The Department of Microbiology

We ushered in the academic year 2021-22, at the Department of Microbiology by organizing an **Online Certificate Course** (40 hours), titled '**Basic Statistics for Biological Sciences**', from the 5th of July,2021 to the 16th of July, 2021, under the aegis of the **DBT Star College Scheme**. The objective of the course was to orient participants to basic statistics tools used in biological sciences. All sessions included a hands-on component for helping students to gain confidence in the actual handling and representation of



data. Fifty nine out of 70 participants successfully completed the course and were awarded graded merit certificates. Distinguished resource persons enlisted for the course include **Dr Rita Jain**, Assistant Professor, Department of Statistics, Ram Lal Anand College, University of Delhi; **Dr Anupama Mukherjee**, Principal Scientist, Division of Animal Genetics and Breeding, NDRI, Karnal and **Ms Deboshree Das**, PhD scholar at International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai and an outstanding Alumnus of the Department of Statistics, Ram Lal Anand College, University of Delhi, Batch of 2017.

Seventy-six students of the Department of Microbiology cast their votes in online elections held on the 11 th of August, 2021 to elect new office bearers for **Mikrobiologika**, the Microbiology Society of RLA college. **Abhilash Jeas George** and **Saumya Samridhi** were elected to the posts of President and Secretary, respectively, while **Pritika Baranwal** was elected unopposed as Vice-President, Mikrobiologika.



As part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav festivities to mark 75 years of India's Independence, the Department of Microbiology organized an Essay Writing Competition in August and September 2021. Many students keenly participated in the event.

In the month of September, **Mikrobiologika** organized Bio-matrix: An Online Science Quiz which drew widespread enthusiastic participation from different colleges from all over the country. The Preliminary round (with 88 contestants) was held on

the Quizziz platform and the final round (with top 10 contestants) was conducted on the Zoom platform, on 5th of September, 2021.On the 2nd of October, Mikrobiologika hosted an online interaction with three outstanding departmental alumni of the Batch of 2014: Rahul Sanwlani (PhD student, Mathivanan Lab, La Trobe Institute for Molecular Sciences, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia, studying the role of bovine milk-derived extracellular vesicles in cancer progression), Aditya Bajaj and Manasvini Markandey (Senior Research Fellows, Department of Gastroenterology, AIIMS, working on the gut microbiome and organoids). The interaction was very motivating and inspiring for all the attendees, which included current students and several alumni. The alumni guided students and patiently answered questions about research options in India and abroad.

In collaboration with the Centre for Entrepreneurship & Technology development cell (E-cell), Mikrobiologika organized a talk on the 23rd of October, 2021, about the BioNEST facility at the University of Delhi, South Campus, which would help students to gain hands on training and strengthen their understanding about a number of fundamental techniques used in the research field along with the facilities provided by the BioNEST to develop budding entrepreneurs. The speaker Dr Vijay Kantharia is the current CEO, BioNEST, UDSC. A total of 88 persons attended the online talk. The webinar was informative and appreciated by the participants.

An online departmental orientation program was organized on the 23rd of November, 2021 for the newly admitted first year students in order to convey necessary information to them and acquaint them with the functioning of our department. On the occasion of Constitution Day on 26th November, 2021, an online interaction with Ms. Aparajita Sihag (Consultant, NITI Aayog, GoI) was organized for the students of B.Sc. (H) Microbiology I and II Year. Students were informed about the history of drafting of our Constitution, its structure, salient features, the Preamble and were apprised of their fundamental duties. The session concluded with the students reading the Preamble as part of an activity organized by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. It was very informative and received enthusiastic participation from all the students.

Mikrovitae: The Annual Departmental Fest of Department of Microbiology, Ram Lal Anand College, was conducted from 10th February 2022 to 26th February 2022 in online mode, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to orient students towards the fundamentals of biological sciences, a number of competitions (Mikromic Strip, Doodlemik, Spin a Mikroverse, Idea Presentation Competition) were held as a part of this Annual Fest. In addition, Prof. V.K. Chaudhary (NASI-Senior Scientist at Centre for Innovation in Infectious Disease Research, Education and Training (CIIDRET), UDSC) delivered a talk on "Antibodies" - एक नाम, अनेक काम on the 25th February 2022. Participants and organizers enjoyed the process of putting together and participating in this event. The talk was delivered on the Zoom platform and was attended by over 100 students and faculty from several colleges.

Our students attended and benefitted from several Virtual Science Setu webinars organized by THSTI (3) and NIPGR (20), our Science Setu partners. These events enhanced student awareness about current research activities being pursued by premier research institutes of India. A BSL-2 facility was developed in our department, to facilitate safe-handling and research involving Risk-group 2 pathogens. New equipment acquired by our labs include a PCR machine, microcentrifuge and fluorescent microscope. A DBT-funded workshop was conducted to acquaint staff and students about fluorescence microscopy techniques. Two PhD scholars have associated with our department for the first time in order to pursue their doctoral research.

On the 7th of April, 2022 we hosted our first offline Seminar after the pandemic. The talk, which was based on **Intellectual Property Rights in Biological Sciences**, was delivered by **Dr. Chitra Arvind**, **who is a registered patent agent and an advocate** having a wide experience in techno-commercial and techno-legal background. Her talk was primarily oriented towards the basics of intellectual property rights, innovations, patenting and its importance in the scientific world with a plethora of examples, which kept the audience engaged throughout. Dr. Chitra tackled every doubt/question and cleared them beautifully.Our final event was the **Dr. Kusum Rani Gupta Memorial Lecture** held on the 21st of April, 2022, in honor of our dear colleague and teacher, whom we lost to Covid in April 2021. **Prof. Amit Awasthi of THSTI**; Secretary General of Indian Immunology Society who was the guest speaker, delivered a lecture in the area of Immunology, dwelling on the latest developments in our understanding of immunity. The engaging talk was appreciated by all the attendees. An **MoU was signed with the Sustainable India Trust (SIT)** to promote sustainable development goals as envisaged by the UN. Nine students from our department enthusiastically enrolled as "**Sustainable Champions**" for **Satva** and helped organize a talk on SDG by Dr Deepa Sinha, Asst.Prof. Ambedkar University, Delhi (11th January, 2022) and a 'Good Health Camp' for underprivileged children (9th April, 2022).

And last but not least, we bagged the "**Best Microbiology Department Award**", conferred by the Microbiologists Society of India, Delhi on the 8th December, 2021 for the academic session 2020-21. We hope to keep pressing on towards greater goals in the years to come!

Dr. M Salome John, Convenor Mikrobiologika & Dr Sudha Chaudhry, TiC Department of Microbiology





Students and faculty of the Department of Microbiology with the Principal on 25th of February, 2022 during **Mikrovitae 2022**, the annual departmental festival.