



From President's Desk

Artificial Intelligence in plant disease identification: need for biological validation in sugarcane disease diagnostics

Artificial intelligence (AI)-based approaches for plant disease diagnosis have expanded rapidly during the past decade, particularly with the development of deep learning architectures such as convolutional neural networks (CNNs), transfer learning frameworks, and transformer-based models. Numerous studies have reported very high classification accuracies for the disease identification in economically important crops, including sugarcane, rice, maize, wheat, and tomato (Alpsalaz et al., 2025; Gunasekaran et al., 2025; Upadhye et al., 2023; Ethiraj & Paranjothi, 2024; Vivekreddy et al., 2024; Lavhe et al., 2025; Pai et al., 2025; Qushtom et al., 2025). These studies collectively demonstrate the increasing interest in automated disease diagnosis for precision agriculture. However, despite the computational advances reported in recent literature, serious concerns remain regarding the biological validity, pathological reliability, and practical applicability of many AI-driven disease identification systems.



A recurring limitation in current plant disease AI literature is the reliance on image datasets that may not have undergone rigorous pathological validation. Several studies utilize publicly available datasets or curated image repositories without clearly describing expert verification procedures for disease annotation. Upadhye et al. (2023) highlighted the growing adoption of CNN-based frameworks for sugarcane disease classification and reported strong performance metrics under controlled experimental conditions. Similarly, Vivekreddy et al. (2024) employed deep learning algorithms for multiclass sugarcane disease classification and reported high predictive

IN THIS ISSUE

From President's Desk	01
Awards/Honours/Promotion	03
IPS Symposia 2025-26	04
IPS Election Result 2026	06
IPS Awards Result 2025-26	07
Obituary	08
Editorial Board - Newsletter	08

performance using image-based datasets. Ethiraj and Paranjothi (2024) further incorporated explainable AI approaches to improve interpretability in sugarcane disease prediction systems. More recently, Lavhe et al. (2025) proposed an IoT-enabled deep learning framework integrating Swin Transformer segmentation, DenseNet201 classification, and optimization algorithms for real-time sugarcane disease prediction. Although these studies represent substantial computational progress, concerns arise when disease labels and symptom classes are not supported by detailed pathological validation.

The problem becomes particularly important because AI systems fundamentally learn visual relationships from annotated training datasets. If the underlying labels are incorrect, ambiguous, or weakly validated, the resulting models may achieve high computational accuracy while lacking biological reliability. Lavhe et al. (2025) utilized a publicly available Kaggle dataset containing approximately 19,926 sugarcane leaf images representing bacterial blight, mosaic, rust, red rot, yellow disease, and healthy leaves. Similar dependence on publicly available image datasets has been observed across multiple AI-based plant disease studies (Upadhye et al., 2023; Vivekreddy et al., 2024). However, visual examination of several published datasets suggests that some symptom classes appear biologically overlapping or inconsistent with classical pathological descriptions. In plant pathology, diseases with similar chlorotic, necrotic, or

streaking symptoms often require molecular diagnostics, pathogen isolation, microscopic examination, or epidemiological context for accurate confirmation. Consequently, visual symptom classification alone may not always provide sufficient diagnostic certainty.

Another major challenge in current AI research is the mismatch between curated image datasets and actual agricultural field conditions. Most published studies rely on images captured under controlled conditions using isolated leaves, uniform backgrounds, and standardized lighting. Upadhye et al. (2023) and Ethiraj and Paranjothi (2024) both reported high classification performance using structured datasets collected under relatively controlled imaging conditions. Lavhe et al. (2025) additionally applied extensive preprocessing and augmentation procedures, including image resizing, cropping, flipping, zooming, and rotational transformations. While these methods improve computational robustness, they do not adequately reproduce real field environments where diagnosis is complicated by overlapping foliage, mixed infections, nutrient deficiencies, environmental stress, insect injury, shadows, and cultivar-specific symptom variation. Models trained exclusively on curated datasets may therefore perform poorly when deployed under natural agricultural conditions.

