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To

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The Editor,

Sir,

I request that the following message may kindly be published in your esteemed daily:

"World Soil Day 2025 Celebration at TNAU"
Rally and 14th Dr. B. Ramamoorthy Memorial Lecture

To create widespread awareness on the vital role of soil, its protection, preservation, and scientific soil health management, the Department of Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry, Directorate of Natural Resource Management (DNRM), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore, in association with the Coimbatore Chapter of the Indian Society of Soil Science (ISSS), commemorated "World Soil Day 2025" on 05 December 2025 under the global theme *"Healthy Soils for Healthy Cities."*

As part of the celebrations, a Rally by Postgraduate and Ph.D. students of the Directorate of Natural Resource Management was organized within the TNAU campus. Dr. R. Thamizh Vendan, Acting Vice-Chancellor & Registrar, TNAU, flagged off the rally and distributed plant saplings to promote environmental stewardship.

The 14th Dr. B. Ramamoorthy Memorial Lecture was concurrently organized by the ISSS - Coimbatore Chapter, Department of Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry, TNAU, Coimbatore. The event was held in honour of the eminent soil scientist, Dr. B. Ramamoorthy, and was presided over by the Acting Vice-Chancellor.

Dr. D. Selvi, President, ISSS – Coimbatore Chapter & Professor and Head, Department of Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry, welcomed the gathering and highlighted the contributions of Dr. B. Ramamoorthy to Soil Science and Plant Nutrition.

Dr. P. Balasubramaniam, Director (DNRM), TNAU, introduced the distinguished speaker, Dr. P. Raja, Ph.D., FISSS, FCMSI, Former Principal Scientist, ICAR–IISWC Research Centre, Koraput, Odisha, narrating his exemplary contributions to Soil Science. Dr. Raja has established a state-of-the-art Climate Research Laboratory at ICAR–IISWC, Ooty, and significantly contributed towards advanced research using carbon flux towers. His prolific academic achievements include more than 200 publications, 100 journal papers, a cumulative NAAS score exceeding 500, and leadership of 33 research projects including 15 externally funded grants. Notably, in the past five years alone, he has published over 25 high-impact papers focusing on evapotranspiration modelling and soil resilience.

Dr. P. Rakkiyappan, QRT Member, AICRP (Sugarcane) & ICAR–Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research, Lucknow, delivered the Guest of Honour address. He underscored the increasing pressures faced by soils due to improper utilization, climate change, global warming, and the rising frequency of extreme events such as floods and droughts. He discussed technologies to enhance soil fertility and productivity and emphasized the urgent need to address plastic pollution and promote polythene-free practices.

In his presidential address, Dr. R. Thamizh Vendan, Acting Vice-Chancellor & Registrar, TNAU, highlighted that soil is a critical natural resource and a foundational input for agriculture. He reiterated the significance of World Soil Day in promoting sustainable soil management. Emphasizing the 2025 theme, *"Healthy Soils for Healthy Cities,"* he stressed the importance of protecting and preserving urban soils. He also highlighted technologies and innovative products developed by the Department of Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry, TNAU, and elaborated on its pivotal role in enhancing soil health awareness through research and outreach initiatives.

The Acting Vice-Chancellor then distributed prizes to the winners of various competitions to the UG, PG and Ph.D students conducted in connection with World Soil Day 2025.

The memorial lecture was delivered by Dr. P. Raja, who spoke on the theme "Unlocking Intricacies of Carbon Dynamics for Climate Resilient Agriculture in the Nilgiris of Western Ghats, Southern India." He elaborated on the carbon dynamics of the Nilgiris, noting its function as a strong carbon sink (-1.77 μmol m^{-2} s^{-1}), while intensive agriculture contributes approximately 1,31,562 t CO_2 eq. annually. He highlighted that replacing farmyard manure with compost or spent mushroom compost (SMC) enhances carbon sequestration and has the potential to reduce district-level emissions by up to 33%. He further emphasized that circular mushroom cultivation models can enhance productivity by 20% and offset 3,750 kg CO_2 eq. ha^{-1}. He concluded by stressing the need for future policies integrating forest conservation with circular soil and agricultural strategies.

Dr. K. M. Sellamuthu, Professor, Department of Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry, TNAU & Councillor, ISSS – Coimbatore Chapter, proposed the Vote of Thanks.The programme witnessed the participation of around 200 scientists and students including the retired Soil Scientists who have attended online and benefitted from the deliberations.

Public Relations Officer