



iFOREST

INTERNATIONAL
FORUM
FOR ENVIRONMENT,
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& TECHNOLOGY



**Divine-Grand-Digital
Mahakumbh of Unity**



CLIMATE CONCLAVE

SPEAKER PROFILES

16th February 2025 | Prayagraj

Speakers and Panelists



Yogi Adityanath

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh

Yogi Adityanath is the longest serving Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. A five-time Member of Parliament from Gorakhpur, he has played a key role in shaping the political landscape of Uttar Pradesh. As Chief Minister, he has focused on law and order, infrastructure development, and economic reforms. Under his leadership, 50 crore devotees have just taken a dip at the holy sangam at Mahakumbh!



Manoj Kumar Singh, IAS

Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh

Manoj Kumar Singh, IAS (1988 batch, Uttar Pradesh cadre) holds a Master's in Public Affairs from the University of Minnesota and a degree in Agricultural Sciences from BHU. He has served in key roles, including District Magistrate in several districts, CEO of Greater Noida, Joint Secretary (MoEFCC), and Principal Secretary (Urban Development), leading major projects like Namami Gange and Smart City. In 2024, he became Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh, also overseeing UPEIDA, Noida/Greater Noida, and Bundelkhand Development Authorities.



Anil Kumar, IAS

Principal Secretary, Department of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Uttar Pradesh

Anil Kumar is Principal Secretary with Department of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Uttar Pradesh. He has helmed the green initiatives and plastic free zones of the Mahakumbh 2025.



Aboobacker Siddique P., IAS

Secretary, Department of Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Jharkhand

Shri Aboobacker Siddique P., IAS (2003 batch, Jharkhand cadre) holds an M.A. and M.Phil. in Sociology from JNU, New Delhi. He currently serves as Secretary, Forest, Environment, and Climate Change Department, Jharkhand, with an additional charge of the Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Cooperative Department. He has held key positions, including DC of multiple districts, Mines Commissioner, and VC of BAU. He received the President's Award for Best Collector (Electoral Practices) in 2015.



Dr Anita Gupta

Head of Climate, Energy and Sustainable Technology (CEST) Division, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India

A distinguished leader in climate and clean energy innovation, Dr. Anita Gupta is the Head of the Climate, Energy, and Sustainable Technologies (CEST) DST, GOI. In more than 28 years of experience she has overseen India's development as a global leader in technology and environmental stewardship. She shaped the startup ecosystem in India through national initiatives, fostering over 175 technology business incubators at premier institutions.



Anoop Nautiyal

Founder, Social Development Communities Foundation

Social worker and founder of Social Development for Communities (SDC) Foundation, Anoop Nautiyal leads community mobilisation activities for environmental action in Uttarakhand. He co-edited the book *Making Molehills of Mountains* documenting major climate events, disasters and road accidents in the state. His work is deeply rooted in addressing the social, developmental, and environmental challenges faced by Uttarakhand and beyond.



Aparimay Shyam Das

President, ISKCON Lucknow

Aparimay Shyam Das, President of the ISKCON Lucknow temple, known for his spiritual talks and teachings focused on the Bhagavad Gita, often emphasising the importance of Bhakti (devotion) as the foundation of Sanatan Dharma; he actively promotes the practice of Krishna consciousness through seminars, satsangs, and other outreach programs within the ISKCON community.



Arun Kumar Saxena

Hon'ble State Minister (Independent Charge), Department of Environment, Forrest and Climate Change, Uttar Pradesh

Dr. Arun Kumar Saxena is an Indian physician and politician affiliated with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He represents the Bareilly constituency in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly and has been elected as an MLA for three consecutive terms since 2012. In March 2022, he was appointed as the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Forest, Environment, Zoological Garden, and Climate Change in the Uttar Pradesh government.



Arun Subramanian

Representative, Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam

Arun is involved in a significant project at the Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Vishva Mahavidyalaya (SCSVMV) a deemed to be University, Enathur, Kanchipuram, working on preserving and digitizing ancient palm leaf manuscripts to ensure their accessibility for future research and reference. He has mentored young innovators through the Atal Innovation Mission of the Government of India, and collaborates with universities to develop holistic management education.



Dr Arvind Kumar

Founder & Managing Trustee, Lung Care Foundation

Dr. Arvind Kumar is presently the Chairman, Institute of Chest Surgery, Chest Onco-Surgery & Lung Transplantation and Chairman, Medanta Robotic Institute, Medanta Hospital, Gurugram. He is former Professor of Surgery, All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), New Delhi and has more than 35 years of experience in public service at AIIMS.



