Indian J. Genet. Plant Breed., (2025); 85(4): 685-686

ISSN: 0975-6906

www.isgpg.org

OBITUARIES

Dr. K.B.L. Jain

Dr. K.B.L. Jain was born in September, 1933 in Karnal, Haryana. His primary and secondary education was completed in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh. He did graduation in Science from Hindu College, Delhi University, Delhi. He joined Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi in November 1955 and later did Associateship under the guidance of Dr. S.M. Sikka in the Botany Division of IARI, New Delhi. He obtained his Ph. D. degree in Genetics from the California University, USA with the IARI and Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship from 1965 to 1968. After coming back from USA, he joined as Assistant Barley Breeder and later became the Senior Barley Breeder (Scientist S4) in the Genetics Division, IARI, New Delhi.

Dr. Jain laid the foundation of barley improvement programme at IARI right after completing his Associateship in wheat. He collected several germplasms from different states of India and abroad and evaluated them in co-operative trials and identified superior lines (e.g. Taiwan 921 was resistant to aphids) to be utilized in breeding programme. He was also the coordinator of the Barley Co-ordination Unit of IARI, New Delhi Centre. His extensive work and contribution were instrumental in the development of about 17 pre-released/ released varieties with resistance to major diseases and pests, particularly aphids, for diverse environmental and stress conditions; Ranjit and DL200 were most prominent among them. By 1985, Dr. Jain joined the wheat breeding group of the Genetics Division and contributed enormously towards wheat improvement. He had also visited wheat programme at CIMMYT.

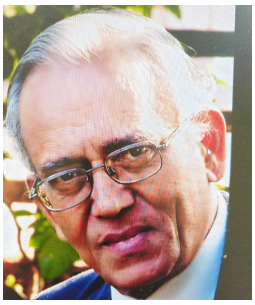
Dr. Jain was a teacher par excellence. He designed a course called "Quantitative Genetics" and taught it to the post-graduate students at IARI, New Delhi. He also guided many Post-Graduate and Ph.D. students. Dr. Jain had published over a hundred scientific papers in national and international Journals of repute. His compilation of pedigree of old and new wheat varieties of India is highly valuable and has been used as a reference document even today. Dr. Jain superannuated on 30-09-1993.

During 1973-1989, Dr. Jain served the Indian Society of Genetics and Plant Breeding as Treasurer. He proved to be an efficient account manager as has been observed during the International Wheat Genetics Symposium (1978) and International Genetics Congress (1983).

A righteous person, dedicated worker, a *Karmayogi* and a distinguished scientist Dr. K.B.L. Jain left this world for heavenly abode on September 8, 2025, at the age of 92 years. The members of the Indian Society of Genetics and Plant Breeding pays their homage to the departed soul and prays the Almighty that his pious soul rest in peace.

Akshay Talukdar, Editor
S.M.S. Tomar, Ex. Editor

Dr. R.D. Iyer



Dr. R. D. Iyer was born on 25 May 1935 in the village, Tirumangalam, Tamil Nadu. His initial education was completed in the local schools and colleges. He obtained his graduate and postgraduate degrees in Botany in 1964 from the University of Delhi, Delhi. After completing his higher education, he joined the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi as a Teaching Assistant in Cytogenetics during 1964-65 under the mentorship of Dr. M. S. Swaminathan. Later Dr. Iyer earned his Ph.D. for his seminal research on production and evaluation of interspecific hybrids, trisomics and mutants in Jute. His doctoral Thesis was recognized as best Ph.D. thesis in Plant Breeding and Genetics and was awarded with the ICAR Jawaharlal Nehru Award in 1978.

Dr. Iyer was a distinguished plant geneticist and a pioneer of plant tissue culture and cytogenetics in India. At IARI, he established the Anther Culture Laboratory with support from the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and made significant contributions to haploid production in crops such as rice, jute, tomato, *Hibiscus, Abelmoschus* and triticale. In 1976, he moved to the ICAR–Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), Kasaragod, as Head of the Genetics Division, where he established a tissue culture laboratory for clonal propagation of elite selections in coconut, oil palm, arecanut, cashew, cardamom, ginger, turmeric, pepper and cacao.

Between 1987 and 1989, he served as Commonwealth Advisor (Plant Tissue Culture) to the Government of Mauritius, establishing a modern tissue culture facility and training personnel in aseptic clonal multiplication of crops and ornamentals, including tobacco, strawberry, Anthurium, Asparagus and rare orchids. Dr. R.D. Iyer was superannuated from the ICAR service in 1995.

Even after his retirement, Dr. Iyer continued to contribute extensively to national and international research and capacity building. In 2011, he served as an FAO Consultant for oil palm tissue culture in Malaysia and Myanmar. He also worked as a DBT Consultant, and established a tissue culture laboratory at Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakkal, for the rapid propagation of endangered medicinal plants. In the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), Chennai, he set up a tissue culture facility for the conservation of endangered mangroves and medicinal plant species. Dr. Iyer initiated the Coconut Super Palm Survey to identify root (wilt) disease resistant and tolerant genotypes. He conceptualized an ideal plant type combining high nut yield with field level tolerance to root (wilt) disease.

He had served as a Ph.D. thesis examiner for numerous universities across India. A prolific scholar, he had published over 120 research articles and authored the biography of a Scientist and Humanist Dr. M. S. Swaminathan (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 2002).

Dr. Iyer passed away on December 11, 2025 at the age of 90 years at Karunagapalli, Kerala [The November issue of the Journal was published in December, 2025, so we have included the obituary of Dr. Iyer, who expired in December, 2025]. The members of the Indian Society of Genetics and Plant Breeding respectfully pay homage to the departed divine soul to rest in peace in heavenly abode

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Akshay Talukdar, Editor
S.M.S. Tomar, Ex. Editor