

Ocimum Biosolutions wins IT Innovation in India 2005 Award

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Ocimum Biosolutions, a Hyderabad-based life sciences R&D enabling company has won the NASSCOM IT Innovation in India 2005 Award. This award aims at encouraging and fostering a culture of creativity and innovation in the Indian IT industry. Ocimum Biosolutions was shortlisted from among 150 companies across India. Anuradha Acharya, founder and CEO of Ocimum Biosolutions, received the award from the President of India, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam at the NASSCOM 2006 - India Leadership Forum held in Mumbai recently.

The IT Innovation in India award is a premier honor for Indian IT companies which have infused innovation into their existing know-how and have come up with new ideas, products, processes or technologies to enable the business achieve higher margins, and thus, profits, to re-invest in the business.

On winning this award, Anuradha Acharya said, "Ocimum Biosolutions has been a pioneer in creating an environment for innovation in the field of genomics and bioinformatics. This recognition by NASSCOM means a lot to us and will help us create more enthusiasm to build innovative products out of India."

BV Biologicals, DeLaval to market mastitis prevention products

BV Biologicals, a group company of Venkateshwara Hatcheries specialized in the manufacture and marketing of biotech

products engineered to suit the large animal health sector mainly cattle, sheep and goat has entered into a joint venture with DeLaval for marketing mastitis prevention products.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed by OP Singh, CEO, Venkateshwara Group and Hemant Ogale, managing director of DeLaval. Mastitis is a dreaded disease affecting dairy animals. It is responsible for colossal economic losses (Rs 6,053 crore annually) to the dairy industry, since it drastically alters the physical and chemical characteristics of milk, thereby rendering it poorer in quality.

BV Biologicals will operate and supply the products to all customer segments in India across territories with direct and indirect sales approaches. DeLaval will provide technical support to BV Biologicals for products such as Dipal, Dip Cup, California Mastitis Test Kit and California Mastitis Test Reagent.

Commenting on the joint venture, OP Singh said, "We believe the JV with DeLaval will help our companies to expand our services and facilitate dairy farmers get more business through the production of quality and clean milk."

Hemant Ogale, managing director, DeLaval India, said, "Our mission is to drive progress in milk production. Together with our partners, we would like to strengthen our presence in the market and cater to the needs of milk producers and to make clean milk production a way of life."

Indian Immunologicals pitches into Pakistan market

Indian Immunologicals Limited (IIL), a leading vaccine manufacturer in India having good presence in international market, has entered the Pakistan market with its human and animal vaccines by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Cirin Pharmaceuticals (CPPL), Rawalpindi and AIMS Traders, Lahore. As per the agreement CPPL will market human vaccines and AIMS Traders will market animal vaccines in Pakistan.

IIL, the first company in India having state-of-the-art facilities for the manufacture of human and animal vaccines, shortlisted CPPL and AIMS, Pakistan companies with well-established marketing network to market its products in Pakistan during BioAsia 2005 held at Hyderabad.

Commenting on the agreements, K V Balasubramaniam, managing director, Indian Immunologicals Limited said, "While providing 'quality vaccines at affordable prices' to the Indian consumers, now we are looking forward to Pakistani market and confident that Pakistani consumers would also benefit immensely with these agreements."

AIMS Traders is hopeful to get the registration of IIL's FMD vaccine, Raksha-Ovac in Pakistan and initiate marketing activity by mid-2006.

Claris to set up manufacturing facility for EPO

Claris Lifesciences, an Ahmedabad-based pharmaceutical company will set up its own manufacturing facility to produce erythropoietin, a rDNA product by end of this year. Currently Claris is importing erythropoietin and marketing in India under the brand name Epotin.

Speaking to mediapersons in Mumbai, Sushil Handa, chairman, Claris Lifesciences, said, "Although the market for EPO in India is small, it is growing at a good rate. We are now in third position in EPO market in the country. Besides focusing on local market, we are also looking at exporting biotechnology products. We have identified the markets in the developing world. Once the manufacturing facility at Ahmedabad is in place, we will submit registrations in the developing countries where we have a strong marketing network for our pharmaceutical products."

Considering the market potential of biotechnology products in India, Sushil Handa said, "Claris will soon enter the biotech market with other products like G-CSF and interferons."

Claris Lifesciences is also committed to research and is manifested through its Claris Research Foundation (CRF). The Foundation with a team of 190 scientists has been focusing in the area of development of innovative products and new drug delivery systems (NDDS) for management of critical illnesses. The Foundation has initiated its research program in the field of biotechnology with focus on R&D of monoclonal antibodies and recombinant technology.

