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AP showcases itself at BIO 2003

Canada, Thailand sign MOU with AP for biotech

The Andhra Pradesh government showcased the state's impressive strides in biotech by participating in a big way at the BIO 2003 exhibition, the world's largest biotechnology event in

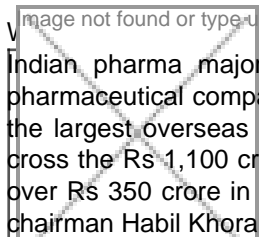
Washington D C in late June. Thanks to this, Thailand and the state of Saskatchewan in Canada have signed agreements with AP for cooperation in biotechnology. The AP delegation was led by the state's minister for biotechnology - B Gopalakrishna Reddy. It included B P Acharya, secretary, industries and commerce and D Balasubramanian, chairman, AP's State Biotech Advisory Committee. The AP stall highlighted the world class infrastructure created at the Genome Valley, ICICI Knowledge Park. A government statement said a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Andhra Pradesh and Thailand to promote biotech sectors mutually, through collaboration in research and exchange of scientists and teaching professionals. The cooperation will include marine biotechnology and biotech applications for aquaculture and tropical medicine. The MoU was signed by Acharya and Prof. Dr Pornchai, Matangkasombut, president (vice chancellor) of Mahidol University of Bangkok. Thailand's deputy prime minister Suwit Khun Kitty was also present at the signing ceremony in that country's Washington embassy. Larry Spanner, deputy minister for industries of Saskatchewan Province of Canada and Acharya signed an agreement for cooperation between the two governments. AP and Canadian members sign MoU for biotech cooperation. AP minister Reddy and Eric Cline, minister for industry and resources of Saskatchewan were also present during the ceremony. The MoU with Canada is for collaboration in the field of agri-biotechnology, with focus on crop, animal and environmental biotechnology. Saskatchewan, which is the leading State of Canada in the field of Agri-Biotechnology will collaborate in the areas of technology transfer, research collaboration, regulatory approvals, educational exchanges etc., to develop the agri-biotechnology sector in Andhra

Pradesh. A Canadian biotechnology delegation is expected to attend the Biotech India International Conference in Hyderabad in September.

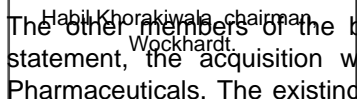
SIRO Clinpharm, Covance to work jointly in India

The Mumbai-based SIRO Clinpharm Pvt Ltd and Princeton-based Covance Inc. one of the world's most comprehensive drug development services companies with 2002 net revenues of \$883 million will collaborate to offer drug development services in India to support the domestic and international biopharmaceutical industry. The collaboration between the two will further strengthen the global reach of Covance and the operational capabilities of SIRO. "We are pleased to collaborate with Covance in offering drug development services in India to the global pharmaceutical industry," said Dr Gautam V Daftary, director, SIRO Clinpharm. Through this collaboration, SIRO hopes to bring its extensive knowledge of India's medical research community, biopharmaceutical industry, and regulatory environment to the global biopharmaceutical industry and assist in establishing India as an important location for multinational pharmaceutical companies to include in their multi-center, global trials. Industry analysts expect India to be the second largest pharmaceutical market in Asia-Pacific after China by 2005 with market growth rates of close to eight percent.

India offers significant opportunities for global clinical research and development through a strong medical infrastructure and access to the world's second-largest population. India represents the largest patient base in the world impacted by lifestyle-related illnesses like cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease and not currently benefiting from other therapies. Covance, which has global operations in 18 countries, is committed to expanding into emerging markets such as India in support of the biopharmaceutical industry's development goals. "Extending our global reach is part of a strategy to deliver to our clients strong project management and regional solutions required to meet their drug development needs and allow Covance to offer faster patient recruitment solutions across a wide spectrum of therapeutic areas including cardiovascular, oncology, and infectious diseases," said Dr James Bannon, president of clinical development, periapproval and central diagnostics at Covance.

 Indian pharma major Wockhardt Ltd has acquired CP Pharmaceuticals Ltd of the UK to become the largest Indian pharmaceutical company there. Company sources said the deal, at a consideration (equity value) of nearly Rs 70 crore, was the largest overseas acquisition by an Indian pharmaceutical company. With this acquisition, Wockhardt Ltd's turnover will cross the Rs 1,100 crore mark, with 53 percent of revenue coming from international markets. "With a combined business of over Rs 350 crore in the UK, Wockhardt now has a critical size to expand into the larger European Union," said Wockhardt chairman Habil Khorakiwala. "We will leverage Wockhardt's research and technology focus and cost-effective

manufacturing strengths to drive CP's European business."Khorakiwala will chair the new management of the company.