The biological complexity of plant disease diagnosis is frequently underestimated in AI-focused studies. Diseases such as red rot, rust, yellow leaf disease, and bacterial blight often exhibit overlapping visual symptoms during different stages of disease progression. Moreover, abiotic disorders, including nutrient deficiencies, drought stress, herbicide injury, and senescence, can produce symptoms visually similar to pathogen-induced infections. Despite this complexity, many studies classify diseases solely from leaf photographs without reporting laboratory confirmation procedures or involvement of trained plant pathologists. Vivekreddy et al. (2024), Ethiraj and Paranjothi (2024), and Lavhe et al. (2025) all focused primarily on computational performance metrics such as precision, recall, F1-score, and area under the curve (AUC), while comparatively limited attention was given to pathological confirmation of disease categories. This imbalance between computational sophistication and

biological validation represents an important limitation in current AI-based plant pathology research.

Another concern involves the possibility of dataset leakage and artificial inflation of model accuracy. Public image repositories frequently contain duplicated or highly similar images, and extensive augmentation procedures may unintentionally introduce related samples into both training and testing subsets. Such practices can produce overly optimistic performance estimates while reducing real-world generalization capacity. Lavhe et al. (2025) reported F1-scores approaching 0.945 and AUC values of 0.93, whereas other studies similarly reported classification accuracies exceeding 95% (Upadhye et al., 2023; Ethiraj & Paranjothi, 2024). Although these results appear promising, exceptionally high-performance values in biologically complex multiclass disease systems should be interpreted cautiously unless validated using independent field datasets collected under diverse agroecological conditions.

The increasing use of explainable artificial intelligence (XAI) methods, including Grad-CAM, attention maps, and Local Interpretable Model-Agnostic Explanations (LIME), has also contributed to the perception that interpretability ensures biological reliability. Ethiraj and Paranjothi (2024) integrated explainable AI approaches to visualize disease prediction patterns in sugarcane leaves. However, interpretability tools only explain which visual features influence model decisions; they cannot verify whether the learned relationships are biologically correct. If datasets contain incorrect labels or biologically inconsistent symptoms, explainable AI methods merely provide explanations for inaccurate learning patterns. Therefore, computational interpretability cannot replace expert pathological validation.

Despite these concerns, artificial intelligence remains an important and potentially transformative tool for agricultural disease diagnostics. The challenge is not the use of AI itself, but rather the lack of interdisciplinary integration between computational researchers and plant pathology experts. Future research should prioritize expert-validated disease annotation protocols, inclusion of abiotic stress symptoms as confounding classes, field-acquired datasets collected across multiple environments, and independent external validation procedures.

Transparent reporting of dataset origin, annotation methodology, augmentation practices, and diagnostic uncertainty should become standard practice in AI-based plant pathology research. In addition, molecular confirmation and laboratory diagnostics should be incorporated whenever feasible, particularly for diseases with overlapping visual characteristics.

In conclusion, recent advances in AI-based plant disease identification demonstrate substantial computational potential but simultaneously reveal significant biological and pathological limitations. High classification accuracies alone do not guarantee scientific reliability when datasets lack adequate validation or fail to represent realistic field conditions. Current trends in sugarcane disease AI research indicate a growing need for stronger collaboration between computer scientists, plant pathologists, agronomists, and field diagnosticians. Such issues in other crops need detailed investigation and discussion to utilize AI technology to resolve major disease problems in the field. The future success of AI in plant pathology will depend not only on advances in deep learning architectures but also on rigorous biological validation, realistic field benchmarking, and interdisciplinary scientific accountability.

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Awards/Honours/Promotions

Dr. Suresh Lingadahalli Mahabaleshwara (Suresh L.M.), CIMMYT, ICRAF, Nairobi, Kenya has been honoured with the Africa Region Food Security Leadership Award for his contributions to managing Maize Lethal Necrosis (MLN) across Sub-Saharan Africa. The recognition was jointly conferred by national agricultural research systems, plant protection organizations and seed sector partners.

