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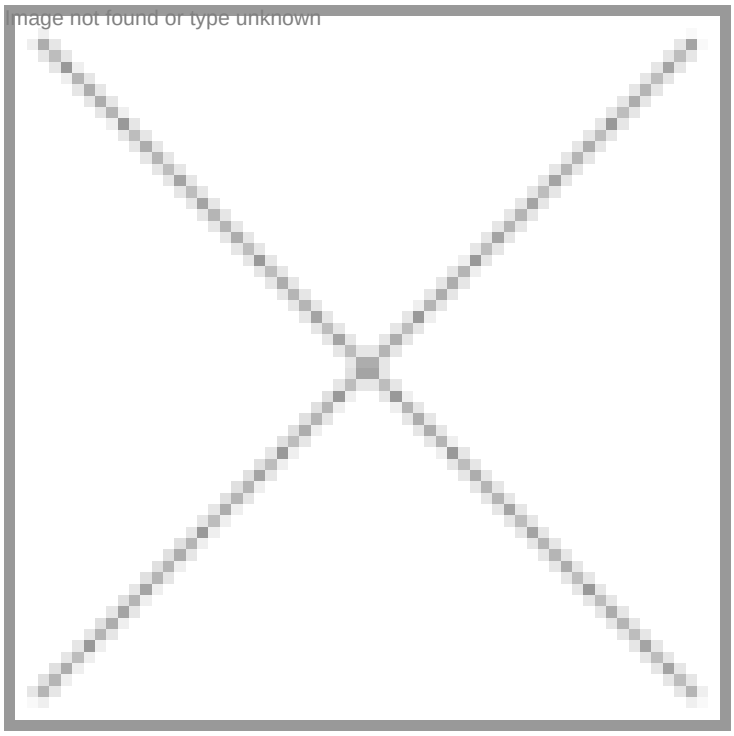

Arogya Raksha Yojana conducts diabetes screening camp

On the occasion of World Diabetes Day, Biocon Foundation and Narayana Hrudayalaya jointly conducted a diabetes ccreening camp at Huskur village near Bangalore. The camp was conducted as part of the Arogya Raksha Yojana (ARY) program for rural India undertaken by the above two organizations.

With a view to increase awareness on diabetes care and management amongst the rural population, ARY diabetes screening camps were held throughout November at Kanakpura and Anekal taluk, in Karnataka. It was found that though the incidence of diabetes in the general population of India is approximately 9-10 percent, awareness on this illness is extremely inadequate in rural areas. This is an illness that can be treated and kept under control, but if left untreated it can be debilitating.

Biocon organizes 'Winning Colours' for juvenile diabetics

Biocon Ltd organized 'Winning Colours', a painting competition for juvenile diabetics. The event was dedicated to raise awareness about the alarming rise of juvenile diabetics on the occasion of World Diabetes Day and Children's Day.

The event highlight was a canvas painting by artist Yusuf Arakkal and the winners of the painting competition. In addition, a cheque was presented to Jnana Sanjeevani, a Bangalore-based NGO working for the cause of juvenile diabetes. Every child was a winner at the 'Winning Colours' competition and twelve of the best paintings were short-listed to be used in a Biocon

sponsored calendar for the year 2006. On the occasion, Insugen.com â€“ a dedicated portal for diabetes management and care was launched by legendary actress Waheeda Rehman, for the benefit of patient and doctor groups.

"Uttaranchal, an ideal biotech destination"

"The biodiversity, presence of diverse agricultural zones, R&D institutions and universities coupled with the high priority accorded to the sector by its state government has made Uttaranchal, an ideal biotechnology destination," said Dr L M S Palni, senior scientific advisor and project director- State Biotech Program.

Speaking at a seminar on "Business Opportunities in Agribusiness and Biotechnology" in Delhi, he said Uttaranchal had many opportunities in fields such as bio fuels, biopesticides, phytochemicals, bioinformatics, diagnostics based industries, biotech based production of seeds, pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals.

Pfizer's inhaled insulin permitted for trials in India

Pfizer's inhaled insulin drug candidate, Exubera, which is used for the treatment of Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, has been given the permission to conduct clinical trials in India. According to Panaba Lakshmi, minister of state for health, Exubera, which is currently in Phase III clinical trials abroad, has been given the permission to conduct the trials in India as part of its global trials. Quintiles will be conducting the trials with the inhalable insulin in India. The Indian spokesperson of Pfizer (India) declined to comment on this, as the development was connected to Pfizer Inc. When contacted, Dr AB Rameteke, deputy Drugs Controller General of India, said he was not in a position to throw more light on this development.

Once approved by regulators in the US and around the world, Exubera is expected to provide an important new insulin delivery modality for patients with Type 1 and Type

2 diabetes. Pfizer and Sanofi-Aventis have a global agreement to co-develop, co-promote (where permitted by law), and co-manufacture inhaled insulin. US-based

Nektar Therapeutics is responsible for manufacturing the fine insulin powders and supplying the inhalers.

Acambis joins hands with Bharat Biotech

Acambis plc, a vaccine developer based in Cambridge, has established a manufacturing and marketing agreement with Bharat Biotech International Limited, relating to Acambis' ChimeriVax-JE investigational vaccine against Japanese encephalitis ("JE").

Under the agreement, Bharat Biotech will be responsible for end-stage fill/finish processing of ChimeriVax-JE at its facilities in India and, once ChimeriVax-JE is approved, will market and distribute the vaccine in India and neighbouring countries.

