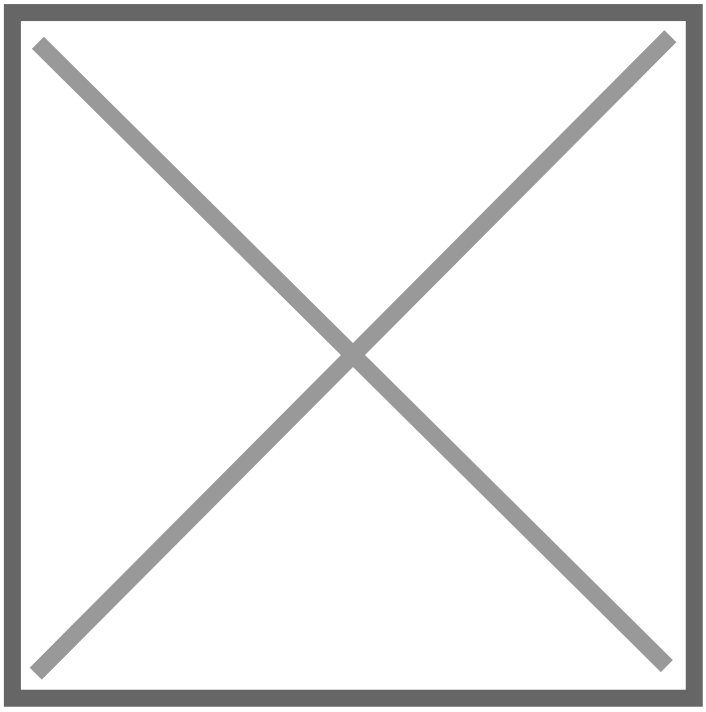
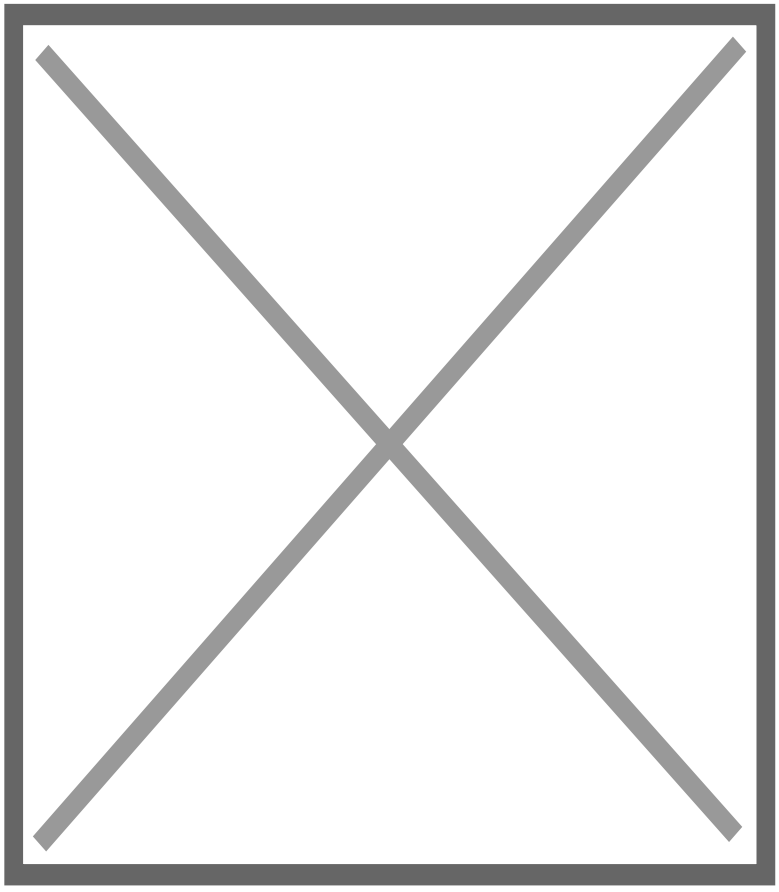


BioSpectrum Awards 2006

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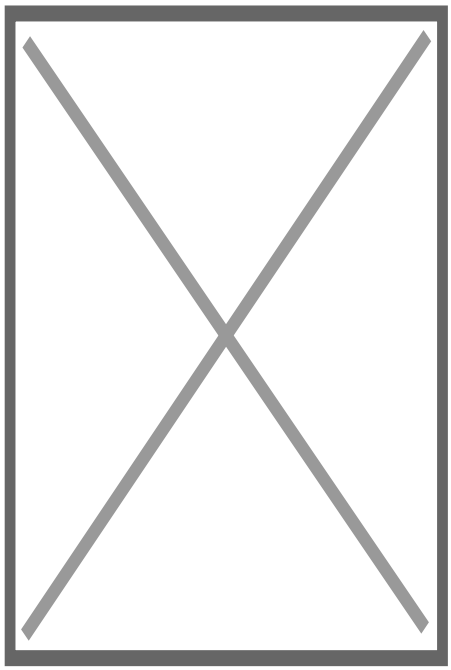
BioSpectrum Awards 2006