MLN, first reported in Kenya in 2011, rapidly spread across eastern and central Africa, severely threatening maize production and food security. During his 11 years with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), Dr. Suresh led major regional efforts

on MLN surveillance, diagnostics, resistant breeding and seed health systems. The award recognizes a decade of science-driven collaboration that has significantly improved disease preparedness, seed security and resilience of maize systems in Africa.



Dr. Efath Shahnaz, Professor (Plant Pathology), Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-Kashmir), India, has received two international recognitions during 2026 for her contributions to the field of plant pathology. She has been selected for the Global Membership Program (Two-Calendar Year Sponsored Membership) and the 2026 Books for the World Program Award of the American Phytopathological Society (APS).

IPS Awards Presented during IPS National Conference 2025–26

The Indian Phytopathological Society (IPS) presented its prestigious awards and honours during the IPS National Conference 2025–26 in recognition of outstanding contributions in plant pathology, education, research, and professional excellence.

The **A.P. Misra Lifetime Achievement Award** was presented to **Dr. Pranjib K. Chakrabarty**, Former Member (Plant Sciences), ASRB and former ADG (PP&B), New Delhi, and **IPS Recognition Award** was presented to **Prof. Srikanta Das** (BCKV, Mohanpur, West Bengal), **Dr. M.S. Patil** (UAS, Dharwad, Karnataka) and **Dr. Pratibha Sharma** (ICAR-IARI, New Delhi) for their distinguished contributions to the field.

The Society also honoured the following distinguished scientists with its various awards during the conference:

K.C. Mehta and Manoranjan Mitra Award: Dr. Pramod Prasad, ICAR-IIWBR, Regional Station, Shimla, HP

J.F. Dastur Memorial Award: Dr. A. Ishwara Bhat, ICAR-IISR, Kozhikode, Kerala

IPS Best Corporate Award

- (i) Dr. Amitava Sanyal, Sumitomo Chemical India Pvt. New Delhi
- (ii) Shri Rajju D. Shroff, UPL, Mumbai, Maharashtra

S.P. Raychaudhuri Memorial Lecture: Dr. P. Chowdappa, Bangalore, Karnataka

Mundkur Memorial Award: Dr. Ramesh Chand, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

A.N. Mukhopadhyay Oration Award (2025): Dr. Gururaj Sunkad, UAS, Raichur, Karnataka

A.N. Mukhopadhyay Oration Award (2023): Dr. Arup Mukherjee, ICAR-NRRI, Cuttack, Odisha

D.P. Misra & R.N. Pandey IPS Best Women Scientist Award: Dr. Efath Shahnaz, SKUAST-K, Srinagar, J&K

S. Sinha Memorial Award: Dr. Prem Lal Kashyap, ICAR-IIWBR, Karnal, Haryana

Sharda Lele Memorial Award: Dr. R. Selvarajan, ICAR-NRC for Banana, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu

A.K. Sarbhoy Memorial Award: Dr. Kamal Dev Sharma, CSKHPKV, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh

M.K. Patel Memorial Young Scientist Award: Dr. Sajad Un Nabi, ICAR-CITH, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir

S.N. Dasgupta Memorial Award: Dr. Sudheer Kumar, Regional Center-IIPR, Bikaner, Rajasthan

The title of **Fellow of Indian Phytopathological Society (FPSI)** was conferred upon eleven eminent scientists in recognition of their significant contributions to plant pathology and the Society.

