

IICT develops process for biopesticide formulations

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The Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT), Hyderabad, has developed a process for biopesticide formulation (10,000 ppm) from the seeds of custard apple and karanja and recently transferred the technology to a small-scale industry unit, Sri Biotech, Hyderabad. The formulations prepared from the extract of the seeds of custard apple and karanja are effective in controlling the insect pests of several crops and are not phytotoxic. These biopesticides are eco-friendly, safe and biodegradable.

IICT has demonstrated the process on 1 kg batch of feedstock of seeds of custard apple and karanja. The process technology is available for other interested entrepreneurs for transfer and could be implemented at small-scale industry level where seeds of custard apple and karanja are available locally.

IBAB holds workshop on IPR

The Institute of Bioinformatics and Applied Biotechnology (IBAB) conducted a three-day workshop on Intellectual Property Rights in collaboration with Brain League consultants, from October 19-21, 2005. The purpose of the course was to provide an understanding of basic concepts of IP relating to technology, to give an insight into IP management, licensing, valuation, and other aspects of IP and to teach basic skills necessary for a good IPR protection system within the company. Kalyan C Kankala, LL.M in Intellectual Property, Commerce and Technology, Franklin Pierce Law Center Concord, conducted most of the sessions.

Strand, Elan sign pact

Strand Life Sciences has entered into a research collaboration with Elan Pharmaceuticals aimed towards supporting Elan's drug discovery efforts. This collaboration allows Elan to access Strand's technologies and achieve customized solutions for internal research programs. The agreement incorporates access to Strand's extensive in silico technology portfolio including predictive modeling for efficacy and ADMET, custom library design, QSAR and pharmacophore modeling, structure based drug design, data and visual mining and consulting experience.

"We are very excited about this opportunity and are confident that this will be a mutually beneficial relationship," said Kas Subramanian, chief scientific officer, Strand Life Sciences.

BII introduces innovative teaching methodologies

Bioinformatics Institute of India (BII), a bioinformatics and biotech institute, has introduced new techniques and teaching methodologies to enhance the quality of education. Recently, Harvard University approached BII for recommending its students for Post-Doctoral Positions in Bio-Informatics available at Harvard University. Vijay Shukla, director, BII commented, "BII is perhaps the only academic organization in the country which is utilizing these novel hi-tech methods in its regular curriculum. It is a matter of great prestige that the world's top most university has recognized the quality of students produced by BII and offered an opportunity to refer students."

Nicholas Piramal acquires Avecia Pharmaceuticals

Nicholas Piramal has announced the acquisition of the UK-based Avecia Pharmaceuticals for a consideration of £9.5 million. The consideration is inclusive of funding the business' UK pension fund deficit of between £8-9 million. The transaction completion is subject to required regulatory and other approvals. This acquisition is the company's second M&A transaction in the UK after the acquisition of Rhodia's Inhalation Anaesthetics business in December 2004.

Ranbaxy signs pact with Lupin

Lupin and Ranbaxy Laboratories have entered into a licensing agreement as per which Ranbaxy will market Lupin's Tuberculosis brand in the severely affected West and North African markets. The alliance will leverage the combined strengths. As per the arrangement, Ranbaxy will sell Lupin's TB brand "Akurit", a fixed dose combination, in countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Algeria, Chad, Mauritania and Congo.

Biotracker achieves GeneChip-compatible status

Ocimum's Biotracker has achieved GeneChip-compatible status with the Affymetrix GeneChip microarray platform and will participate in the Affymetrix GeneChip-compatible Applications Program. The program provides customers with a broad spectrum of software solutions for biomedical research and development. Ocimum's Biotracker is a GLP and US FDA 21 CFR Part 11 compliant Laboratory Information and Knowledge Management System. It is a tool for improving laboratory performance.

