



## Editorial

As we enter the 12<sup>th</sup> year of publication, the journal is poised for a new phase of growth. This issue marks the beginning of many changes that have been initiated in our continuing quest for excellence-led growth. The journal will now be published quarterly, rather than the earlier half-yearly and will strive to increase the frequency further in the years ahead. This enables us to publish more articles from more authors in a timely manner. In terms of journal content, in addition to the editorials, reviews, research articles, short communications and book reviews, there will be a Forum section for commentaries, policy debates, conference reports etc. The journal will continue to publish special sections as well as full-fledged special issues on appropriate themes from time to time. PDF reprints will now be provided on request to authors free of charge, and the authors will be allowed to display them online on their own webpages or professional archives. Efforts are on to develop a full-text online version of the journal. We will endeavour to reduce the average time lag between submission to acceptance from 3 months to 2 months, and between acceptance to publication from 4 months to 2 months. In case of fast-track submissions or articles that do not require major revisions or resubmissions, our target shall be to complete the entire process from submission to publication in 3-4 months. It is also pertinent to mention that our rejection rate, which is an index of the quality of articles we publish, will also be improved from the current level of about 50 %.

In order to facilitate the editorial handling of this high turnover, the editorial team has been suitably modified with a new Executive Editor and a new editorial team. The authors are strongly encouraged to submit their manuscripts by email directly to the Editor-in-Chief, one of the Executive/Associate Editors, with a copy to the Editor-in-Chief. This should be followed up by sending two hard copies of the manuscript and CD version (identical to the emailed version) to the editorial office addressing Mr. Ashok Datta, A-155, Ashok Vihar, Phase-IV, New Delhi - 110 052, India.

PMBP also seeks to initiate a discussion in the plant biology research community regarding the avoidable redundancy in Indian plant biology journals and the need for consolidation. At a time when plant biology research worldwide is going through interdisciplinary convergence, there are at least half a dozen journals published from India covering plant physiology, biochemistry, genetics molecular biology and biotechnology. Most of these journals have a low publication frequency of 2-4 issues per year and an unenviably low international impact. On the other hand, Indian plant scientists have registered a tremendous growth in the number of papers published in international journals indexed in ISI and other important databases (Raghuram, 2004. Indian publishing : Enduring the boom. Trends Plant Sci. 9: 9-12). It is certainly possible and feasible for Indian Journals, to compete for a share in this growing pie, if we can reduce the fragmentation and remove the redundancies of Indian plant biology publishing and consolidate them into a single mainstream Indian plant biology journal. Ideally, such a journal should be published monthly in print as well as online full text versions, reflect the interdisciplinary convergence in plant biology in India and abroad, as well as provide a platform for debates and discussions on the policy trends and other issues that affect the research community and the farmers and agroindustries. The interrelationship between high turnover, low redundancy, high quality and high citation impact is well known. While the professional societies and the visionary Indian scientists who launched Indian plant biology journals made tremendous contribution to the identity and growth of Indian plant biology publications, it is now time for them to come together and consolidate their effort to bring the much needed international visibility to Indian plant biology. It is possible for multiple societies to launch or run a single journal without losing their own identity. For example, the Indian physics association and Indian Academy of Sciences came together in the early 1970s to jointly launch Pramana, which went on to become one the best known Indian journals in its field. In Europe, the plant physiology societies from individual countries came together into a Federation of European Societies of Plant Biology (FESPB) that brought better visibility, pan-European identity and synergy to some of their journals. The Indian plant biology journals can be easily merged into a single entity by a consortium or federation of the societies that run them, employ professional distribution and marketing help, and a joint editorial team can work towards making it a self-financing, high impact monthly journal. Some of us at PMBP have been informally discussing this proposal with the editors of other Indian plant biology journals and have been getting very positive signals. We therefore decided to place it for public discussion through this editorial, so that the concerned societies can come together to find the ways and means to realize the collective dream of having one world-class plant biology journal from India that we can all be very proud of.

We hope that our authors, readers, subscribers and others would continue to support us with their patronage and participation in this new phase of the journal's growth towards the heights of excellence, as well as our efforts to promote consolidation of as many Indian plant biology journals as possible into a single world-class monthly journal of high international visibility and impact. We welcome your comments and suggestions in this regard.