

## Jubilant Biosys

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### Jubilant Biosys

Jubilant Biosys is an innovative bio-informatics and chemo-informatics service provider, which started its operations in November 2003. The company has made significant inroads into the global market place and has entered into multiple engagements with leading R&D and pharmaceutical organizations. Jubilant Biosys currently has more than 32 international customers, of which seven are pharmaceutical companies and eight are in the biotechnology sector. During the fiscal 2004, it became a subsidiary of Jubilant Organosys and its activities complement Jubilant Organosys' focus on the pharmaceutical and life sciences market, creating a potential for greater synergies.

"Jubilant Biosys specializes in providing high quality databases and informatics solutions to meet the R&D requirements of leading pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies globally," informed VN Balaji, chief scientific officer, Jubilant Biosys. Located at Bangalore, employing over 250 researchers and scientists and spread over an office area of 25,000 sq ft, it is recognized by the Department of Science and Industrial research (DSIR) as an R&D company. It focuses on providing bioinformatics research services throughout the drug discovery and development process, and has a modern bio and chemo informatics center, including a software development facility for aiding biotechnology research.

Jubilant Biosys has further developed its innovative knowledge-based products that provide bio and chemo-informatics services during fiscal 2004. Some of these products are Kinase ChemBioBase, GPCR Annotator, Caspase database, Pathways database, Nitrilase and Nitrile Hydratase database.

During FY 2004, Jubilant Biosys successfully initiated engagements with leading global pharmaceutical and research organizations. One of the world's largest pharma majors, Novartis, licensed PathArt from Jubilant Biosys. Novartis will be leveraging PathArt in its global drug discovery programs. Jubilant Biosys also licensed PathArt to The Systems Biology Institute, Tokyo, which would help their researchers generate better systems biology models.

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### **Labland Biotechs Pvt Ltd**

Labland Biotechs, floated in the year 1994, has a fully equipped laboratory at Mysore. Labland is entering into a new phase in its business mission and diversifying its activities into biodiesel.

Labland has firmed up two long-term contracts with an UK-based D1 Oils for the supply of tissue cultured jatropha plants and jatropha seed-derived crude oil respectively. Under the long-term contract with D1 Oils, it will supply one crore jatropha plants produced through tissue culture every year for the next 10 years for global distribution.

To promote jatropha-based biodiesel program in rural areas, Labland has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Sahyadri Science College, Kuvempu University, Shimoga in Karnataka. With this, Sahyadri Science College became the first to act as Jatropha Information and Dissemination Centre. "Indian farmers are expected to have sustainable benefit from the scheme since the biodiesel requirements are likely to go up in the coming years in the country and overseas," said Dr Sudheer A Shetty, managing director, Labland Biotechs.

Besides plant biotechnology Labland has entered pharma biotech by taking 26 percent stakes in Neobiotics India Pvt Ltd, a pharma biotech company in Canada. With this partnership, Labland has strengthened its activity in the areas of pharma biotech, contract research, and biotech training.

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### **Manipal AcuNova**

Manipal AcuNova, a Bangalore-based contract research organization, is a collaborative venture between the Manipal Education and Medical Group International India Pvt Ltd and AcuNova Life Sciences Pvt Ltd. Set up in 2005, this CRO has four lines of business. "One, we are the business development arm for discovery research for Manipal Group and also a sponsor. Two, conduct clinical research, mostly in the clinical development phase from Phase 1 to Phase 3 at Manipal and non-Manipal sites. The third area of activity is a clinical reference lab with advanced molecular diagnostics lab. This is coming up in Bangalore. The fourth division is into clinical data management," informed DA Prasanna, vice-chairman and managing director, Manipal AcuNova.

Manipal AcuNova has recently raised Rs 45 crore. It currently has three research centers and is looking at setting up another research center in either Hyderabad, Chennai or Mumbai. "Establishing a clinical reference lab and expanding client capabilities in the US and UK, where the company has subsidiaries, are also on the cards," said Prasanna.

The company was conferred the title of "India's best emerging CRO" in a survey conducted by Proximare, a New Jersey-based management consulting firm that develops and implements growth strategies for pharmaceutical and biotech companies.

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### **Metahelix Life Sciences**

Metahelix is an agri-biotech company focused on developing technologies for crop improvement. The company partners with agri-biotech and seed companies and offers services in the areas of functional genomics, plant genetic transformation, trait development and marker assisted crop improvement. Metahelix was set up in 2000 by five scientist-turned-entrepreneurs. Till date, an amount of over Rs 9 crore has so far been spent on research facilities and personnel. Its scientists have core capabilities in plant genomics and informatics combined with vast experience in the genetic transformation of corn, cotton, rice and several vegetable species.

Metahelix has partnerships with seed companies and is focused on developing new and novel crop varieties using biotechnology. In 2003, Metahelix signed a four-year plant functional genomics research agreement with Vialactia Biosciences Ltd, a New Zealand-based dairy biotech company. The program involves the functional validation of a large number of genes from pasture plants, potentially leading to improved plant varieties of pasture and crop plants. Vialactia and Metahelix intend to use the knowledge from ViaLactia's ryegrass functional genomics program to develop commercial rice varieties in India through Dhaanya Seeds, a subsidiary seed production and marketing company of Metahelix.