AstraZeneca, NPIL sign pact

AstraZeneca AB, Sweden and Nicholas Piramal India Ltd (NPIL) have announced the signing of a development and know-how agreement. Under this agreement, both the companies will establish a framework for future collaboration for development of processes for the manufacture of intermediates, active ingredients or bulk drugs for supply to AstraZeneca. The development and know-how agreement does not have a fixed tenure. It is envisaged to continue and last so long as the parties have products under development. If the collaboration on any of the product development is successful, the agreement provides for the parties to further negotiate terms of an agreement for supply of the product by NPIL to AstraZeneca.

Sterling Biotech acquires Torrent Gujarat's biotech facility

Sterling Biotech, one of the largest manufacturers of pharmaceutical gelatin, has announced Rs 55 crore deal to acquire the manufacturing facility of Torrent Gujarat Biotech. The plant of Torrent Gujarat Biotech is located at Masar in Baroda. The transaction is subject to both the parties receiving necessary approvals under applicable laws. Sterling Biotech will use the facility to manufacture specialized gelatin derivatives such as fish gelatin, hydrolyzed gelatin and fermentation-based nutraceuticals. These gelatin derivatives and nutraceuticals have been developed by Sterling for its existing customers in western world, which are large pharmaceutical and nutraceuticals companies including Fortune 500 companies.

Glenmark acquires an Argentine firm

Glenmark Pharmaceuticals SA (GPSA), a wholly owned Swiss subsidiary of Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd, acquired an Argentine marketing company Servycal SA for an undisclosed consideration. This 100 percent all-cash acquisition, funded through internal accruals of GPSA, marks the direct entry of an Indian pharmaceutical company for the first time ever in Argentina. Servycal, with a focused oncology portfolio, will enable Glenmark to expand its geographical scope and breadth of product offerings in the fast growing South American pharmaceutical markets. The company owns a basket of 17 approved product registrations with an additional three products pending registration. Apart from Argentina, Servycal's products are registered in 12 other South American country markets.

Biocon's H1 net profit drops 22%

Despite performing well in research services, insulin and other pharmaceutical products Biocon Ltd's net profit dropped by 22 percent at Rs 82 crore for the half year ended September 30, 2005 as against Rs 105 crore during the corresponding period last year. However it has registered a consolidated sales growth of 4 percent at Rs 375 crore during H1 FY 2006 as against Rs 360 crore in the corresponding period last year.

The Q2 performance was significantly stronger than Q1 and revenues were up 15 percent and PAT increased by 13 percent. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, chairman & managing director, Biocon Ltd, said, "Given the challenges in the European Statins market, I am satisfied with our results. We are seeing strong growth in important parts of our business. We have many excellent growth drivers that are beginning to bear fruit. Our discovery-led research programs in diabetes and oncology are making good progress. We are on track to complete Phase IIB clinical trials for our EGFR antibody, Biomab-EGF by the year-end. We also expect to submit an IND for our oral Insulin molecule, IN105 by the end of this fiscal. I would like to reaffirm our belief in our innovation pathway that will deliver long term, sustainable value."

Wockhardt's net profit up 17%

Wockhardt Ltd reported a 17 percent rise in net profit for the third quarter ended September 30, 2005. Sales at Rs 359 crore showed a 12 percent increase over the corresponding quarter of 2004. Operating profit increased by 9 percent to Rs 88 crore during the quarter and operating margins stood at 24.3 percent for the period.

Its newly created Biotech Strategic Business Unit bagged a tender for supply of insulin to Chile. Wockhardt has received company registration for its biopharmaceuticals in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The total approvals so far are 25.

Sterling Biotech's net profit up 57.5%

Sterling Biotech has continued to report a robust growth during the third quarter ended September 2005 on back of higher capacity from Ooty unit. Its net sales rose by 17.7 percent to Rs 122.47 crore as against Rs 104.03 crore for the third quarter of the previous year. Net profit has risen much faster by 57.5 percent at Rs 28.64 crore as against Rs 18.19 crore during the same period. The margin at net level has risen due to operational efficiencies, expanded capacity, value added products and lower interest charges.