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Syngene enters drug discovery pact

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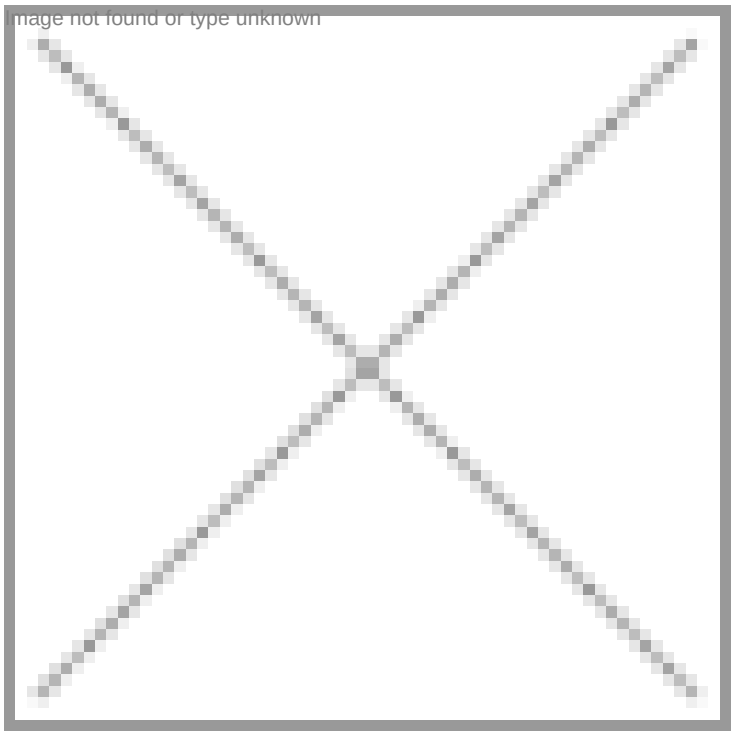

Biocon subsidiary, Syngene International, entered into an agreement with US-based, Endo Pharmaceuticals, to expand their collaboration to develop molecules to fight cancer.

â€œSyngene and Endo will partner on two new discovery programmes, strengthening their ongoing alliance in cancer research,â€? stated Syngene in a filing to the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). Syngene and Endo had inked a pact for drug discovery collaboration in March 2010. As per that agreement, Endo would retain all rights to the molecules developed, while Syngene would receive research fees, milestone payments and success fees from Endo.

â€œThis expansion reflects both the progress being made by Endo in the exciting area of novel therapeutic interventions to treat cancer, and Endo's confidence in Syngene's discovery and development capabilities in strengthening Endo's pipeline,â€? said Mr Peter Bains, director of Syngene.

Both the firms would leverage their complementary and synergistic capabilities towards innovating novel therapeutic molecules for a robust cancer pipeline, the company said.

Jubilant net profit up 53 percent in Q1

The consolidated net profit of Jubilant Life Sciences rose by around 53 percent to 77.12 crore ($16.8 million) for the first quarter ending June 30, 2011, over 50.43 crore ($10.9 million) registered in the same period in the previous fiscal. The Q1 results announced by the company on August 9, 2011, showed the increase in the net sales of the company to 944.29 crore ($205 million) as compared to 817.62 crore ($177.9 million) during the same period in previous financial year.

Expressing their optimism on continued growth, Mr Shyam S Bhartia, chairman and managing director, and Hari S Bhartia,

co-chairman and managing director, Jubilant Life Sciences, said Jubilant expected to continue the growth momentum with the commissioning of new capacities; innovation led product launches, expansion in high growth geographies and increased capacity utilization in services business. R Sankaraiah, executive director (finance) Jubilant Life Sciences, said the company was focusing on discovery of new molecules and success has been achieved with the number of molecules in the drug discovery increasing from 17 to 21. â€œThere are 1,000 scientists working in the NDDS and there is an equal opportunity for expansion in this area too,â€? he said.

