

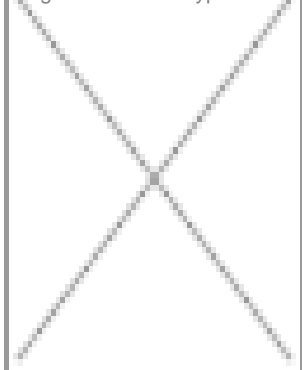
BioSpectrum Awardees Stand Tall

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An unseasonal hailstorm during a harsh Delhi winter more than 50 years ago, destroyed all the experimental wheat crops planted by a promising plant botanist Dr Obaid Siddiqi. He had no choice but to wait for the next winter season. Any other young researcher would have been disheartened by the turn of events. But this young researcher listened to the advice of his colleagues at the premier Indian Agriculture Research Institute, New Delhi, and embarked on another scientific journey to University of Glasgow, UK. The country lost a plant biotechnologist, but got in return, one of the finest geneticists of the modern era. Dr Siddiqi, dabbled in molecular biology, neurophysiology and settled down to genetics. And he continues to hunt for genetic clues to find how memory works in living organisms; at the age of 78 at Bangalore's National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) which he founded more than 20 years ago; as an arm of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. Today, NCBS is one of the country's most prestigious biological research institutions; and the researchers who have passed through its portals have played significant role in the development of India's biotechnology industry.

It is this unwavering quest for scientific excellence in Dr Obaid Siddiqi which made him the unanimous choice for the 8th BioSpectrum Life Time Achievement Award 2010. Though Dr Siddiqi has been honored with the nation's second highest civilian award Padma Bhushan in 2006, he has remained far away from the limelight. Through the profile in this issue, BioSpectrum hopes to bring to limelight the remarkable contributions of this most unassuming scientist of our era.

Like Dr Siddiqi all the other BioSpectrum awardees this year, stand out from the crowd. The 10-member jury, headed by Hari Bhartia, discussed all the short-listed nominees threadbare; but then when it came to choosing this year's awardees, the process was smooth, unanimous and satisfying to everyone.

Glenn Saldanha, head of Glenmark Pharma, was picked as the BioSpectrum Person of the Year 2010, for giving a new direction to the pharma sector with his singular focus on biological, in the last few years. Saldanha is credited with showing a new direction to the country's pharma industry to boost their pipelines, and the rapid strides made by Glenmark's biological unit in taking three biological molecules into pre-clinical trials and clinical trials, is a stand out achievement.

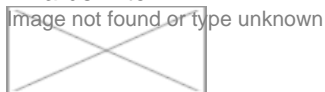
When it came to choosing the Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2010, Dr Rashmi Barbhuiya, CEO & MD of Advinus Therapeutics, was the clear winner. Despite being a late starter in entrepreneurship, starting his company in his fifties, Dr Barbhuiya and his 470 member team is leaping ahead with some unique work. India and US are building great bridges and this former Ranbaxy executive, with his 27 years of previous work with the US pharma industry, saw this happening five years ago. No wonder the company's name, Advinus is a play on 'Advantage India US'. He shuttles between his home in the US and research centers in Bangalore and Pune to make the Indian flag fly high in the world. No wonder, Dr Barbhuiya was one of the few Indian entrepreneurs who were invited to a two-hour closed door discussion with US President Barack Obama, during his recent India visit.

For the BioSpectrum Product of the Year 2010, the jury plumped for a truly Indian effort in finding a highly efficient and effective gene that has the potential to transform the country's agriculture in the long term. The cry1C bt gene from Metahelix Life Science, Bangalore was the clear winner from the long shortlist of biotech products that hit the market in the last 12 months.

The jury appreciated the wide range of biotech industry-friendly initiatives of the Government of Karnataka in recent times in announcing a revised biotech policy, biotech finishing schools, venture capital and expanding the footprint beyond Bangalore. So Karnataka was chosen the BioSpectrum BioState of the Year 2010.

Biocon under Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw has moved into a much higher orbit through a series of path breaking business step. Through the insulin deal with Pfizer, in the near future, an India-made biotech drug is likely to be available in the medicine shelves all around the world. And there are many other firsts from Biocon this year. So the BioSpectrum Leadership Award 2010 is a recognition from the industry to Mazumdar-Shaw's relentless pursuit for excellent on a global scale.

The industry will gather in Bangalore on December 17 to honor these great achievers. See you all there on the BioSpectrum Awards Nite.



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