Editorial

Biman Nath, Associate Editor

All living organisms need to walk a tightrope between life and death, so to speak. It turns out that as several cells are created every day in our bodies, several others must die, in order to keep this delicate balance. Diseases are often marked by the absence of this balance, and either the cells that are destined to die continue to survive, or excessive cells die. Last year's Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine honoured three scientists who discovered the basic mechanisms and the genes responsible for this 'programmed cell death'. Continuing with our series of articles on last year's Nobel Prize winners, we have an article in this issue that describes the science of suicidal cells.

Our featured scientist this month is one of those rare personalities in our country who succeeded in establishing a school of thought, rather than simply building institutions, or chairing noble committees and commissions. Panchanan Maheshwari was instrumental in taking the study of botany in our country to a new height. He was also a legendary teacher. That he was very popular with his students is attested by the fact that quite a few plants have been named after him by them, for example, *Panchanania jaipuriensis, Isoetes panchananii* and others.

The 'Classroom' feature this time showcases a number of experiments that many readers would love to try out. It is heartening to find that most of them are written by students who were inspired to describe the experiments they had done. In this regard, our student readers may find the announcement for the Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojana (KVPY) fellowships for 2003 (pp. 94) worthwhile to consider. This prestigious fellowship will certainly benefit the school and college students who would like to pursue a career in research.

Logarithms are often perceived by school students as an unnecessary complication of life for them. The book on logarithm whose review appears in this issue would breath a refreshing air for them. Apart from these, we also have an article that describes the vast range of electromagnetic waves, another on how the chemical synthesis of indigo played a role in the freedom movement, and others.