

ICMR needs to push translational research

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Addressing a galaxy of senior scientists in New Delhi on November 15, 2010, during the inauguration of centenary celebrations of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare Ghulam Nabi Azad said, "India cannot wait indefinitely for development of new technologies for health, that are urgently required, to control various diseases affecting the people of the country."

Dr C Gopalan, former director general, ICMR and president, Nutrition Foundation of India, in his keynote address, urged the community not to depend on synthetic nutrients, and recommended judicious use of available food items, to control malnutrition. As challenges in nutritional security are formidable, there is a need to re-set our priorities; and also involve school children, mothers and other agencies, to spread this message.

In his Foundation Day lecture, Father of Green Revolution in India, Dr MS Swaminathan, said that to counter challenges in crop productivity due to climatic changes, it is essential to develop strategies as 'anticipatory research'. He emphasized that issues of malnutrition can be effectively resolved only with the involvement of farmers. 'Health research for marginalized communities continues to be an area of priority for ICMR', observed Dr Vishwa Mohan Katoch, director-general of ICMR.

DBT signs MoU with UK Biotech Council

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India; and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi, have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the UK's Biotechnology and Biological Science Research Council (BBSRC) and the Department for International Development (DFID). The MoU was signed on November 12, 2010 by Dr MK Bhan, secretary, DBT, in the presence of Minister of Science & Technology, Kapil Sibal and visiting UK Science Minister, David Willetts.

The letter of intent (LoI) to launch a new initiative on 'Food Security: Sustainable Crop Production Research for International Development' has also been signed, with the aim of underpinning scientific knowledge that will increase food security and alleviate poverty.

The initiative is expected to forge productive global partnerships between scientists in the UK, India and other developing countries, to leverage high quality biological and biotechnological research, for sustainable crop production in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The total value of the initiative is estimated to be **144 crore**, over a period of five years. This fund will be used to support the development of scientific knowledge, and building sustainable research capacity that will benefit emerging economies and the developing world.

The LoI will subsequently be followed up by a joint call for proposals on sustainable crop production, that will be open for research proposals from international teams of scientists from India, the UK, South Asia and Sub-Sahara Africa. Sibal and Willets reiterated the commitment of their respective countries towards closer cooperation and a cohesive relationship in this area. They hoped that the collaboration on global food security would harness the expertise available in the UK, India, sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asian region.

Novozymes opens new R&D center

Novozymes, one of the world's largest producers of industrial enzymes, has opened its new state-of-the art R&D center and office in Bangalore. Steen Riisgaard, CEO, Novozymes, inaugurated the new center that will house the India operations, including global support services and the R&D center.

The R&D center will undertake protein engineering work for Novozymes' global requirements; and will act as a resourcebase for the company's global discovery projects. The center will also serve as an application technology excellence center for Novozymes' global juice and wine industry requirements. The center is actively innovating food applications for the Indian market, by undertaking research to understand local needs in India.

OSDD to receive 183 cr fund

The Open Source Drug Discovery (OSDD) project of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is set to receive another financial boost. While pledging the support of the government to innovation, Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh emphasized that government is committed to raise around **183 crore** in funding for OSDD, from international agencies and philanthropists.

Dr Manmohan Singh while giving away the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar prize for exceptional contribution in the field of science, at a ceremony in New Delhi, said, "The Government of India has committed around **183 cr** to this project, and is now committed to raise an equivalent amount of funding for OSDD, from international agencies and philanthropists."