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The Hindu Bureau

COIMBATORE/
UDHAGAMANDALAM

The Tamil Nadu Forest Department along with Government Arts College celebrated the International Day of Forests by conducting an awareness rally and planting tree saplings on the college campus.

District Collector Kranthi Kumar Pati launched the programmes by flagging off the rally.

Mr. Kumar spoke to students on the importance of forests. As an initiative to save forest resources and reduce the usage of plastic, the Collector distributed cloth bags to students. The event held under the theme 'Protect forest for a better future' was conducted in association with the Eco Club and NSS units of the college. Around 600 students participated in the awareness rally. The Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB), Coimbatore, also conducted a tree sapling planting drive to mark the day. IFGTB Director C. Kunhikannan inaugurated the programme and said that all

the destruction caused by humans could only be balanced by planting a greater number of trees.

Kannan C.S. Warriar, Senior Principal Scientist and coordinator of Environmental Information System (ENVIS), stated that 17 states in the country have achieved the target of 33% forest cover and Tamil Nadu stood in seventh place in terms of total forest area in India. Saplings of various indigenous medicinal and timber tree species including Ficus racemosa (Athi), Terminalia arjuna (Neer maruthu), Magnolia champaca (Senbagam), and Mimosa elengi (Magilam) were planted in the botanical garden.

In Udhgamandalam, an awareness rally to commemorate International Day of Forests started from the Collector's office ended at the Government Arts College.

A total of 130 persons participated in the rally, which was flagged off by Nilgiris Collector S.P. Arith. Participants held aloft banners calling to protect the Nilgiris' fragile ecosystem, protect wildlife, save tigers and grow more trees.