

Awards for Vasundhara fest announced

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pune: Hanamantrao Gaikwad, the founder of a house-keeping firm that has branched off into services like wind, solar and hybrid systems, will be bestowed with the top honour at the ninth Kirloskar Vasundhara International Film Festival (KVIFF) which will start on January 16.

"Coming from a humble background, Gaikwad set up this small initiative with merely eight employees. Today, it has spread to 70 locations and employs 45,000 people. His resolve to employ people from villages has helped in boosting livelihood options for the rural poor. This is why we have decided to honour him with the Vasundhara Sanman," said Virendra Chitrav, the festival director. Chitrav was ad-

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Virendra Chitrav |
FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

dressing a news conference to announce the seven awards that will be presented during the eight-day film festival.

Vidya Athreya, an ecologist who has been working on the issue of human-leopard

conflict for over a decade, will be honoured with the Vasundhara Mitra award for activists. "The Corbett Foundation that has been working tirelessly on reducing incidents of man-animal conflict will be felicitated for its work in Uttarakhand and Gujarat," Chitrav said.

The Vasundhara Mitra award for photographers will be given to Dhritiman Mukherjee, one of the best-known nature photographers in the country. "Before Mukherjee, most wildlife photography used to be close up shots of wild animals. He brought innovative use of wide-angle and fisheye lenses to capture photographs of animals in their natural habitats. His photographs brought several endangered and less known species into focus," said ornithologist Pramod Patil.

Abhijit Ghorpade has

been selected for the ecojournalist award and Bharat Bhushan has been selected for the green teacher award. The lifetime achievement award will be conferred on water conservationist Suresh Khanapurkar, Chitrav added.

Several activities and conferences have also been planned as a part of the eight-day film festival.

"We are very pleased to be taking forward our Eco Rangers initiative launched in October last year. On January 21, a conference will be held where 10 of the 60 colleges that are a part of the programme will make presentations on environment issues on their campuses and possible solutions. This will be a 'Green College, Clean College' conference," said Madhav Chandrachud, chairman of KVIFF.