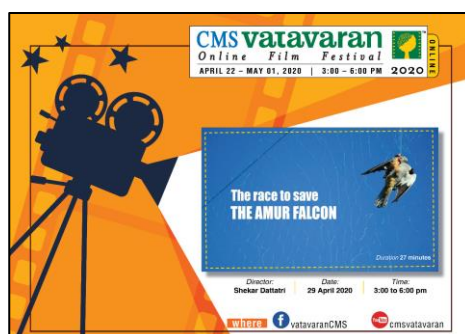
26 April 2020: **Education on the Boat -A New Hope** by KM Tajbiul Hasan; more than 350 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



27 April 2020: **Parvat, Purohit, Putra (Mountain, Priest, Son)** by John Seddon and Vaibhav Kaul; more than 500 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



28 April 2020: **Dammed** by Nandan Saxena and Kavita Bahl; more than 950 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



29 April 2020: **The Race to Save the Amur Falcon** by Shekar Dattatri; more than 600 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



30 April 2020: **Wild Meat Trail** by Rita Banerji and Shilpi Sharma; more than 850 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.



01 May 2020: **The real price of cheap medicines** by Jos van Dongen; more than 800 viewers viewed more than 75% of the movie across the platforms.

CMS VATAVARAN team has promoted the festival extensively on the various social media platforms i.e. YouTube, twitter, Instagram and CMS VATAVARAN Facebook page and profile and its various likeminded relevant groups with the help of event creation, cross posting of DMs, and by organising watch party during the film screenings which resulted creating a buzz around the viewers and generating interest in the online film screening.

Both the phases of this “Lockdown Special Online Film Festival” has got very encouraging response from the viewers, which is reflected in the 7 April to 30 April (during the duration of online film festival) FB reach report of CMS VATAVARAN.

In this duration:

The actions on Facebook Page of CMS VATAVARAN was up by 100%.

Page Views was up by 634%.

Page previews was up by 1600%.

Post reach (reach to people) grown by 3203%: 29825 new people reach (viewed the films post).

Post engagement up by 11686%: 14379 new reach.

Videos reach (watched): 12552 viewed, up by 62660%.

Increase in our video views by 197983%.

Based on the experience gained during the two phases of online film festivals and the feedbacks from the viewers the CMS VATAVARAN team has decided to organize a third phase of online film festival. Team has also realised that the timings of the festival (3 to 6 pm) needs to be changed to 5 pm to 9 pm. It will not only help the Indian viewers like school students which are busy in their online classes till 4.30 pm and the working professionals who are working from home during the lockdown get free from the work after 6 pm. So, by changing the screening time from 3 pm to 5 pm will help us to get a large number of viewers in India who were unable to join us earlier. At the same time, it will also give extra time to our viewers from outside India to enjoy the screenings.

During the COVID lockdown, the acceptance for the online medium/platforms for screenings has been increased in the filmmakers and the audiences both. Therefor the CMS VATAVARAN team has decided to continue this effort and include the online film festival permission section in its film festival term and conditions. It has also decided to organize monthly and special online screenings of the relevant documentaries and films on various environmental days.

The online film festival has got very encouraging response from the filmmakers and the viewers and the below mentioned quotes are proof in itself:

- During this time, people with creative ideas and brilliant visions are needed. The organizers of the CMS VATAVARAN are such people and have proven this by successfully organizing their online festival. With their project they have reached many people and made important environmental and nature protection issues better known and understandable. The documentaries shown were impressive and overwhelming. Only if man loves and understands the world he be willing to do everything to protect our planet. Thanks to the entire CMS VATAVARAN team for your commitment! Keep it up.

Andreas Ewels (ZDF filmmaker and director of the NATOURALE Film Festival Germany)

- These were really a very good initiative for enjoying some of the excellent films on Environment and Wild life. Mainly in such a panic condition of COVID-19 it was created some sorts of mental relief for the viewers. They enjoyed really some best films indeed. Specially in my country Bangladesh; I shared the screening schedules to my friends and my film colleagues and they enjoyed almost all the films. Thanks to CMS VATAVARN.

KM Tajbiul Hasan (Filmmaker, Cinematographer and Researcher)

- It was great to see India's longest running environmental and Wildlife film festival shift gears and go entirely online including live streaming. This might be the events and festivals will be held increasingly as we adapt to these strange yet interesting times.

Gautam Pandey (National Award winner wildlife filmmaker)

- All of the world needs healing and inspiration. While we desperately wait for the lockdown to be over and get back to our normal lives, the question I really wish to ask the world is 'what normal life do they wish to continue with. During these times when we really need to ask this question to ourselves, I really feel that the answer lies in the films showcased by CMS VATAVARAN during covid-19 lockdown. I really feel that these films should be available for wider audience to learn from and at the same time get inspired from.

Aarti Shrivastava (National award-winning filmmaker and Asia 21 IPYLI Fellow)

- Hats of CMS VATAVARAN. Putting up a green film festival during times of monumental exigencies speaks volumes about your "ConcernForCause" which indeed is commendable, praiseworthy & extends the message of nature & its bounties... How to prosper, progress & propagate the cohesive bond between nature, life on-ground, above in atmosphere & below depths is the only ultimate solution to humankind, health & wealth, peace & people. Keep Rising.

Jalal Uddin Baba (Environmentalism and award-winning gorilla film-maker)