During the quarter, the company filed one DMF in the US taking the total US DMF filings to 52, besides filing two DMFs in Canada and one unique EDMFs in EU along with few in other markets including Australia. The API plant at Nanjangud, India, received the ANVISA Brazil approval during the quarter. There were three ANDA filings in the US. It received one ANDA approval for donepezil to be supplied from its solid dosage formulation plant in Roorkee, India, and one dossier approval for sildenafil, with patent expiry expected in June 2013. The Roorkee plant which already has USFDA and UKMHRA approvals, also received Japanese PMDA certification during the quarter.

Venus gets US patent for Vancoplus

Chandigarh-based Venus Remedies, a leading research-based global pharmaceutical company, received its first US patent for its novel research product, Vancoplus. The patent grant is valid up to December 2027.

Vancoplus, a brand of ceftriaxone and vancomycin along with a chemical vector, used in CVMC technology, is the only remedy after vaccination to treat MRSA and multi-drug resistant microbes that cause meningitis, pneumonia, typhoid, septicemia, urinary tract infection, skin and skin infections and staphylococcal endocarditis. The estimated medical cost due to MRSA in USA was $5 billion in 2010 and is expected to reach $9 billion in the next five years. With Vancoplus,Venus expects to grab a fair share of this market within three years of its launch.

Wockhardt reports 193.9 cr net profit

Pharmaceutical and biotechnology major, Wockhardt, announced its first quarter results (April â€“ June 2011) for FY 2011-12. Consolidated sales revenue wa 1,053.2 crore ($229.1 million), which is a growth of 14.3 percent. Operating profit (EBIDTA) was 310.8 crore ($67.6 million), a growth of 72.5 per cent and net profit was 193.9 crore. â€œWockhardt is focused on its fundamental priority of delivering a sustained all-round performance this year and in turn create value for all its stakeholders,â€? said Dr Habil Khorakiwala, chairman, Wockhardt. â€œOur positive first quarter results of FY 2011-12 is a pointer in this direction.â€? During the quarter, Wockhardt's India business grew by over 24 percent with a market share of 2.03 percent (IMS June 2011).

GSK net sales up 13 pc in Q2 2011

GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals released its financial results for the second quarter ending June 30, 2011. During the quarter, the company clocked sales of 561.54 crore ($122 million) as against 497.93 crore ($108 million) during the second quarter last year. While the net sales grew by 13 per cent, sales of the core pharmaceuticals and vaccines business grew by 14 per cent.

Profit after tax (before exceptionals) grew by nine per cent during the quarter, and the operating profit margin wasmaintained at 35 per cent in line with the first quarter of 2011. Net profit for the quarte was 147.54 crore ($32.1 million). Planned investments in field force expansion for the year continued during the quarter.

â€œThe company's growth has been in line with the market growth. In particular, oncology, dermatologicals and mass specialty therapies have grown well. In addition to the base effect, vaccines have shown strong growth,â€? said Dr Hasit B Joshipura, managing director of GSK.

Apart from the two original products from the GSK pipeline in oncology and haematology, a branded generic and a product in Stiefel, dermatology, was launched during the quarter.

Eli Lilly India, Lupin announce tie-up

Eli Lilly India and Lupin have entered into a strategic collaboration to promote and distribute Lilly's Huminsulin range of products, including Huminsulin R, Huminsulin NPH, Huminsulin 50/50, Huminsulin 30/70 and Humapen Ergo II.

Lupin's India formulations business will promote and distribute the range of products in India and Nepal, virtually doubling the number of sales representatives behind the diabetes care product. This collaboration will double the current customer base and approximately 45,000 doctors will now be called on as a result of the new partnership.

Lilly hopes to increase access to Huminsulin products through its relationship with Lupin India, bringing one of the most basic

and proven therapies for diabetes treatment to more patients. Lupin India's formulation business will deploy a sales force of medical representatives to provide education and resources to physicians and patients.

â€œThis partnership will allow us to change our game in India. We will have a stronger footprint with many more sales representatives promoting our diabetes brands, and this will become a foundation to expand our diabetes business not only for current products, but also for our future pipeline. Lupin is well-aligned with Lilly's goal of expansion in India and other emerging markets,â€? said Mr Eberhard Ludewigs, vice president, emerging markets, Eli Lilly.

