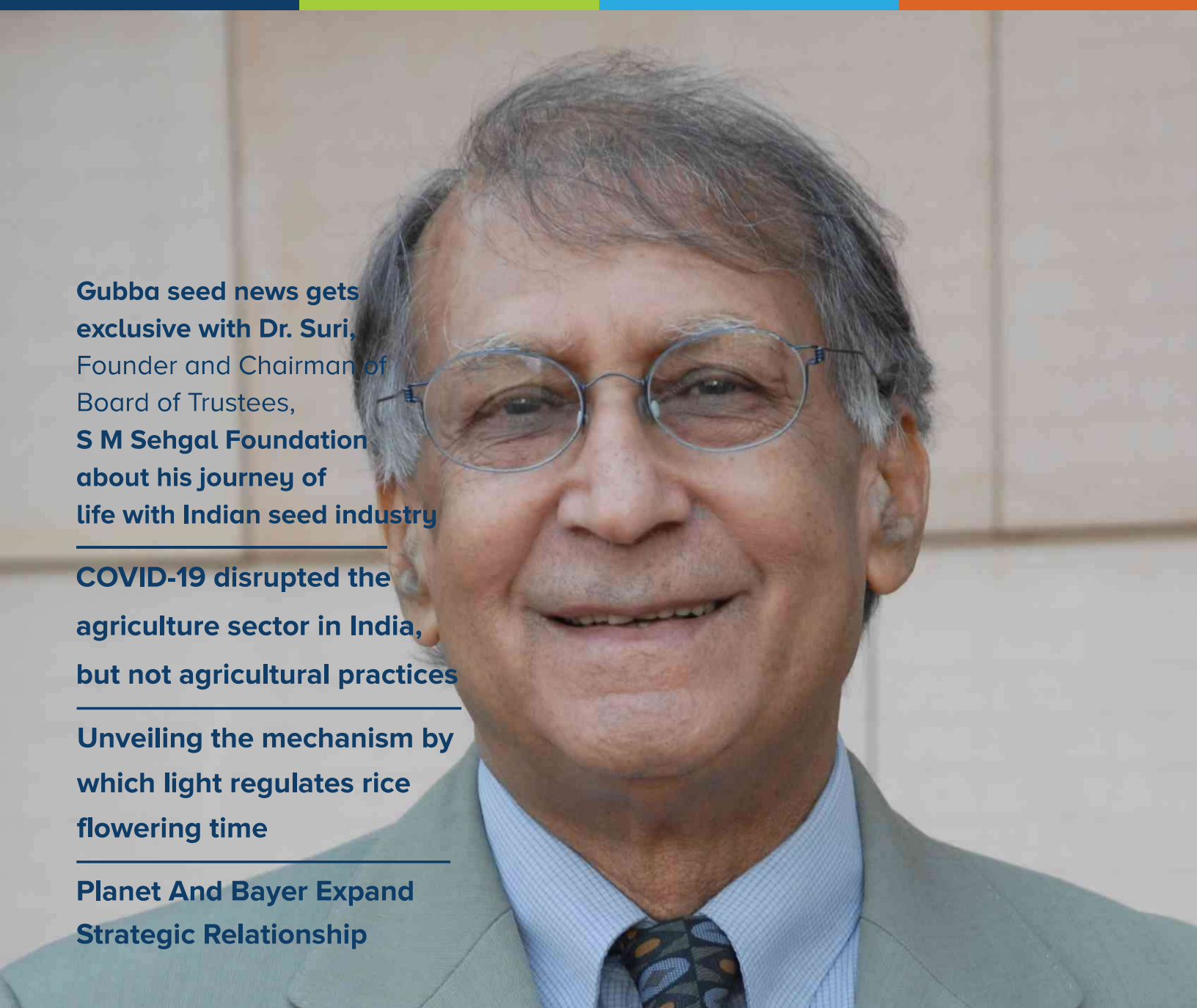


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**Gubba seed news gets exclusive with Dr. Suri, Founder and Chairman of Board of Trustees, S M Sehgal Foundation about his journey of life with Indian seed industry**

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**COVID-19 disrupted the agriculture sector in India, but not agricultural practices**

