**Travelling film festival CMS VATAVAVARAN to now headed to Agra, from Gangtok**

*The week long green film festival and forum was attended by more than 4000 people across 9 venues in Gangtok*

**Gangtok, March 17, 2015:** The 6th travelling edition of CMS VATAVARAN which was held at Gangtok from March 12 to March 17, 2015 concluded on March 17, 2015 with a closing ceremony and prize distribution. The chief guest of the closing ceremony was Shri R B Subha, Hon’ble Minister of Sports & Youth Affairs. Other dignitaries who grace the ceremony on the Dias were Shri K P Dahal, Chairman, Youth Development Board, Shri Kamal Chettri, Joint Director, State Sports & Youth Affairs alongwith Shri Nabin Kumar Naik, Zonal Director, NYKS, Sikkim Zone, Shri Sundeep C Srivastav, Head Coordination, CMS VATAVARAN and Shri Puran Chettri, Youth Coordinator, NYK, Gangtok.

Around 250 youth from six states of India attended the programmes. These youth were from Sikkim, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Odisha. A colourful cultural programmes were presented by the youth.

During the prize distribution, prizes were given to the winners of slogan writing competition and biodiversity quiz.

Slogan writing competition was held in Hindi, English and Nepali languages with the theme of biodiversity conservation. In Hindi Slogan Writing Competition Best Award was bagged by Laloo Prasad Yadav, Katihar, Bihar, 1st runner up in this category was bagged by Tribikram Podh, Sambhalpur, Odisha and 2nd runner up was Manish Kumar Bhagat, Katihar, Bihar. In English Slogan Writing Competition Best Award was bagged by Anukul Kumar, Katihar, Bihar, 1st runner up in this category was bagged by Silseng Ch Sangma, Tura West, Gars Hills, Meghalaya and 2nd runner up was Ms. Nirmala Limboo, Mangan, North Sikkim. In Nepali Slogan Writing Competition Best Award was bagged by Ms Sangita Rai, Tashiding, West Sikkim, 1st runner up in this category was bagged by Prabin Chettri and 2nd runner up was Ms. Dilmaya Limboo, Mangshila, North Sikkim.

Six awards were given to individuals in Biodiversity Quiz. Ms. Megha Theeng, NYC, Sikkim, Rajat Kumar Poddar, Kishanganj, Bihar, Sonu Shaw, Katihar, Bihar and Lall Hang Limboo, Dentam, Sikkim has bagged 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th prizes respectively. 02 consolation prizes were given to Anamul Haque, Bihar and Ms. Susmita Tamang, 32 Miles, Sikkim. The event marked the closing of the week long film festival held for the first time in Gangtok. The next travelling film festival will now be held in Agra from March 26-28, 2015.

With participation of more than 4000 people from across the state, Gangtok CMS VATAVARAN films touched the chords of the people with issues ranging from water conservation, environment awareness, wildlife conservation, marine biodiversity conservation and more. School students and teachers from different districts of Sikkim were invited for film screenings and filmmaking workshop. A total of 20 schools participated in the film screenings and workshop held at Department of Forest, Environment

and Wildlife Management, Department of Science, Technology and Climate Change and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, Gangtok respectively.

Collaborating partners of CMS VATAVARAN hosted and provided support to the various programmes that were organized in this film festival. CMS VATAVARAN had the support of Abhar Innovisions as the Knowledge Partner. Small Town Film Fest was the Environment Education Partner. ICICI Bank has been the India Principal Partner of the travelling edition of CMS VATAVARAN held in Puducherry, Amritsar, Raipur, Gangtok and now to be held in Agra from March 26-28, 2015. The festival has been supported by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India since 2002.

“I like to thank all those who supported and participated in this unique festival that uses award winning films to create awareness about our nature and wildlife. We are successful in our mission if we are able to motivated any one person to take action to conserve and protect your beautiful, rich and yet fragile ecosystems. ” said Ms P N Vasanti, Director General CMS.

The film festival kicked off with a gala inaugural ceremony on March 12 in the presence of Hon’ble Minister of Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management, Shri Tshering Wangdi Lepcha as the Guest of Honour. The inaugural ceremony was attended by officials of various government departments, students, media, representatives of NGOs and partners. Green Ambassadors were also awarded during the award ceremony. Mr Nosang Limboo was awarded for his efforts towards highlighting the richness of biodiversity in Sikkim through the discovery and documentation of butterfly species, wildlife tours and introduction of butterfly watching tourism. And, Ms Tshering Uden Bhutia was awarded for her efforts towards conservation of environment in Sikkim through wide ranging eco-tourism, Waste Management and Watershed Planning related work.

