

PRESS RELEASE

Unique Green Film Festival and Forum on Environment and Wildlife to being organised first time in Gangtok

August 14, 2021.

A unique three-day green film festival and forum is being organized for the first time in Gangtok. This festival is scheduled from September 15 to 17, 2021.

This unique green festival is being organized by SECURE HIMALAYA project of UNDP with support from the Ministry for Forest and Environment, Govt of Sikkim & Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MOEFCC), GOI and CMS VATAVARAN along with the ICFAI University, Sikkim. This is part of a series of '9th CMS VATAVARAN Travelling Film Festival and Forum' in four Himalayan cites of Uttarkashi, Gangtok, Lahaul & Spiti and Leh. All the programs in these festivals are free for all to attend and is open to general public at large.

The idea behind this festival and forum is to encourage conservation through using films, festivals and forums. In this mode, the festival will outreach and engage with to cross section of stakeholders, including Government of India, Media, Conservation organizations, Experts, Academics, Corporations, Youth and general public and to provide a platform for showcasing the SECURE Himalayas initiatives and programs.

Key Highlights of the Gangtok festival:

- ❖ A two-day capacity-building workshop from 15-16 September 2021, on MOJO Film Making and using videos as a tool for conservation; to be conducted by experienced and award-winning film director/instructor from FTII, Pune, at the ICFAI University Campus.
- ❖ One-day film screening of selected awarded/nominated CMS VATAVARAN environmental films on various other relevant environmental issues like water conservation, wildlife conservation, climate change, forest conservation and livelihood & sustainable technologies on September 17, 2021.
- ❖ 12 youth from the marginalised community of the project area of the SECURE HIMALAYA Sikkim project are specially invited to participate in the workshops and the film festival.
- ❖ Drawing and painting competitions with the selected students from different schools of Gangtok on September 17, 2021. The best three paintings will be selected by a three-member expert committee and will be awarded on the last day of the festival in an award ceremony.
- ❖ On the spot quiz competition on environment for school students during the film festival on September 17, 2021.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions only 35 participants will be included in the workshop. The film screenings will also be divided into two sessions of three hours each where only fifty people can be allowed to participate in each session. Strict COVID 19 safety measures, as per the direction of the administration will be taken into consideration during the screenings and workshops. Participants will be briefed about precautions before the program starts; during the program, and frequent reminders of these precautions will be shared.

Speaking on this occasion, **CMS DG Dr Vasanti Rao** said, *“The Himalayas and specially the Sikkim region is highly sensitive towards climate change and need special conservation efforts by all, including each citizen. Climate change is rapidly altering the farming of the region and hence effecting the livelihood of the locals. According to a study, Climate change can also cause a change in habitat preference. For example, the Red Panda of Sikkim which is the state animal and according to IUCN ranking a vulnerable species, may experience change in habitat as the temperate ecosystems which is the preferred habitat has started shrinking. By organizing festival and forums like CMS VATAVARAN, we can connect these local changes to larger global trends and discourse, and also introspect/discuss what we all collectively can-do conserve the same. We invite all residents and nature lovers to attend this festival.”*

For any queries, please contact:

Sabyesachi Bharti, Deputy Director, CMS VATAVARAN: 8826689218; sabyesachi@cmsvatavaran.org

The Government of India and **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, with support from the Global Environment Facility, are implementing a programme in the high altitude Himalayas entitled **“SECURE Himalayas - Securing livelihoods, conservation, sustainable use and restoration of high range Himalayan ecosystems”**, to ensure conservation of locally and globally significant biodiversity, land and forest resources in the high Himalayan ecosystem, while enhancing the lives and livelihoods of local communities. The project promotes sustainable management of alpine pastures and forests in the high range Himalayan ecosystems to secure conservation of globally significant wildlife, including endangered snow leopard and their habitats to ensure sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic benefits for communities in the selected high-altitude landscapes in the Trans- and Greater Himalayan regions.

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 taps into an important motivating factor for audiences everywhere: the emotional draw of connecting with a compelling story or character. 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 52 travelling festivals in 41 cities of 25 Indian states have been organized. *Website: www.cmsvatavaran.org.*