

Inaugural Ceremony

The Puducherry Auroville CMS VATAVARAN was declared open with a gala Inaugural Ceremony. The eminent individuals present during the occasion were:

- **Chief Guest:** Thiru T Thiagarajan, Hon'ble Minister for Forest, Science, Technology and Environment, Govt of Puducherry
- **Guest of Honour:** Shri Maninder Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt of India
- **State Principal Partner:** Shri G Kumar, CF and Chief Wildlife Warden, Department of Forest and Wildlife, Govt of Puducherry
- **Special Invitee:** Dr V Candavelou, IAS, Secretary, Science, Technology & Environment, Govt of Puducherry
- **Knowledge Partner:** Dr K V Devi Prasad, Professor & Head, Department of Ecology & Environmental Science, Pondicherry University
- **Organising Partner:** Ms Sunaina Mandeem, Co-founder, PandyCAN!



The festival began with a lamp lighting ceremony by all the eminent dignitaries present during the occasion. Dr N Bhaskara Rao, Chairman, CMS welcomed the august gathering.



Thiru Thiagarajan, hon'ble Minister for Forests, Science, Technology and Environment inaugurated the festival. In his inaugural address he said *“Puducherry is the place for multi cultural and multi linguistic people. The city is getting replenished from the disaster which it met in thanae cyclone. According to Gandhiji, Cleanliness is more important than independence. The responsibility to clean the city lies with people. Though it's with government, people have equal responsibility to make it clean. Media plays an important role in the present situation to create awareness among the masses and CMS VATAVARAN is doing a great job to create awareness among general public with the collaboration of media. I hope that it will spread good awareness about nature and its importance to the people”*.

Three **Green Ambassadors (C Oviya, R Rajamanikam and S Govindan)** from Puducherry were felicitated for their remarkable contribution at the grassroot level in the field of environmental conservation.

Guest of Honour Shri Maninder Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt of India **said** *“Films are a powerful media for creating awareness. CMS VATAVARAN has been creating awareness about biodiversity conservation in all parts of the country. Nearly 39 festivals have been organised in 30 cities with the support of Government as well as with their partners”*.

The inaugural ceremony concluded with a the screening of a 13 minutes CMS VATAVARAN award-winning film *“Turtles in My Soup”* directed by Kalpana Subramaian on the illegal trade of fresh water turtles in India.

The ceremony was attended by whos who of Puducherry and Auroville including school & college teachers & faculty, civil society, government department representatives, media, environmentalists, filmmakers, etc.