Swami Atmashraddhananda

Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Kanpur

Swami Atmashraddhananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, is the secretary of Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Kanpur. He was the guide for Vivekananda study circle of IIT Madras for 12 years. He is the former editor of the hundred-year-old spiritual and cultural monthly of Ramakrishna Math, The Vedanta Kesari; and is known for his reflective writing and speaking style. He has authored a number of books covering Vedanta philosophy and Indian culture.



Avinash Dhakne, IAS

Member Secretary, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board

A seasoned administrator and policy expert, Dr. Avinash Dhakne has held key leadership roles across Maharashtra's governance landscape. With a background in veterinary sciences and an MBA from the University of Queensland, he has served in diverse capacities, from municipal administration to industrial development and environmental regulation. Currently, as Member Secretary of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, he plays a pivotal role in shaping the state's environmental policies.



Dr Chandra Bhushan

President & CEO, International Forum for Environment, Sustainability & Technology (iFOREST)

Chandra Bhushan is an environmentalist who is President and CEO of International Forum for Environment, Sustainability & Technology (iFOREST). His scope of work encompasses both global and local issues, from climate change and energy transformation to rights of mining-affected people and environmental governance.



Professor Chandramauli Upadhyay

Trustee, Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Varanas

Principal of JM Goenka Sankrit Mahavidyalaya and retired professor, Prof. Chandramauli Upadhyay is a distinguished scholar in Vedic astrology. Over 35 years of teaching experience he has occupied key administrative and academic positions like Head of Department, Department of Jyotish, SVDV, B.H.U., Varanasi.



Swami Chidanand Saraswati

President, Parmarth Niketan Ashram

A revered spiritual leader and president of Parmarth Niketan, Swami Chidananda Saraswati dedicated his life to selfless service, unity, and spiritual enlightenment. He combines his mastery of Sanskrit and philosophy with a mission to foster interfaith harmony and global peace. He played a key role in forums like the UN Millennium World Peace Summit and the Parliament of World Religions.



Gauri Singh

Deputy Director General, International Renewable Energy Agency

Deputy Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), Gauri Singh is a policy expert with over 30 years of experience in renewable energy and sustainable development. She has played a major role in shaping global and national energy policies including the development of India's National Solar Mission policy in 2010. She oversaw the planning and implementation of large-scale initiatives in Madhya Pradesh that drove down poverty and helped create sustainable rural communities.



Dr Maneesha V Ramesh

Provost, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham

A distinguished scientist and academic leader, Prof. Maneesha Vinodini Ramesh serves as the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Provost) of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham and Dean of the Amrita School for Sustainable Futures. She is globally recognised for groundbreaking work in disaster resilience including the development of world's first Wireless Sensor Network system for landslide warnings.



Sister Manorama

Senior Faculty Member, Brahma Kumaris

Sister BK Manorama is a Senior Meditation Faculty at Brahma Kumaris Prayagraj. Brahma Kumaris is a spiritual organisation that promotes Rajyoga meditation providing everyone with the opportunity to develop their spiritual potential.



Swami Mukundananda

Founder, Jagadguru Kripalu Yog Trust

Renowned Vedic scholar and founder of the Jagadguru Kripalu Yog, Swami Mukundananda is a spiritual leader with a background in technology and management. He is the founder of a yogic system called JKYog. His teachings help apply the wisdom of the scriptures in our daily lives by using a simple scientific approach.



Nilachal Mishra

Partner and Head of Government & Public Services, KPMG India

With over 20 years of experience, Nilachal advises governments on large-scale transformation in WASH, public health, skill development, and digital infrastructure. As Head of Health, Human, and Social Services at KPMG India, he leads key policy reforms. A recognized thought leader, he speaks at industry forums and authors influential publications.



Prabodh Acharya

Chief Sustainability Officer, JSW Group

A respected sustainability thought leader and Chief Sustainability Officer at JSW Group, Mr. Acharya collaborates with top executives in the group to integrate ESG and sustainability into business strategy across industries like steel, energy, and infrastructure. With over three decades of global experience in corporate sustainability, climate policy, and environmental management, he has played a pivotal role in advancing sustainable business practices.



Rajendra Ratnoo, IAS

Executive Director, National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM)

Executive Director of the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), Shri Rajendra Ratnoo brings extensive experience in disaster risk reduction and policy implementation. Under his leadership, NIDM played a key role in organizing the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) 2023. He has integrated disaster management into higher education and public health initiatives, making significant contributions to resilience building and humanitarian assistance.



