



## Report on International Microorganisms Day 2025

Theme: “Sūkṣmānām Mahattvam – Tiny Creatures, Giant Impact”

Dates: 15th – 17th September 2025

Venue: Prasanthi Nilayam Campus, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning

### Introduction

The Department of Biosciences, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL), Prasanthi Nilayam Campus, celebrated International Microorganisms Day 2025 from 15th to 17th September 2025. The three-day program comprised a series of academic and interactive events such as eminent lectures, oral and poster presentations, a microbiology quiz, and an agar art workshop.

The celebration commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by five dignitaries:

- Dr. Raghunath Sharma, Director, Prasanthi Nilayam Campus
- Prof. S. Venketesh, Head, Department of Biosciences
- Dr. Pradeep B. E.
- Dr. Isha Sai
- Dr. Seethalakshmi

This was followed by the welcome address by Dr. Balaram Khamari, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Biosciences. Students from both the Prasanthi Nilayam and Anantapur campuses introduced the eminent speakers across the sessions.

### Day-wise Highlights

#### Day 1 – 15th September 2025 (Monday)

The inaugural day of the event began with soulful Vedam chanting by the students. This was followed by the first slot of oral presentations, where students presented their research work or literature review about fascinating topics before an expert audience and the jury. The sessions reflected both enthusiasm and scientific curiosity.

The morning continued with the Eminent Lecture Series, inaugurated by a talk from Prof. Bibha Chaudhury (IBAB), who spoke about cutting-edge developments in microbial research. This was followed by another set of oral presentations, giving young researchers further opportunities to share their work.



In the afternoon, the program branched into parallel sessions. A hands-on Agar Art Workshop was organized for boys, where seven participants creatively expressed themselves using living microbes as their medium. Simultaneously, poster presentations by thirteen girls' teams were conducted, showcasing a wide range of topics in microbiology and biotechnology. These sessions created an interactive environment where students could exchange ideas freely.

### **Day 2 – 16th September 2025 (Tuesday)**

The second day began with parallel activities designed to engage both school and university students. Twenty-six girls participated in the Agar Art Workshop, producing intricate designs that demonstrated both creativity and microbial handling skills.

At the same time, the much-awaited Microbiology Quiz was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved Class XII students from Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School (Boys and Girls wings) and the Eswaramma English Medium School. The second phase was for first-year undergraduate students from the Anantapur and Prasanthi Nilayam campuses of SSSIHL. The quiz drew enthusiastic participation and healthy competition, and the winning teams from both categories were later felicitated with prizes.

Meanwhile, nineteen boys' teams presented their posters, each comprising one to three students. The posters reflected diverse scientific themes and encouraged peer-to-peer learning. During the morning hours, students from Classes X to XII of Sri Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School also visited the poster sessions, providing them with early exposure to the world of scientific presentations.

In the afternoon, the Eminent Lecture Series continued with two distinguished talks. Prof. Steffan Backert (FAU, Germany) and Dr. Sunil Lakshman (inStem, Bengaluru) delivered insightful lectures on microbial pathogenesis and advances in molecular microbiology. The day concluded with the third slot of oral presentations, where young researchers once again demonstrated their scientific rigor and creativity.

### **Day 3 – 17th September 2025 (Wednesday)**

The final day began with two eminent talks by Prof. Swati Saha (University of Delhi) and Prof. Roland Brandt (University of Osnabrück, Germany), who delivered the prestigious Dr. K. Gopinatha Rao Memorial Lecture. Before the lecture, Sri Arun Sai Kumar Peketi introduced Dr. K. Gopinatha Rao, in whose memory the endowment for the lecture was instituted by his family. He then continued to introduce Prof. Roland Brandt. Following the lecture, Prof. Brandt was felicitated in a traditional Indian manner with a shawl and a memento by Dr. Raghunath Sharma, Director of the



campus, and Dr. A. Ashok, Honorary Professor, Dept. of Biosciences. The forenoon session featured the continuation of the lecture series with Dr. Shridhar Narayanan (FNDR, Bengaluru).

The post lunch session started with the prize distribution ceremony, where winners from the oral presentations, poster sessions, and quizzes were honored. The Dean of Sciences, Prof. N. Srividya, graced the valedictory function and personally handed over prizes to some of the winning students, encouraging them to pursue excellence in their scientific journeys.

The day also included students-lead programs including a screening of the documentary “Microbes – Evolution and Applications for Human Welfare”, a special story on evolution drug-resistance by Sudarshan Aryal, and inauguration of the DBIOS students’ club “RuBis.CO”. All the distinguished guests and speakers joined together in the club inauguration and published the first post from the club’s social media handle. This was followed by presentations by representatives of the six research groups currently working in the department of Biosciences. The event concluded with the formal valedictory address by Prof. S. Venketesh, followed by the vote of thanks by Sri Bhargava Sai M, and Mangala Arati, marking a spiritually uplifting conclusion to the three-day celebration.

### **Participation Statistics**

A total of 45 abstracts were received via the Google form. Out of these, 13 were selected for oral presentations (10 students – 7 boys and 3 girls, along with 3 research scholars), while 32 were chosen for poster presentations (13 girls’ teams and 19 boys’ teams).

The Agar Art Workshop witnessed active participation from 33 students (26 girls and 7 boys), producing several creative microbial artworks.

Prizes were awarded to:

- The top three oral presenters.
- Two teams each from the boys’ and girls’ poster sections.
- One winning team each from the quiz competitions (schools and university).

These events not only brought out the scientific acumen of the students but also instilled in them a sense of confidence and creativity.



## **Conclusion**

International Microorganisms Day 2025 successfully brought together students, research scholars, and faculty to celebrate the fascinating world of microbes. The event fostered scientific curiosity, creativity, and collaboration among participants, while also providing a platform for young researchers to showcase their work.

Through lectures from eminent scientists, interactive workshops, and competitive sessions, the program highlighted the theme “Tiny Creatures, Giant Impact”, emphasizing the vital role of microorganisms in human welfare and ecosystem balance.

The Department of Biosciences, SSSIHL, gratefully acknowledges the support of the university administration, faculty, guest speakers, and student volunteers who contributed to the resounding success of the event.