â€œWith Lilly's presence and expansion in the emerging markets space, the leadership team at Lupin feels strongly about the collaboration and the synergy it will create,â€? said Mr Shakti Chakraborty, group president, India region formulations, Lupin.

SGB, BP venture join hands for biofuel

Bharat Renewable Energy, a joint-venture of Bharat Petroleum, which is India's second largest petroleum company, with SG Biofuels (SGB) will develop and deploy elite hybrids of jatropha for the production of biodiesel in India. The program's first phase includes a crop development effort to produce high performing hybrid varieties of jatropha adapted to unique growing conditions across the country. Additional phases include the deployment of more than 86,000 acres of jatropha using SGB's JMax hybrid seeds.

â€œWith the genetic diversity of their jatropha hybrid material combined with the ability to produce large volumes of hybrid seed, SG Biofuels is an ideal partner to work with to successfully develop, validate and scale jatropha as the primary source for biodiesel in India,â€? said Mr MV Radhakrishnan, chief executive officer of Bharat Renewable Energy.

SGB will draw from the advancements of its global JMax crop development centers, where the company is optimizing elite hybrid varieties of jatropha through a combination of molecular breeding and biotechnology. The centers feature hybrid material from the company's germplasm library totaling more than 12,000 genotypes.

SGB will work with BREL to select, test and scale the highest yielding, most commercially viable hybrid varieties for growing in India, including the initial 86,000 acre deployment.

According to the Asian Development Bank, the current cultivation of jatropha and other non-edible oilseeds will need to increase by nearly 80 million acres to meet the nation's biodiesel targets.

Zinsser HTS system installed at Piramal Life Sciences

Sangama Scientifics, a professionally managed scientific instruments distribution company from Bangalore, has installed automated system for polymorphism, pre-salt screening and solubility studies called CRISSY, at Piramal Life Sciences in Mumbai. This is the first HTS system from Zinsser Analytic, a German company, to be installed in India. Sangama's release said CRISSY is capable of precise dispensing and weighing of drug candidates and solvents. The system boasts of a specially designed reactor blocks, controlled heating and cooling with mixing, evaporation and drying, filtration, pH measurement and adjustment, preparation of HPLC, XRD, Raman sampling for the direct analysis. Polymorph screening is essential to obtain a controlled chemical and pharmaceutical manufacturing process and is an economically necessary tool in drug discovery.

Viscotek GPC, Zetasizer Nano combined in research

Researchers at the Department of Bioengineering, University of Pittsburgh, combined Malvern Instruments' Viscotek gel permeation chromatography (GPC) system and Zetasizer Nano for their work. Molecular weight and distribution measurements were necessary for the researchers to study the synthesis of novel polymers. They used the Viscotek GPC system to characterize molecular weight, prior to applying the Zetasizer Nano for zeta potential measurements to study inter-molecular interactions. The Viscotek line of instruments offers a complete, temperature-controlled, advanced, multidetector system that is suitable for all macromolecular applications. The Zetasizer series measures particle and molecular size from below a nanometer to several microns, zeta potential, electrophoretic mobility, and molecular weight.

GE Healthcare to acquire PAA Laboratories GmbH

GE Healthcare has reached an agreement to acquire PAA Laboratories, a developer and supplier of cell culture media for biomedical research and the fast-growing biopharmaceutical and vaccine manufacturing industry. The acquisition of PAA Laboratories will allow GE Healthcare to expand its offering of products and services for cell biology research and for the discovery and manufacture of biopharmaceuticals, including recombinant proteins, antibodies and vaccines.

The strong strategic fit between the two businesses, combined with expanded capabilities in product development and

marketing, will offer significant long-term customer benefits. Financial terms of the agreement were not disclosed. The acquisition, which is subject to customary closing conditions, including regulatory approvals, is expected to close in Q3 2011.