- (i) Dr. Sunita Mahapatra, BCKV, Mohanpur, West Bengal
- (ii) Dr. Ashwini Charpe, Dr. PDKV, Akola, Maharashtra
- (iii) Dr. Dipak T. Nagrale, ICAR-CICR, Nagpur, Maharashtra
- (iv) Dr. Ritu Bala, PAU, Ludhiana, Punjab
- (v) Dr. S. Chandra Nayaka, University of Mysore, Mysuru, Karnataka
- (vi) Dr. Vivek Singh, ANDUAT, Kumarganj, Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh
- (vii) Dr. V. Venkataravanappa, ICAR-IIHR, Bengaluru, Karnataka
- (viii) Dr. Gajendra Jagtap, VNMKV, Parbhani, Maharashtra

(ix) Dr. Shankara S. Bhat, Mysuru, Karnataka

(x) Dr. Supriya Chakraborty, JNU, New Delhi

(xi) Dr. Anand Kumar Tewari, GBPUA&T, Pantnagar, Uttarakhand

Under the **Prof. M.J. Narasimhan Academic Merit Award 2025–26**, a total of 14 candidates from seven zones participated. **Dr. Halima Khatoon, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi**, and **Ms. Rosie Brahma, AAU, Jorhat, Assam**, were selected for the award, while twelve other candidates received the commendation awards for their research presentations.

For the **APS–IPS Travel Sponsorship Award**, four candidates representing three zones participated in the contest, and all participants were recommended for final selection by the American Phytopathological Society (APS), USA.

- (i) Mr. R.K. Mohana Pradeep, *TNAU, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu* (Title: Functional validation of Pelota-like gene in tomato defense against begomo viruses through CRISPR/Cas9)
- (ii) Mr. Gaurav Y. Rakhonde, *UAS, GKVK, Bengaluru, Karnataka* (Title: Secondary metabolites of endophytes in postharvest diseases management of strawberry)
- (iii) Mr. Meghanath Dasari, *SKUAST-Kashmir, Shalimar, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir* (Title: Genetic interactions between dominant and recessive resistance genes conferring resistance to BCMV and BCMNV in common bean)
- (iv) Ms. Alinaj Yasin, *AAU, Jorhat, Assam* (Title: Dissecting *Ralstonia pseudosolanacearum* colonization and tomato defense responses through grafting, fluorescent reporter-based tracking, and transcriptomic profiling)

IPS Symposia 2025-26

IPS Central Zone Symposium

IPS Central Zone Symposium and SAS National Conference on “Integrated Approaches for Managing Emerging and Re-Emerging Plant Pathogens” was organized by Indian Phytopathological Society (Central Zone) and Society of Agricultural Scientists, Tirupati during 20-21 January 2026. More than 150 delegates

participated in the conference. This conference was organized by Dr. M.K. Jyosthna, Zonal President and Dr. Pradeep Manyam, Zonal Councillor of IPS-CZ.

IPS Delhi Zone Symposium

The Indian Phytopathological Society (IPS), Delhi Zone, in collaboration with ICAR-NIPB and ICAR-NRIIPM, successfully organized a National Symposium on “Integrating Pathogenomics and Eco-Friendly Approaches for Sustainable Plant Health” at ICAR-NIPB, New Delhi, on 23rd January 2026 featuring a distinguished Inaugural Session graced by Dr. D.K. Yadava, DDG (Crop Science), ICAR, Dr. Poonam Jasrotia, ADG (PP&B), ICAR, Dr. P.K. Rai, Director, ICAR-NIBSM, Raipur, and Dr. R.C. Bhattacharya, Director, ICAR-NIPB. A thought-provoking Plenary Lecture by Dr. T.R. Sharma, ICAR-National Professor & BP Pal Chair, emphasizing next-generation omics and pathogenomics for sustainable plant health. The symposium featured several invited lectures by eminent scientists working in the area of plant health, along with oral and poster presentations by young researchers and students. The inspiring Valedictory Session, chaired by Dr. R.C. Bhattacharya, with addresses by Dr. Raman Thangavelu, Director, ICAR-NRIIPM, Dr. P.K. Rai, Director, ICAR-NIBSM, Raipur, Dr. J.C. Rana, Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT, and Chief Guest Dr. T. Mohapatra, Chairperson,



PPVFRA, providing an excellent platform for scientists, young researchers, and students to exchange ideas and showcase innovations in plant pathology. This conference was organized by Dr. Ashish Kumar, Zonal President and Dr. Mukesh Kumar Khokhar, Zonal Councillor of IPS-DZ.