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**Unveiling the mechanism by which light regulates rice flowering time**

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**Planet And Bayer Expand Strategic Relationship**

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**GUBBA**  
**SEED NEWS**

India's largest Circulated Seed News Magazine



## Gubba seed news gets exclusive with Dr. Suri, about his journey of life with Indian seed industry



**Surinder (Suri) M. Sehgal, PhD**, leading international crop scientist; chair of the Board of Trustees of S M Sehgal Foundation and Sehgal Foundation, USA; founder and chair of Hytech Seed, India; founder of the William L. Brown Center for Economic Botany at the Missouri Botanical Garden, St Louis, Missouri, and emeritus trustee of the Garden.

### Q1. How did your journey towards the Indian seed industry start?

My associations with the global seed industry go back to 1970 and, with the seed business in India specifically, since 1972. We were based at Tolichowki in Hyderabad where we had our own research farm. We released two double-cross proprietary hybrids of maize that were outstanding in performance, and we established a network of producer-distributors to multiply and sell them. Many current top seed companies started out in the seed business as our producer-distributors.

The regulatory environment for a private seed enterprise in India in the 1970s was very difficult. The National Seed Corporation, a public sector company, was a dominant player. The private seed industry was almost non-existent except for a couple of players who were accessing products developed in the public sector, and multiplying and selling them.

We restructured our business in 1988 under the name of Proagro Seed Company Private Ltd. (now Bayer). Many excellent people who worked with us in Proagro went on to be among the “who's who” in India's seed industry.

I always believed that a well-bred hybrid seed could revolutionize maize production in India, just as it had in the US. I thought good seed could significantly increase agricultural productivity as well as increase farmers' income as it happened with the miracle varieties of wheat and rice. I am pleased that this prophecy came true, and that India is now a large producer of corn.

### Q2. What seemed like your first breakthrough?

We were the first private seed company to have its own proprietary hybrids of maize with wide adaptation, and they were suitable for all the corn-growing areas of India. As a result, Proagro had a phenomenal growth year after year, and became the dominant player in the proprietary hybrid seed market. Always ethical in our breeding and business practices, we also made sure that there were no “me-too” products, and that all our germplasm was fully documented.

### Q3. What was the biggest challenge in your journey?

The seed business is challenging by its nature. The biggest challenge is the changing climate over which one has no control. The other challenges are manageable, and one can always find a good solution. Maintaining consistent good quality can be challenging but can also be overcome. The advent of biotechnology brought some new challenges that are still being sorted out.

### Q4. What is one such arena in today's seed scenario that has the most scope for improvement? Please share your thoughts.

In the developed world, the seed industry had huge growth after the enactment of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). Though we have IPR in India, the industry is still evolving and has yet to attain maturity. As it evolves, I hope it becomes more ethical than it appears at present. Developing new products for a changing climate is a need. The industry requires good classical breeders who are ethical, dedicated, well trained, and willing to put up with the drudgery of work in the field.

### Q5. What is that one message you would give to the next generation of Indian seed industry?

Farming is changing rapidly across the globe. New technologies in the form of digitization and sophisticated mechanization are driving the changes, and the seed industry is changing along with it to serve the changing farming trends. However, when it comes to digitization and mechanization in India, the challenge is that new technologies must be adapted to the needs of the small-resource, poor farmers.

The Indian seed industry needs well-educated, ethical entrepreneurs to accept new challenges, whether in biotechnology, digitization, or mechanization. And India needs a strong and vibrant seed industry to serve Indian farming—a noble profession, though not lucrative as internet technologies. We must always keep in mind that the seed industry is serving the farmers who feed India, and society in general.

Source:

communications@smsfoundation.org

### Happy Happenings at Gubba

#### New Borns

**Mr. Naresh**  
(Gubba A1 Supervisor)  
*Blessed with*  
**Baby Girl**  
**2 July, 2022**

**Mr. Shekar**  
(Gubba Y3  
Fork lift operator)  
*Blessed with*  
**Baby Girl**  
**11 July, 2022**

**Mr. Vinod**  
(Gubba A1 Fork lift operator)  
*Blessed with*  
**Baby Boy**  
**12 July, 2022**