# Editorial...

The use of underground space has increased many-fold in present times, which is spread over a wide variety of application areas, viz. water transfer through tunnels, power stations, metro railways and railway stations, road communication, oil and gas pipelines, oil and gas storage, nuclear waste disposal, sewage, communication cables, parking, etc. Besides these conventional utility areas, some unconventional application areas of underground space are hydrogen gas storage, compressed air energy storage, etc. In view of vast utility of underground space, International Conference on Underground Space Technology (ICUST) had been organized by the Society jointly with NIRM. The current issue is entirely devoted to underground space technology as all the papers in this volume form a part of the proceedings of the ICUST, 2011.

Complexity and heterogeneity of rock materials and their widely varying underground behaviour pose great challenge to all stakeholders engaged in the design and construction of underground civil structures for different purposes. Important topics related to underground space development have been covered in the present volume of the journal including state-of-the-art methods and techniques that are employed in the investigation, design and construction.

This issue contains a total of 41 papers of the ICUST including nine Keynote papers presented by some world figures in their respective fields of expertise. Topics like site characterization, laboratory studies, design and analysis of excavations in rock and methods of excavation including trenchless technology have been covered in these papers. Few papers on these very topics and papers on other related topics are waiting publication as they could not be included in this volume for reasons like editing and modification delays in addition to keeping the size of journal handy. Remaining papers of the Conference will be published in subsequent issue(s).

**(Ashok Kumar)**
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