IPS Mid-Eastern Zone Symposium

The conference commenced on 28 January 2026 with the Inaugural Session, graced by eminent scientists, academic leaders, and IPS office bearers. The inaugural addresses emphasized the urgent need to integrate classical plant pathology with emerging disciplines such as microbiome science, genomics, metabolomics, artificial intelligence, and translational research, particularly under the challenges posed by climate change and emerging pathogens. The scientific programme comprised multiple well-structured technical sessions, plenary lectures, invited talks, oral and poster presentations, covering a broad and contemporary spectrum of plant pathology and microbial sciences. In detailed about Scientific Programme and Technical Sessions The scientific programme was meticulously structured into seven on-campus technical sessions on 28 January 2026 and five online technical sessions on 29 January 2026, supported by plenary lectures, invited talks, oral and poster presentations, and stakeholder interaction sessions. In total, the conference engaged more than 80 session chairpersons, co-chairpersons, and rapporteurs, ensuring high-quality moderation and documentation. Across all sessions, the conference featured over 90 oral presentations and more than 110 poster presentations, reflecting robust scientific engagement by scientists, Ph.D. scholars, SRFs, young professionals, and students. More than 260 delegates participated in the conference. This conference was organized by Dr. Harsh Vardhan Singh, Zonal President and Dr. Abhijeet S. Kashyap of IPS-Mid-Eastern Zone.



National Conference on Crop Health and Sustainable Plant Disease Management Organized at BCKV

The Indian Phytopathological Society (IPS), New Delhi, in collaboration with Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya (BCKV), Mohanpur, successfully organized the three-day National Conference on “**Current Perspectives on Crop Health and Sustainable Plant Disease Management**” during February 18–20, 2026 at the Farmers' Academy and Convention Centre (FACC), BCKV, Kalyani, West Bengal.

The conference witnessed participation of nearly 300 scientists, researchers, agricultural officers, industry representatives and farmers from across the country to discuss emerging challenges and innovative approaches in crop health and sustainable disease management.

The conference was inaugurated by **Shri Pradip Kumar Mazumdar**, Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, Panchayat & Rural Development and Co-operation, Government of West Bengal, who highlighted the importance of sustainable disease management practices for enhancing farmers' income and ensuring agricultural resilience under changing climatic conditions.

Distinguished dignitaries present on the occasion included Dr. Ashok K. Patra, Vice-Chancellor, BCKV; Dr. C.D. Mayee, Former Chairman, ASRB; Dr. P.K. Chakrabarty, Former Member, ASRB; Dr. Dinesh Singh, President, IPS; and Dr. Kajal Biswas, Secretary, IPS. Dr. B.N. Panja, Organizing President, and Dr. Goutam Mondal, Organizing Secretary, outlined the objectives and significance of the conference.

Technical sessions deliberated on emerging disease challenges under climate change, economic impacts of plant diseases, integrated disease management approaches, and the increasing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in disease diagnosis, predictive analytics, and crop health monitoring. An exhibition showcasing advanced agricultural technologies, biological products and innovative crop protection solutions was also organized alongside the conference.

The conference concluded with emphasis on strengthening climate-resilient agriculture through integration of scientific research, technological

innovation and policy support for sustainable crop production and food security.



IPS Election Result 2026

During the conference, the results of the **IPS Elections 2026** were announced. **Dr. Rajendra Gade** (Dr. PDKV, Akola, Maharashtra) was elected as President-Elect (2026), **Dr. Malkhan Singh Gurjar** (ICAR-IARI, New Delhi) as Secretary (2026–2028), and **Dr. Deeba Kamil** (ICAR-IARI, New Delhi) as Treasurer (2026–2028). Elections for zonal chapters (2026) were also completed for various IPS regions across the country as follows.

