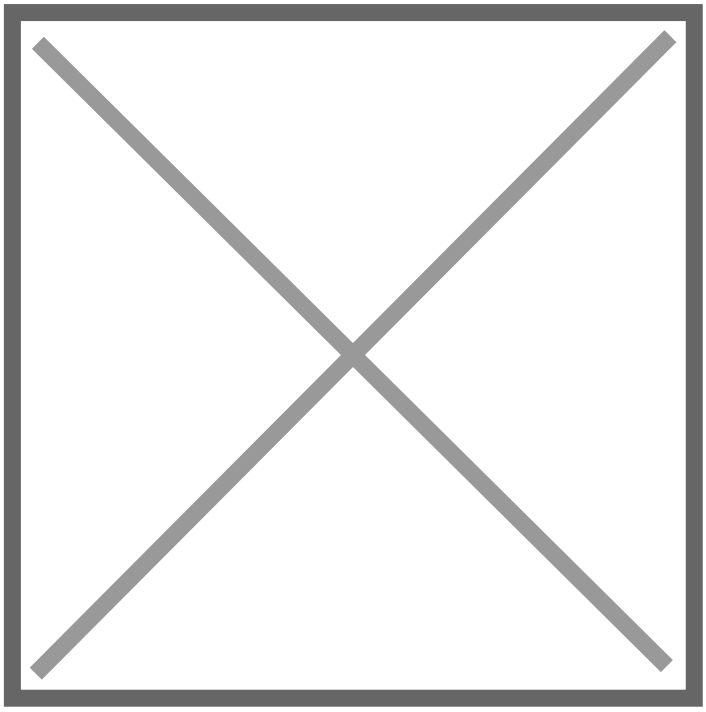


News Bites

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NCL gets fund for DNA chip project

The Pune based National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), a constituent lab of the CSIR, has received funds from the Department of Science and Technology for it's three year project to develop DNA chip as a cheaper alternative to DNA sequencing. According to reports the project will help to identify specific genetic disorders like Thalessemia. The reports say that if this works, scientists can target India-specific genetic disorders like hypertension.

Foundation laid for Bangalore Helix

Karnataka chief minister SM Krishna laid the foundation stone for the biotech park, "Bangalore Helix". The CM said the government is investing Rs 150 crore in the project on 150 acres of land near Electronics City Phase III on the Bangalore-Hosur Road. This is to be developed in two phases over the next 18 months. In the first phase 75 acres would be developed. The park, which is meant to give the state its biotech edge, will house small and big biotech companies, research bodies and start-ups.

100 acres marine BT Park in Tamil Nadu

The government of Tamil Nadu has earmarked 100 acres to set up the marine biotechnology park, proposed to come up along the East Coast Road about three kilometers ahead of Mahabalipuram. According to reports, the park, to be established at an investment of Rs 50 crore, is envisaged as an incubator facility to address investment initiatives in this sector. It will provide an opportunity to harness marine, micro and macro organisms through innovative technologies and systems for comm-
ercial application in areas such as nutrition, pharmaceuticals, industry
and recreation.

Biogenus project to provide 1000 jobs

The Biogenus project at Karwar will provide job opportunities for 1000 skilled laborers from the coastal belt of Karnataka. The Biogenus India has recently singed a memorandum of understanding with government of Karnataka for setting up marine biotechnology research center and aqua culture and has made investments to the tune of $20 million for the same. According to reports, the CEO of Biogenus, Lukose Vallartharaj, has already visited Kumta, where the park is about to come up.

Avesthagen joint venture with BioMerieux

Avestha Gengraine, a bangalore based company has signed a MoU with the French company BioMerieux to do R&D in the field of Molecular Diagnostics. Talking at the French Indian Business Meeting held during Bangalore Bio 2003, Villoo Morawala-Patell, founder and CEO of Avesthagen said now they are focussing in the field of research based on human therapeutics and diagnostic kits for diseases like diabetes and tuberculosis. "We are looking for global partnership for co-development and out-licensing of intellectual property in each of these areas," she added. Avesthagen has had tie-ups with the Indian companies like Advanta India, Astra Zeneca, etc.

Karnataka clears projects

The high-level committee of the government of Karnataka, headed by chief minister SM Krishna has cleared 12 project proposals worth Rs 3,620 crore and having an employment potential of about 69,000. The projects include setting up of R&D facility for ayurvedic medicine and formulations at Bidadi by Himalaya Drug Company at an investment of Rs 165-crore. Astrazeneca India Pvt. Ltd has also received the approval for its proposal of setting up a Rs 72.57-crore R&D center for development of anti-TB drugs and other drugs and formulations at Hebbal.