Quoting Gordon Cameron, chief executive officer of Acambis, the release said, "The scale of the current epidemic in India has highlighted the critical need for a safe, efficacious and cost-effective vaccine against JE. We believe that the forthcoming Phase III trials of ChimeriVax-JE will demonstrate our vaccine can meet that need and Bharat Biotech is the ideal partner to help us to maximize ChimeriVax-JE's reach."

Dr Krishna M Ella, CMD, Bharat Biotech International said, "This partnership with Acambis will enable us to bring a much-needed and improved JE vaccine to children in the Indian subcontinent, a region currently suffering from an epidemic that has so far killed over 1,000 children."

Anamol Labs to manufacture healthcare products

Anamol Laboratories, a Pune-based pathology lab was acquired by M J Dashora, (then managing director of Accurex Biomedical in 2004) to venture into manufacturing of healthcare products of latest technologies under an independently new banner having ultra modern, state-of-the-art plant facility.

Speaking to BioSpectrum, M J Dashora, managing director, Anamol Laboratories said, "Biotechnology has grown far and wide during last 15 years. But most of these technologies are expensive and confined to research laboratories. Making these available to common masses at affordable cost is our main focus. We are committed to implement and popularize the latest developments in the field of clinical chemistry, food biochemistry, food toxicology and molecular diagnosis of diseases."

Anamol's primary objective was to provide world-class health care services to common patients at affordable cost. It was shifted to Tarapur (Boisar) for establishment and efficient functioning of the upcoming 25,000 sq. feet plant facility. It strongly

feels that excellent advancements in these fields move out from research laboratories to industry making them available for use in pathology and analytical laboratories.

Virchow Biotech to start clinical trials with VIRKINASE

Hyderabad-based Virchow Biotech has received the green signal from the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) to conduct of clinical trials with VIRKINASE in India.

Virchow Biotech has indigenously developed VIRKINASE- recombinant Streptokinase.

The company proposes to conduct a multi-centric randomized double- blind study in a total number of 75-100 subjects aged between 18-75 years with acute myocardial infraction fulfilling the eligibility criteria. The clinical trials will be conducted at five CARE Hospitals in Hyderabad.

The GEAC noted that RCGM has recommended the product for Phase â€“III clinical trials in its meeting held on May 25, 2005 based on the pre-clinical toxicity data generated in rats and rabbits. The committee also noted that the product r-Streptokinase is a drug approved for marketing in India. After detailed deliberations and taking into consideration the recommendation of RCGM, DCGI and the expert members, the committee approved the conduct of clinical trials with VIRKINASE in India.

NPIL signs manufacturing pact with global firm

Nicholas Piramal India Ltd has signed a long-term manufacturing and supply agreement with a large global hospital products company. The agreement is for an initial term of ten years, followed by yearly renewals. This agreement represents an exclusive partnering arrangement between the two companies for certain global markets.

According a company's release, NPIL will manufacture and supply select hospital care products to the company. The agreement provides an avenue for addition of further products under the arrangement. NPIL will manufacture the products at its USFDA-approved facilities at Digwal, Andhra Pradesh. Revenue from the initial set of products is expected to range between $12-15 million per year.

Hikal acquires stake in Chinese company

Hikal Ltd, a technology driven company has entered into a joint venture agreement by acquiring a minority stake in one of Sinochem Corporation's subsidiary company. Sinochem of China is a "Fortune 500" company. The acquisition will enable the company to backward integrate for sourcing some of its intermediates and APIs. Hikal is already sourcing intermediate from Sinochem for one of its products.
Speaking on the occasion, Jai Hiremath, vice chairman and managing director, Hikal said, "This joint venture will help Hikal improve its cost base, as we see many sourcing opportunities of raw materials and intermediates for our APIs. The association with Sinochem will open up new avenues for marketing and sourcing of products in different markets."
Earlier, in 2004, Hikal, involved in custom synthesis and manufacturing of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), Intermediates and Crop Protection products, had acquired a majority stake in Marsing & Co., Denmark.

Wonder plant to cure diabetes

Stevia, a high value medicinal plant whose dry leaves can be used by diabetics, has been successfully cultivated in Debang valley district of Arunachal Pradesh and is ready for commercial harvesting.

PB Kanjilal, head of medicinal plant division of Regional Research Laboratory (RRL) of Jorhat, said the laboratory had adopted several villages at Roing in Debang valley to motivate 300 farmers to cultivate the plant whose leaves are far sweeter than sugar and can be used by diabetics.

Novartis India seeks permission to import Xolair

Novartis India intends to import Xolair (omalizumab) in finished formulations from the US for marketing in India and has sough the permission of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) for the same. Xolair is a recombinant humananised monoclonal antibody (protein) indicated for the treatment of asthma and is administered via subcutaneous injection.

The GEAC noted that, while clinical trials on Xolair have been done in over 4000 patients in 20 countries including the US, the UK, Australia, Germany, Canada, France, and Switzerland, the product is said to have been approved for marketing in

Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Israel, New Zealand, Pakistan, Palestine, the US and Venezuela.

After detailed deliberations at its October meeting GEAC has decided to seek the information from the applicant such as the status of approvals in the countries where clinical trials have been conducted, details of the clinical trials with type and categories of patients tested in other countries and status of issue of market authorization by DCGI.