Zonal President (Central Zone): Dr. Kuldeep Singh Jadon, ICAR-CAZRI, Jodhpur, Rajasthan

Zonal Councillor (Central Zone): Dr. Laxman Singh Rajput, ICAR-CAZRI, Jodhpur, Rajasthan

Zonal President (Delhi Zone): Dr. V. Shanmugam, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi

Zonal Councillor (Delhi Zone): Dr. Ganesan Prakash, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi

Zonal President (Eastern Zone): Dr. Ayon Roy, UBKV, Cooch Behar, West Bengal

Zonal Councillor (Eastern Zone): Dr. Surajit Khalko, UBKV, Cooch Behar, West Bengal

Zonal President (Mid-Eastern Zone): Dr. R.K. Gaur, DDU Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh

Zonal Councillor (Mid-Eastern Zone): Dr. Smriti Mall, DDU Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh

Zonal President (North-Eastern Zone): Dr. Palash Deb Nath, AAU, Jorhat, Assam

Zonal Councillor (North-Eastern Zone): Dr. Anurag Kashyap, AAU, Jorhat, Assam

Zonal President (Northern Zone): Dr. Sanjeev Sharma, ICAR-CPRI, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

Zonal Councillor (Northern Zone): Dr. Santosh Watpade, ICAR-IARI, Regional Station, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

Zonal President (Western Zone): Dr. Mohan V. Totawar, Dr. PDKV, Akola, Maharashtra

Zonal Councillor (Northern Zone): Dr. Shrikant B. Bramhankar, Dr. PDKV, Akola, Maharashtra

Zonal President (Southern Zone): Dr. Gururaj Sunkad, UAS, Raichur, Karnataka

Zonal Councillor (Southern Zone): Dr. Mallikarjun Kenganal, ZARS, Kalaburagi, Karnataka

IPS Awards Result 2025-26

The IPS Awards for the year 2025–26 were announced recognizing distinguished contributions in research, teaching, extension, and advancement of plant pathology.

The following distinguished members have been recommended for the various awards of the Society during the conference.

A.P. Misra Lifetime Achievement Award: Dr. B.N. Chakraborty, Professor (Botany), University of North Bengal, Siliguri, West Bengal

S.P. Raychaudhuri Memorial Lecture: Dr. D.K. Yadava, DDG (Crop Science), ICAR, New Delhi

IPS Recognition Award:

- (i) Dr. M.K. Naik, Former Vice Chancellor, KSNUAHS, Shivamogga, Karnataka
- (ii) Dr. Rashmi Aggarwal, Emeritus Scientist, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi
- (iii) Dr. V.I. Benagi, Former Vice Chancellor, UAS, Dharwad, Karnataka
- (iv) Dr. Bhagwan Waghmare M., Former Professor & Head (Botany), Maharashtra Mahavidyalaya, Nilangana, Latur, Maharashtra

- (v) Dr. R.P. Awasthi, Former Professor, GBPUAT, Pannagar, Uttarakhand for their significant contributions to plant pathology.

Mundkur Memorial Award: Dr. Kamal Khilari, SVPUAT, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh

Pravasi Fellow: Dr. Nimal Adikaram, NIFS, Kandy, Sri Lanka

IPS Best Corporate Award

- (i) Dr. Arpita Roy, ADAMA India Private Limited, Hyderabad, Telangana

- (ii) Dr. D.S. Mishra, Bayer Crop Science

A.N. Mukhopadhyay Oration Award: Dr. Zaki A. Siddiqui, AMU, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh

B.N. Chakraborty and Usha Chakraborty IPS Best Teacher Award: Dr. Subrata Dutta, BCKV, Kalyani, West Bengal