Thermo Fisher unveils Revco UxF Series freezers

Thermo Fisher Scientific has introduced its new Thermo Scientific Revco UxF Series ultra-low temperature (ULT) freezers. Equipped with a unique touch-screen control panel that features an event log, health monitoring system and controlled access options, the Revco UxF Series provides a constant update on the integrity and health of the freezer compartment.

The freezers maximize sample storage capacity while minimizing footprint inside the lab. Five new capacities, ranging from 421 to 949 liters (14.9-33.5 cu ft) have been launched and will provide a number of options to suit any storage and lab space requirements. The freezer's new cabinet design and vacuum panel insulation allow storage of up to 70,000 2ml tubes or 118,300 1ml Thermo Scientific Cryobank tubes.

iPod used for knee replacement surgery

Apple has gone a step further in aiding orthopedic surgeons who conduct knee replacement surgeries. Dr Arun Mullaji, an orthopaedic surgeon affiliated to Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital, recently conducted a knee replacement surgery on 75-year-old Gulab Singhvi navigating with an iPod using the DASH technology. With miraculous results, Ms Singhvi was able to walk on the same day.

Dr Mullaji performed what Smith & Nephew claimed was the first commercial non-experimental orthopedic surgery in Asia, if not the entire world, with the aid of an iPod.

DASH is a new technology from Smith & Nephew that aids joint replacement procedures with great accuracy and precision. According to a release from the company, clinical studies have shown that when computer technology is used for joint replacement the patient experiences less pain, loses less blood and has a lower risk of needing a blood transfusion. It is fully tested and approved by international regulatory bodies as being completely safe for the patient.

The technology enables the iPod to connect through wireless to a camera that emits an infrared beam. The iPod, in turn, is attached to miniature instruments. The surgeon positions these instruments by reading the data on the iPod's high-resolution screen to cut the bone and place the new joint. The surgeon can thus determine the exact alignment of the leg and the new joint on the screen of the iPod.

Padmashree offers MSc clinical research

Bangalore-based Padmashree Group of Institutions started a master's course (MSc) in clinical research from this academic year. The course aims to provide students with a theoretical and practical understanding of the issues involved in the design, conduct, analysis and interpretation of clinical trials of health interventions.

This two-year course offered by Padmashree Institute of Clinical Research (PICR) is affiliated to the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) and recognized by the Government of Karnataka.

â€œAll our training programs have been developed by the clinical research experts who have worked in the healthcare industry for many years. This course is an assortment of various modules of clinical research and biopharma subjects. The course is especially designed for graduates from health science and allied health science milieu. Our training programs are medical industry oriented to an extent of preclinical testing, good laboratory practice, and good clinical practice and also provide immense practical knowledge in real-life scenario,â€? said Dr Suresh Babu, principal, PICR.

To provide industry interaction, PICR has set up a good infrastructure wet lab facility and has tied up with different agencies such as Padmashree Diagnostic Center, Kidwai Institute of Oncology, Bangalore Institute of Oncology (HCG Global), Aristogene, BiOZEEN, Bioneeds and Avesthagen.

Indian Oil, DBT to set up research hub

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has inked a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India, to set up a DBTâ€“IOC Center for Advanced Research on Bio-energy. The center is expected to offer breakthroughs to restore oil with vegetation founded fuels through biotechnological interventions.

It is the second such center being set up by the DBT. The first one was at the Institute of Chemical Technology in Mumbai. This center, coming up at Indian Oil's R&D hub at Faridabad, will cost 53 crore ($11.5 million) and the DBT will share half of this cost.

Workshop on plant genetic resources

A workshop on â€œEfficient Management and Use of Plant genetic Resourcesâ€? was held on July 29 and 30, 2011, atNew Delhi. The event was attended by over 70 participants representing various Indian Council for Agricultural research (ICAR) institutes and state agricultural universities, collectively known as the National Active Germplasm Sites. Dr RS Paroda, chairman, Haryana Farmers' Commission and TAAS, inaugurated the workshop and Dr S Ayyappan, secretary, DARE and DG, ICAR, presided over the inaugural session. The workshop focused on national networking on acquisition, conservation, evaluation and strengthening of database on plant genetic resources information.