3P is key to drive demand in global vaccines markets: report

There is a huge unmet need in emerging markets, which can be catered to only with a focused approach, driven by support from the leading vaccine manufacturers and increased role of private-public partnerships (3P). New analysis from Frost & Sullivan on Global Vaccines Markets reveals that vaccines markets earned revenue of \$ 9,925.5 million in 2005 and estimates to reach \$20,019.1 million in 2012.

"There is a huge shortfall in manufacturing capacity of vaccine manufacturers largely because of the deadlock between governments and vaccine manufacturers. Significant addition to manufacturing capacity is urgently needed to continue immunization programs, especially with new and better vaccines expected to be launched," noted Barath Shankar, research analyst, Frost & Sullivan.

The launch of new vaccines against rotavirus and HPV expects to support the next phase of accelerated growth of the vaccines in developed markets. However, the success of these products in rest of world markets would determine the long-term growth of the vaccines market.

The lack of basic healthcare infrastructure in emerging economies is a major challenge that is receiving increased attention from government and aid agencies. The emergence of private-public partnerships is expected to overcome the hurdles posed by these shortcomings.

"The top five vaccine manufacturers account for 85.3 percent of vaccine revenues globally in 2005. This is due to the large share of revenues from developed markets that account for 79.5 percent of the global vaccine revenues. The emerging markets have a large untapped potential that is assisted aid agencies and public-private partnerships," said Barath Shankar.

Ranbaxy acquires Romania's largest generics company

India's pharma major Ranbaxy Laboratories Limited has acquired leading Romanian pharma company Terapia for \$324 million.

This new entity, the largest generic company in Romania, will help Ranbaxy leverage its presence across the European Union and the CIS markets.

Coming barely days after Ranbaxy's acquisition of the unbranded generic business of Allen S.p.A (a division of GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), in Italy acquired through Ranbaxy's Italian subsidiary, Ranbaxy Italia S.p.A) the deal is of significance in fast tracking Ranbaxy growth plans giving it access to another of the fast growing markets.

Scheduled to join the European Union from January 1, 2007, Romania is the fastest growing pharmaceutical market in the Central & Eastern European (CEE) region recording an approximate annual growth of 34 percent from 2002 to 2005. Besides, Terapia also has a presence outside of Romania with 30 percent of its product portfolio registered in over 15 countries including the high growth generic markets of Russia, Ukraine and Poland.

According to Peter Burema, president, Ranbaxy, Europe, CIS, Africa & Latin America, the latest acquisition of Ranbaxy gives the company a platform to further leverage its primary care presence across the European Union and the CIS markets. "The product portfolio of the two companies is highly complementary," he said.

Slated to be on path to become one of the top five global generics company, currently Ranbaxy is among the top 10 generic pharmaceutical companies in the world and is rapidly consolidating its presence in Europe.

The Terapia acquisition has created multiple synergies of product development, product flow, low cost manufacturing and proximity and access to high growth markets for the company. "Terapia represents exceptional value for our stakeholders," stated Malvinder Mohan Singh, CEO and Managing Director, Ranbaxy Laboratories Limited.

Ranbaxy enters LATAM, Russia markets with oncology products

Ranbaxy Laboratories Limited (Ranbaxy), India, has entered into a strategic alliance with Zenotech Laboratories Limited (Zenotech), India. Under the semi-exclusive agreement, Ranbaxy will market Zenotech's oncology cytotoxic injectable products under the Ranbaxy label, leveraging its global marketing and distribution network, in the key markets of Latin America (LATAM), including Brazil and Mexico, Russia and other CIS markets. Ranbaxy is also exploring to expand this collaboration to other markets. Zenotech will develop and manufacture these oncology products at its dedicated facilities located in India.

Commenting on the development, Peter Burema, president, Europe, Africa, CIS and Latin America, Ranbaxy, said, "We welcome this opportunity to join hands with Zenotech towards establishing a relationship that will complement each other's strengths. The alliance facilitates Ranbaxy's entry into this new therapeutic segment in these key markets. Ranbaxy will continue to strengthen its product portfolio and provide novel products for the benefit of the patients."

Dr Jayaram Chigurupati, CEO, Zenotech Laboratories said, "Zenotech is very excited about the collaboration with Ranbaxy. This collaboration will enable us to expand market reach of our speciality injectables portfolio to cancer patients in several emerging markets around the world. The alliance will positively impact Zenotech in speeding up its own biogenics development program."

Zenotech is a specialty generic injectables company with a biotech core. Zenotech's predominantly high value injectables product portfolios serve niche therapy areas like oncology, anesthesiology, gynecology, and neurology. Zenotech has direct marketing presence in India and in Vietnam and has subsidiaries in Brazil and Nigeria.

Zenotech's generic biologicals, GM-CSF and G-CSF have completed clinical trials in India and are awaiting regulatory approvals for market launch. Zenotech has full-fledged research and development facilities in India and in the US. Its oncology and biologics manufacturing facilities are located in India.