D.P. Misra & R.N. Pandey IPS Best Women Scientist Award: Dr. Tasvina Rahman Borah, ICAR RC NEH Region, Umiam, Meghalaya

S. Sinha Memorial Award: Dr. Deebe Kamil, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi

Sharda Lele Memorial Award: Dr. Prashant P. Jambhulkar, RLBCAU, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh

A.K. Sarbhoy Memorial Award: Dr. Bilal Ahmad Padder, SKUAST-K, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir

M.K. Patel Memorial Young Scientist Award: Dr. K. Nagendran, ICAR-NRC for Banana, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu

J.F. Dastur Memorial Award: Dr. Mehrajul Din Shah, SKUAST-K, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir

K.C. Mehta and Manoranjan Mitra Award: Dr. Atul Kumar, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi

S.N. Dasgupta Memorial Award: Dr. Shyam Saran Vaish, BHU, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

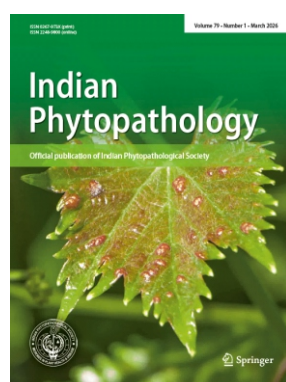
The title of **Fellow of Indian Phytopathological Society (FPSI)** was recommended to the following members, namely

- (i) **Dr. Ram Dutta**, ICAR-DOGR, Pune Maharashtra
- (ii) **Dr. Pranab Dutta**, CAU (Imphal), Umiam, Meghalaya
- (iii) **Dr. Prem Lal Kashyap**, ICAR-IIWBR, Karnal Haryana,
- (iv) **Dr. Narender Kumar Bharat**, Dr. YSPUHF, Nauni, Solan Himachal Pradesh

- (v) **Dr. Sujit Kumar Ray**, BCKV, Kalyani, West Bengal
- (vi) **Dr. Mukesh Khokhar**, ICAR-NRIIPM, New Delhi
- (vii) **Dr. Jaspal Kaur**, PAU, Ludhiana, Punjab
- (viii) **Dr. D. Pramesh**, ICAR-DMR, Solan, Himachal Pradesh
- (ix) **Dr. Jagjeet Singh Lore**, PAU, Ludhiana, Punjab,
- (x) **Dr. Pramod Prasad**, ICAR-IIWBR, Regional Station, Flowerdale, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh
- (xi) **Dr. Birendranath Panja**, BCKV, Kalyani, West Bengal
- (xii) **Dr. Poly Saha**, BCKV, Kalyani, West Bengal
- (xiii) **Dr. R. Thangavelu**, ICAR-NRIIPM, New Delhi
- (xiv) **Dr. K.P. Singh**, BHU, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
- (xv) **Dr. Shyam Sunder Sharma**, RCA, MPUAT, Udaipur, Rajasthan
- (xvi) **Dr. H.V. Singh**, RCA, MPUAT, Udaipur, Rajasthan
- (xvii) **Dr. M.V. Totawar**, Dr. PDKV, Akola, Maharashtra
- (xviii) **Dr. A.K. Chowdhury**, UBKV, Cooch Behar West Bengal
- (xix) **Dr. V. Suryanarayana**, UAS, Sirsi, Karnataka

Obituary

Prof. K.A. Balasubramanian, Former University Head, Department of Plant Pathology, ANGRAU, Bapatla, in the USA at his daughter's residence on 12 February 2026. Prof. Balasubramanian was not only an outstanding teacher and distinguished scientist in the field of Plant Pathology, but also a noble human being with great humility and compassion. As my teacher, he profoundly influenced my academic journey and professional growth. His valuable contributions to Plant Pathology, his dedication to teaching, and his commitment to guiding students will always be remembered with gratitude and admiration.



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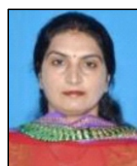
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