

# REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY 2025 CELEBRATION

15<sup>th</sup> May 2025

ICFRE-Institute of Forest Genetics & Tree Breeding, Coimbatore

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## Observation of International Museum Day (IMD) 2025 at ICFRE-IFGTB

ICFRE-IFGTB has been consistently celebrating various national and international days of importance related to nature conservation. In continuation of this tradition, International Museum Day (IMD) 2025 was observed at ICFRE-IFGTB on 15th May 2025. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) proclaimed 18 May as International Museum Day in 1977. The theme for IMD 2025 was “The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities.”

The Gass Forest Museum (GFM), managed by ICFRE-IFGTB, is one of the largest and oldest forest museums in the country. GFM has long been engaging the public—especially students—by offering scientific insights and promoting awareness on forest conservation, biodiversity restoration, and ecosystem sustainability. The museum’s “Edu Centre” serves as a vital platform for environmental education, where various documentaries on environmental and nature education themes are regularly screened for visitors and students.

On the occasion of IMD 2025, around 100 participants, including students, green activists, and members of the public, took part in the celebration. The event was supported by the Builders Association of India (BAI), Coimbatore Chapter, Omega Tribes, and Young Indians, and aimed to raise ecological awareness among the youth and general public.

Shri L. Joseph, Chairman, BAI, Coimbatore Chapter, and Shri Manoj Krishna Kumar, Omega Tribes, Coimbatore, graced the occasion as Guests of Honour. Dr. B. Nagarajan, Group Coordinator (Research), ICFRE-IFGTB, presided over the event. Shri B. Meenakshi Sundaram, Historian, Poet, and Senior Journalist, attended as the Chief Guest and delivered a lecture titled “**Western Ghats Unboxed.**”

Dr. K. Ganesh Kumar, IFS, CCF & Head, Extension, ICFRE-IFGTB, welcomed the gathering and spoke about the significance of celebrating International Museum Day. He elaborated on the history and legacy of the Gass Forest Museum, highlighting the dedication and vision of Mr. Archibald Horace Gass and the continued efforts of generations of forest officers, scientists, and nature enthusiasts in building and preserving the museum. He emphasized the importance of learning history through science rather than through hearsay or myths and highlighted various nature-connect programmes under the PRAKRITI initiative of ICFRE-IFGTB.

During his felicitation address, Shri L. Joseph emphasized the importance of tree conservation and environmental education. He reiterated BAI's commitment to collaborate with ICFRE-IFGTB in tree planting and nurturing initiatives to combat climate change—aligning with the “Green Kovai” mission, which aims to make Coimbatore more environmentally sustainable.

Dr. B. Nagarajan, in his presidential address, underlined the role of museums as community hubs that promote harmony and unity across cultures. He spoke on the relevance of digital transformation and accessibility in museums, urging that such innovations be leveraged to broaden public access to knowledge and heritage. He also encouraged the community to visit local museums to foster a deeper understanding of our culture and civilization.

The Chief Guest, Shri B. Meenakshi Sundaram, during his lecture on “Western Ghats Unboxed,” emphasized that the Western Ghats are deeply interconnected with the Coimbatore region's rich natural and cultural heritage. He elaborated on the region's exquisite spiritual customs that thrived under the rule of the Sangam-era Chera and Chola dynasty. He also explained how trade in South India was extended by Roman merchants along the Coimbatore route, which was known as “Rajakesari Peruvazhi,” a major highway that facilitated commerce in the Kongu region of the Western Ghats. His lecture further highlighted the efforts of King Rajaraja Chola in protecting and conserving the region's flora and fauna, as evidenced by various edicts. He also emphasized the importance given to forests by ancient communities, particularly through the conservation of sacred groves.

The program concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Shri G. R. Madhavaraj, IFS, DCF, Extension.

Following the formal function, participants toured the Gass Forest Museum, where Smt. B. Sunitha, CTO, and Shri P. Chandrasekaran, CTO, guided them through the museum and explained its historical and ecological significance. Participants were introduced to a rich and diverse collection of exhibits, including animals, birds, reptiles, as well as antique arms, woodcrafts, insects, cultural artifacts, and many other valuable specimens.







# IFGTB hosts 'Western Ghats Unboxed' event to mark International Museum Day

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The Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB) commemorated International Museum Day with a special event titled 'Western Ghats Unboxed' at the Gass Forest Museum in the city on Thursday.

The programme was aimed at raising awareness among students and the public about the ecological and conservation importance of the Western Ghats.

Supported by the Builders Association of India (Coimbatore Chapter), Omega Tribes, Young India, Gardeners Club, and other organisations, the event began with a lecture titled 'Where Science Meets Story: Explore, Learn, Protect' by B. Meenakshi Sundaram, an award-winning journalist.

Following the talk, P.



Journalist B. Meenakshi Sundaram speaking at an event organised by the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding in the city on Thursday. M. PERIASAMY

Chandrashekar, Chief Technical Officer at the Gass Forest Museum, conducted a guided tour for participants, outlining the museum's history and its collection of approximately 10,000 species native to the Western Ghats.

He emphasised the importance of forest preservation.

K. Ganesh Kumar IFS, Head of Extension at the

museum, said the event primarily targeted school and college students to deepen their understanding of local biodiversity, its history, and evolution.

Plans are under way to enhance the museum experience with the addition of an eco-park, a Western Ghats simulation, and a 3D theatre to provide a more interactive environment for visitors.