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### **Molecular Connections**

Molecular Connections headquartered in Bangalore, is a joint venture between Idea2solutions Pvt Ltd, an incubator promoted by the founders of the Dr Reddy's group and Laboratories for Information Technology, Singapore, a national research institute for advanced technologies. The focus of the company is to build products and provide services to enhance efficiency, reduce the discovery cycle time and minimize the resources spent by drug discovery companies.

One of its important accomplishments is the NetPro, a proprietary protein interaction knowledge base, which covers expert, curated and annotated protein-protein interactions from published biomedical literature. All molecules in NetPro™ are linked to public Ids (like LocusLink), facilitating ready integration of interactions information into proprietary databases. The protein-protein interactions in NetPro™ are complemented with annotations of the profiled proteins with scientific literature information on a variety of important subjects.

Molecular Connections has licensed NetPro to global players like Lion Bioscience Research Inc and GSK. Currently the company has about seven major client spread across the US, Europe and the Far East. Its varied client base has helped the company in consolidating its exposure in Europe and the US. It has also licensed the protein interaction database to a research lab at DOE Institute for Genomics and Proteomics, UCLA. Molecular Connections has offices in Bangalore, India and Gaithersburg, Maryland.

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### **Monad Nanotech Pvt Ltd**

Monad Nanotech is the first Indian company to produce carbon nano materials (CNM) at a commercial level using low cost production technology developed by Prof. Maheswar Sharon's group at IIT Mumbai, who has two patents and 38 research publications to his credit on carbon nano materials. Prof. Sharon, a pioneer in CNM research in India along with his wife Dr Madhuri Sharon, ex-director - plant biotechnology, Reliance Life Sciences, started Monad Nanotech Pvt Ltd in January 2004. Now it has filed two more patents.

The R&D activities at Monad Nanotech are lead by Prof. Sharon. The team has been working on not only synthesis of carbon nano material but also on their futuristic applications. Prof Sharon was the first scientist to use plant-based precursors for synthesis of CNM, the idea being that plant based precursor unlike petroleum-based precursors could be harvested as and when desired.

Their first attempt was made with camphor, which is synthesized from the resin of pine tree. Now they expanded their choice to various other non-edible oils. They have been able to synthesize almost all forms of carbon nanomaterials, which have been synthesized by conventional route.

Utilizing the rich experience and technologies developed by Prof Sharon, Monad Nanotech with a small team of 10 scientists had come out with 13 products. The company uses plant-based raw material for the production of various types of CNM rather than expensive fast depleting fossil fuels. Monad Nanotech has been supplying many nano materials to the research organizations in India. The products include MWCNT1-3 nano beads 1-2, nano fibers 1-4, fibrous carbon nano size metals and porous carbon gas diffusion fuel cell electrodes at less price Rs 100-500 /gram based on the purity of the product. The nano materials in the international market, are available at \$80 /gram (Rs 3600 / gram taking one \$one = Rs 45).

"Being the first generation nanotechnologists we have limitation. But combining research with commercial activities we will grow, inspite of depending on international orders," said Dr Maduri Sharon, managing director, Monad Nanotech Pvt Ltd.

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### **Reliance Life Sciences Pvt Ltd**

Reliance Life Sciences (RLS) is a millennium initiative of the Reliance Group. The Group initially has invested \$5 million in setting up facilities in cell biology in Mumbai. And the embryonic stem cell work began in April 2001.

The Reliance Industries Ltd will be investing about \$25 million in cell biology research to focus on stem cells and tissue engineering. This covers embryonic stem cells, haematopoietic stem cells, skin cells, tissue engineering, genetics and molecular diagnostics. RLS' facility at Jamnagar primarily focuses on plant biotechnology projects where modern farming methods are being tried in arid areas. In addition to this, Jamnagar also has facilities for carrying out industrial biotechnology research by addressing the biopolymers, biofuels and bioprocess development opportunities.

Mukesh Ambani  
Besides stem cell research, RLS is developing business opportunities in the domains of medical biotechnology, plant biotechnology, industrial biotechnology, contract research and clinical trials.

RLS is in the process of setting up its Cord Blood Repository (CBR) and plans to grow the repository to around 30,000 units over the next two-three years. It has filed about nine patents in India and has been offering few products and services in both medical and plant biotechnology space. With a strong team of scientists and researchers numbering over 100, it already has products and services in medical biotech such as ReliCord, ImmunoRel, AlbuRel, and ReliSeal.

Reliance Industries Ltd has set 2009-10 as a threshold year to emerge as a global energy major. To achieve this, life sciences has been identified as its next major initiative. While addressing the company shareholders in August 2005, Mukesh Ambani, chairman and managing director, Reliance Industries Ltd who also heads the Reliance Life Sciences said, "I would like to take you into confidence on the broad contours of areas that Reliance Industries Ltd would explore and engage. Life Sciences is our next major initiative."

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