

# Woodpecker film fest to showcase 12 stories from NE



A still from *Tez*

## STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Aug 23: Twelve stories of hope and change from the North East, including Assam, will be showcased at the 4th Woodpecker International Film Festival to be held from September 15 in New Delhi. These films and documentaries from the region focus on a variety of issues,

including environmental conservation, women empowerment, homosexuality, forest protection, etc.

The festival will screen 94 films from seven countries and 35 cities this year, including several National Award winning films.

Talking to *The Assam Tribune*, founder director of the festival Narender Yadav said, "The festival and

the forum accelerate debate and discussion on critical social, ecological and development issues like environment and wildlife, health and sanitation, livelihoods, gender, children, etc. Our festival's vision is to showcase films that promote discussions, expand expectations, challenge attitudes and change lives. We are constantly experimenting to promote issue-based cinema globally and explore the power of storytelling through films to create a better world."

One of the films, *Little Hearts* directed by Manas Sagra, is set in the scenic backdrop of rural Assam. It is the story of two friends, Apu and Manglu, and their various adventures in the wilderness of the village. In this 14-minute film, the friends unknowingly indulge themselves in a terrible crime, which, in the aftermath, becomes a regular source of pain for Apu. How Apu overcomes the burden of guilt forms the crux of the story.

Another film, *Manas – Return of the Giants*, directed by Praveen Singh,

shows how the Manas National Park was destroyed by a two-decade war, resulting in an almost complete loss of wildlife. The film raises a query whether this National Park, which is being revived with the help of scientists and armed rangers, will have a secure future.

Other films and documentaries from the region include *Autodriver*, *Hygiene – A Tradition*, *Pakke Paga – Protecting the Hornbills of Arunachal Pradesh*, *Voices of Teesta*, *Wildlife Week at Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary*, *Tez*, *The Nest*, *Oh My Soul*, *Phum Shang*, *Tashi* and the *Monk*.

It needs to be mentioned that the Woodpecker International Film Festival (WIFF) is a globally acclaimed festival focusing on issue-based cinema. Launched in 2013, the festival is part of the 'Cinema for Change' initiative launched by CMSR foundation, a non-profit trust based in New Delhi. The festival is organised every year in New Delhi and showcases the best of alternative cinema.