 The other members of the board include V Rajan (UK-based) and Lalit Kumar as directors. According to a company statement, the acquisition will not come in the way of the current manufacturing and marketing operations of CP Pharmaceuticals. The existing product range of CP Pharmaceuticals, Bovine Insulin and Porcine Insulin will continue to be available and there will be no change in the availability of these products in the future. CP Pharmaceuticals is a major supplier to UK's National Health Service with a reported sale of Rs 230 crore in 2003. It has four key businesses consisting of a branded portfolio of hospital drugs, generics, contract manufacturing and exports. It has 225 product licenses, equipping the company with a significant growth potential. It has spent over Rs 50 crore on acquiring brands in recent years.

Effective microorganisms gaining ground

The solid wastes generated in the municipalities of Pune and Gurgaon are being treated with Effective Microorganisms (EM) at a very low cost effectively. EM is a useful and effective way of managing the environment in today's world. EM is a liquid concentrate, which uses naturally occurring microorganisms. This technology is becoming popular in India. "The technology is growing into the corporate sector. We are providing the waste management solutions to the industries, as per the norms set by the government," said Navin Chopra a partner in Organic Solutions, New Delhi, a consultancy company in this field. The principle of EM is the conversion of a degraded ecosystem full of harmful microbes to one that is productive and contains useful microorganisms. EM is scientifically produced from the cultivation of over 80 strains of microorganisms which are native to the country. The chief among these are photosynthetic bacteria, lactic acid bacteria, yeast and filamentous fungi. Unlike ozone treatment process where both useful and pathogenic bacteria are removed from the waste water, EM only synthesizes harmful bacteria. EM technology was developed at the University of Ryukyus, Okinawa, Japan in the early

D. Teruo Higa. The uniqueness of EM stems from the fact that what humans consider contaminated or offensive is food for these bacteria. The potential for EM in the treating all kinds of waste and effluent is therefore tremendous. "EM metabolize waste and bring complex substances to a state where they can be easily assimilated by their environment. These organisms promote low temperature fermentation rather than normal purification. That means the typical waste odors, oxidizing agents and other unfriendly substances are not produced where these organisms can dominate," informed Chopra.

SciNova to work with AstraZeneca

SciNova Informatics, a Pune based company, will develop a software for "structure elucidation of natural compounds based on NMR and Mass Spec data" for AstraZeneca Research Foundation India (AZREFI), Bangalore. AZREFI is endowed by AstraZeneca Plc, UK and registered as a non-profit society to foster biomedical research related to infectious diseases and drug discovery. SciNova will use its capabilities in data mining, machine learning in particular, to develop the product. It will retain rights to market the product in the international market. Dr Shridhar Gadre from the chemistry department associated with the Science & Technology Park, Pune University, will provide additional computational inputs. "We were impressed with SciNova's computing capabilities and their understanding of Life Sciences, particularly their expertise in data mining," said Dr Anand Kumar, Director (AZREFI). Commenting on this, Vishal Jajodia, CEO, SciNova Informatics said, "This is a great moment for the entire SciNova team and we are really excited about working with AZREFI which is associated with an innovative pharmaceutical company like AstraZeneca. This is a good beginning and is our first step on the challenging road to success." The official release quoting Rajeev Gangal, chief scientific officer noted that the collaboration is not only a certificate of faith in SciNova's capabilities but also a demonstration of the benefits of collaboration between Indian academia, bioinformatics and pharma/biotech companies.

IT spending integral to life sciences sector

There is no denying that information technology (IT) is today an integral part of the life science companies, especially in pharma and biotech companies. A recent study conducted by India's #1 IT portal, Cyber India Online Ltd. (CIOL), under its Enterprise Connect Program, revealed that majority (74 percent) of the respondents spent in excess of Rs 21 lakh per annum. While about 43 percent spent in the range of Rs 20-50 lakh, another 31 percent spend Rs 51 lakh or more annually. Most of these companies have spent this year on financial packages, inventory planning, sales force automation, network security and intranet implementations. Guess what! VoIP, VPN, and WAN have been identified for future implementations in this sector. Furthermore, life sciences sector CIOs and IT managers are looking at info on IT applications like datawarehousing, ERP, and supply chain management. Would some of these be amongst their next initiatives?

Analysis by annual turnover	
Annual turnover	%age of respondents
Up to Rs 99 crore	26
Rs 100-249 crore	36
Rs 250-499 crore	11
More than Rs 500 crore	15