Cadila Healthcare gets DCGI's nod to conduct Phase II clinical trials on ZYH1

Ahmedabad-based Cadila Healthcare has received permission from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) to conduct Phase II clinical trials on its new molecular entity - ZYH1, after successfully completing Phase I clinical trials. The Phase II studies will focus on evaluating the efficacy of ZYH1. This novel agent for treatment of metabolic disorders has been designed and developed by Zydus Research Centre, the research wing of the company.

"ZYH1 is expected to address the issue related to patients suffering from dyslipidemia in both diabetic and non-diabetic condition," said Dr BB Lohray, president, Zydus Research Centre. The drug is expected to improve lipid profile, leading to decrease in cardiovascular risk in diabetic patients, as well as other diabetes related complications. In Phase I clinical studies, the molecule showed favorable pharmacokinetics and good oral bioavailability. The drug is expected to have a once daily dosing leading to better compliance.

GlaxoSmithKline launches second phase of Suraksha Kavach program

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), India's leading vaccine company introduced the second phase of its recently launched Suraksha Kavach program with a nationwide initiative to educate school children on chickenpox.

The school campaign is the second phase of the campaign that will roll out in ten cities - Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Pune, Jaipur and Ludhiana. Interactive communication modules will help children and adolescents understand the disease, how it spreads and ways to prevent chickenpox.

GSK launched the Suraksha Kavach programme on the eve of India's 57th Republic Day, and to drive awareness about protection against disease and wellness for individuals, families and society at large.

Chickenpox is a highly infectious disease, caused by the Varicella zoster virus, which results in a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness and fever.

GSK's initiative aims to improve disease awareness, highlight prevention method and dispel myths that still persist about chickenpox. Vaccination is the most effective, practical and convenient way of preventing chicken pox. Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) immunization guidelines recommend that the chickenpox vaccine can be given at any time after one year of

age.

MMB (India) reduces Bt tech fee to Rs 900 per 450gm

Mahyco Monsanto Biotech (India) Ltd (MMB) has reduced the technology fee by 30 percent from Rs 1,250 per 450gm packet of Bollgard cottonseed charged to seed companies for use of its insect-protected cotton technology in order to best meet current market conditions.

According to Sarita Bahl, senior manager, public affairs, Monsanto, "In the coming season, the technology fee will be Rs. 900 per 450gm packet of Bollgard cottonseed, approximately 30 percent less than last year's technology fee. This change in the technology fee will give MMB's seed company licensees an opportunity to pass along new savings to farmers if they choose. If seed companies do choose to lower their final seed prices, we believe that this will encourage more farmers to choose genuine Bollgard technology because of its clear benefits."

It may be recalled that during last January the government of Andhra Pradesh has approached the Monopolies & Restrictive Trade Practices Commission (MRTPC) on high pricing of Bt cottonseed by MMB India Ltd, a 50:50 marketing JV between Mahyco and Monsanto Holdings.

Advanced Enzyme receives SKAL certification

Advanced Enzyme Technologies has received SKAL certification for its EnviroSEB product being certifying it to be an organic product. With this, Advanced Enzyme Technologies has joined the SKAL International Program for Organic Certification for its agriculture product AgroSEB (Unique Biological Yield and Quality Enhancer) that originates from organic cultivate and are processed using organic methods.

The team at Advanced Enzyme Technologies worked on the program for the Organic Certification, detailed the documentation and process parameters and successfully complied for the SKAL International Audit for Organic Certification and received the organic certificate for its agriculture bioproduct AgroSEB – an organic bio enzyme.

SKAL International is an independent, internationally operating organization that carries out inspections and issues certificate for sustainable organic production methods by supervising, testing, inspecting, assessing and certifying the organic products.

ICRISAT's ABI bags best tech incubator 2005 award

The Agri-Business Incubator (ABI) at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) has been selected by the central government to receive the National Award for the Best Technology Incubator for the year 2005. A formal announcement regarding the award is expected on May 11.

The ABI has been selected on the basis of its work done in promoting technology-based ventures in the agri-biotechnology sector.

"It has been proved that a strong and dynamic agri-business substantially contributes to growth in agricultural production and employment," said Dr William Dar, director general of ICRISAT.

The selection of ABI at ICRISAT for the Best Technology Award is a testimonial to the institute's success in attracting public-private sector partnerships for developing agricultural technologies into successful agri-business ventures, added Dar.

The ABI was established with financial support from NSTEDB. Through the ABI, the institute is promoting several technologies ranging from farm-based to advanced biotechnologies. Some of the agri-business products and technologies incubated through ABI are: sweet sorghum for ethanol production; Helicoverpa-resistant transgenic cotton and drought-resistant groundnut.