Dr Rajendra Singh

Founder, Tarun Bharat Sangh (Waterman of India)

Magsaysay award winning water conservationist and environmentalist, Mr. Rajendra Singh is better known as 'The Waterman of India'. He has helped build nearly 12,000 Johads or earthen dams that collect and store rainwater. He has revived over a dozen rivers, transforming 500 drought prone villages of Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Karnataka into flourishing ecosystems.



Raju Nayak

Editor Director, Gomantak

Renowned journalist and Editor Director of Gomantak, Raju Nayak brings over four decades of experience in media and publishing. He has held senior editorial positions at The Times of India, Lokmat, and Indian Express. An advocate for environmental journalism, he has attended multiple UN Climate Change conferences and extensively researched Goa's mining industry. A passionate writer and cultural leader, Raju has made significant contributions to Goa's literary and artistic landscape.



Ricky Kej

Environmentalist and Composer

Ricky Kej is an Indian music composer, environmentalist and a three-time Grammy Award winner. Kej was conferred with a Padma Shri award in 2025 for his contributions to the Arts. He serves as the United Nations "Goodwill Ambassador" (UNCCD) United Nations Refugee High Profile Supporter, UNESCO MGIEP "Global Ambassador for Kindness" and UNICEF "Celebrity Supporter".



RR Rashmi (Rtrd IAS)

Distinguished Fellow, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

Distinguished Fellow at TERI, Rajani Ranjan Rashmi is a climate policy expert and Retd IAS officer. Over 35 years of public service he held the position of special secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change acting as a key climate negotiator and policy maker in the run up to the Paris Agreement.



Professor Sachin Chaturvedi

Director General, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)

A leading expert in development economics, Professor Sachin Chaturvedi is the Director General of the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS). He has been a pioneer in evidence based economic policymaking and South-South Collaboration networks. Among the 22 books he has authored/edited, "The Logic of Sharing" is considered one of the best volumes on international development cooperation.



Dr Sachin S. Gunthe

Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology Madras

A leading atmospheric scientist and professor at IIT Madras, Dr. Sachin S. Gunthe specializes in Earth system science, climate change, and air pollution. His research has focused on the role of aerosols in the Indian climate system. His contribution to the field will help reduce uncertainties in climate models. His academic leadership is helping establish a central University in Leh, Ladakh that will focus on climate science education.



Dr Sairam Bhat

Professor of Law, National Law School of India University, Bengaluru

served as an Adjunct Faculty at Golden Gate University and a Visiting Researcher at Georgetown University Law Center. With several published works on environmental and business law, he is also the Editor-in-Chief of multiple law journals. His work bridges legal scholarship and practice, making complex legal principles accessible and impactful.



Shalini Mehrotra

Zonal Coordinator, Heartfulness Institute, Shri Ram Chandra Mission

Shalini Mehrotra, Zonal Coordinator for the Heartfulness Institute in Lucknow, promotes Heartfulness meditation, guiding individuals toward inner peace and well-being. Under Kamlesh D. Patel (Daaji), the Institute integrates spiritual wisdom with science, emphasizing inner transformation for a balanced life. Through initiatives like the Green Kanha Initiative, it applies spiritual principles to environmental conservation.



Skand Vivek

Senior Editor, Dainik Jagran

An accomplished Hindi media professional, Skand Vivek Dhar has extensive experience in newsroom management and editorial leadership, he has been at the forefront of the evolving media landscape. He is a recipient of a National Award for Agriculture Reporting from the Government of India.



Dr Sujata Roy Abhijat

Associate Professor, Delhi University

Senior Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Delhi, Dr. Sujata Roy Abhijat is a distinguished scholar specialising in environmental ethics, gender studies, and social philosophy. She is a prolific author who has published several books that explore the intersections of environmental consciousness, ethics, and spirituality. She has also been an environmental consultant for important government projects, including significant engagements with the World Bank.



Sushant Sharma, IFS

Secretary, Department of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Uttar Pradesh

Shri Sushant Sharma is a distinguished officer of the Indian Forest Service, Uttar Pradesh cadre. He holds a B.Sc. degree and a Post Graduate Diploma in Forestry Management from IIFM, Bhopal. Throughout his career, he has held various significant positions, including Divisional Forest Officer in multiple divisions, Joint Director at the Forest Survey of India, and currently serves as the Secretary of the Department of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change in Uttar Pradesh.



Upendra Tripathi (Rtrd IAS)

Adjunct Professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Indian Institute of Science

Recipient of Indian Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration, Mr. Upendra Tripathy is the founding Director General of the International Solar Alliance. He was able to use 42 years of diverse experience across related sectors to transform India's renewable energy landscape. His leadership and innovative thinking have shaped policies and institutions, driving progress in sustainable energy, governance, and climate justice.



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