Panel Discussion on Biodiversity Conservation in Sikkim was held on the same day of the inaugural ceremony in afternoon from 03.00 pm onwards at Meeting Hall, Chintan Bhawan. Issues and concerns were discussed. Discussion was focused on rich biodiversity of the state and also looked at some of the key threats. It also highlighted key issues such as ecotourism and climate change adaptation for which the state is considered a pioneer. Panel Discussion was chaired by Dr Thomas Chandy, IFS, Principal Secretary-cum-PCCF. Ms Seema Bhatt, an Independent Consultant – Climate Change, Biodiversity Conservation and Ecotourism had moderated and presented an overview on the topic. Dr Usha Lachungpa, Principal Research Officer (Wildlife), Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department and Additional Director, Sikkim State Biodiversity Board had a talk and presentation on Biodiversity Conservation in Sikkim and its key challenges.

Dr Hemant K Badola, Scientist-F (Conservation of Biodiversity) and Scientist-in-Charge, G B Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment & Development, Sikkim Unit gave his presentation on Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change and discussed on the initiatives of Khangchendzonga Landscape in India. Shri R P Gurung, Chief Executive Officer, Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim discussed about the prospects and challenges of Ecotourism in Sikkim. Dr Sunil S Thorat, Scientist-C and officer on special duty from Institute of Bio-resources and sustainable development, Sikkim Unit, Department of Bio-technology, Govt of India talked about relevance of bio-resources database to biodiversity conservation in Sikkim.

The second day began with simultaneous program themes with Sikkim State Council of Science and Technology and Department of Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management hosting a filmmaking workshop and film screening respectively. The filmmaking workshop was conducted by cinematographer and former professor of SRFTI, Kolkata, Mr Tapas Das. The workshop was attended by journalism students of Sikkim University and school students. The participants were taught basic camera handling, photography and he elucidated the importance of environment and wildlife filmmaking. Schools were invited for the screening from all parts of Sikkim by the Department of Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management. Five award winning and nominated films were screened. Dam 999 by Sohan Roy, Corbett’s Legacy by Naresh Bedi, Timbaktu by Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh, A2 (A2-B-C) by Ian Thomas Ash and Saving the Ganga by Bahar Dutt. The films were well received by the students who were present at the screening.

The third day of the film festival went outdoors, with a nature trail. More than 50 students assembled outside Vigyan Bhawan to be taken to the Himalayan Zoological Park. Situated 3 km away from Gangtok, the park is located at an altitude of 1780 m. The students were taken on a trek for 3 hours led by Dr Minla Lachungpa, a biologist and a veterinarian. She also briefed the young students about the animal habitats in the region. Simultaneously, a film screening was also organized at the Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department for students and teachers. 11 schools from different districts of the state participated in the film screening. The films that were screened on the third day include- Tiger Dynasty and The Antartica Challenge: A Global Warming, Foresting Life, Earth Witness: Reflections on the Times and the Timeless. As part of a collaboration with the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, CMS VATAVARAN presented special film screenings for the youth participating in the National Integration Camp on the third day. A slogan writing competition was also held in three languages, Hindi, Nepali and English.

A cleaning drive was carried out in Paljor Stadium by the team of CMS VATAVARAN along with the youth participating at the National Integration Camp on the fourth day of the festival. Black Cat Division, Sikkim also approached CMS VATAVARAN for a special screening. Around 250 youth watched the film, Zor Lagaa ke—Haiya by Girish Girija Joshi at Paljor Stadium in the evening. The film starring Mithun Chakraborty and Mahesh Manjrekar carries an environmental message of saving trees.

The fifth day highlights included a screening at Rachna Books, in collaboration with the Small Town Film Fest. The film that was screened included Finland (Wildes Scandinavein) by Oliver Goetz. The screening was attended by the locals of Gangtok. The same day a biodiversity quiz was conducted for more than 250 youth of Sikkim, Bihar, Meghalaya, Assam, West Bengal and Odisha at Paljor Stadium. These youth are participating in the National Integration Camp organized by Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, Sikkim.

**ABOUT CMS VATAVARAN :** Initiated in the year 2002 by CMS, CMS VATAVARAN – India’s premier environment and wildlife film festival and forum 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 organisations and students of all ages and is recognised as a calendar event amongst filmmakers, environment, wildlife and conservation sector. Its unique twin track approach of organising competitive and traveling film festivals and environment forum has positioned it as one of the most prestigious film festivals across the globe. Till date 39 festivals have been organised in 30 cities of India. The travelling festivals are organised in state capitals and other important towns and cities. [**www.cmsvatavaran.org**](http://www.cmsvatavaran.org)

**For more information, please contact:**

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