The activity for the BioSpectrum Awards 2006, the fourth annual biotechnology industry awards, began in early October. An eminent jury panel comprising members representing the biotechnology industry, academia and the public sector was

constituted in the first week of October. By virtue of being the Person of the Year in 2005, Dr MK Bhan, secretary, DBT, assumed the responsibility of heading the jury panel. Our practice has been that the winner of the Person of the Year award in the previous year, unanimously becomes the jury chairperson for the following year's awards.

The jury



The panel consisted of distinguished members like Nitin Deshmukh, head, private equity, Kotak Mahindra Bank, who has been working closely with this emerging industry for over a decade; Prof Samir Brahmachari, director, Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, brought in the academic perspective; Dr Krishna Ella, CMD, Bharat Biotech, represented the emerging private sector; and Dr KC Bansal, principal scientist, National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology, IARI, brought the views of the research community to the fore. The two representatives from CyberMedia were Pradeep Gupta, publisher of BioSpectrum and CMD, CyberMedia and Abraham E Mathew, chief editor, BioSpectrum. The list of nominations along with the backgrounder of the nominees was sent to all the panelists via e-mail well in advance and the research support was provided by the editor of BioSpectrum, N Suresh along with Ch. Srinivas Rao, associate editor, BioSpectrum.

With the stage set for choosing the biotech champions for the year 2006, the panel meeting was held at the DBT office in Delhi on October 30. The jury members had the onerous task of selecting the awardees for the Life Time Achievement, Person of the Year, Entrepreneur of the Year, and Product of the Year awards from a list of impressive nominations along with dwelling on the possibility of a Special Category Award. This award has been given only once in 2003, the year in which the BioSpectrum awards were instituted, to the State of Andhra Pradesh for its impressive forays in the biotech sector. During 2004 and 2005, the jury had decided against having any special category awards.

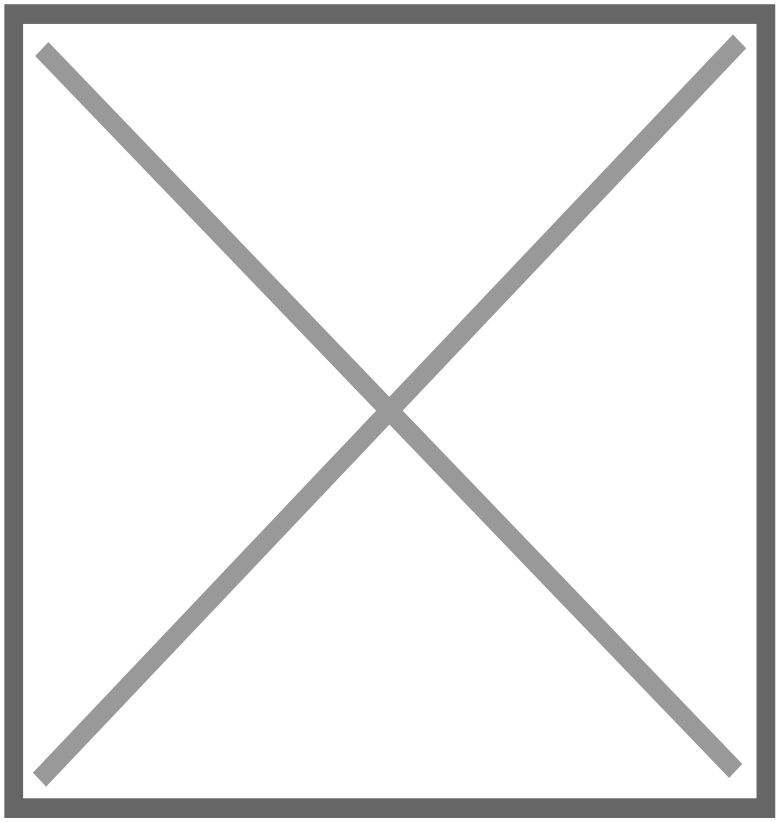
Jury deliberations

The jury panel was completely in sync with the selection of the award winners. Dr RA Mashelkar, director-general, CSIR, was the unanimous choice for the Life Time Achievement category. "Dr Mashelkar is the perfect example of a scientist and a policy maker who has reared and nurtured the biotech industry. He has been a prime mover in the biotechnology segment," said Dr Bhan. "This is the appropriate time to honor him as he is completing his term at CSIR this year," noted Pradeep Gupta.

M Ramasami, managing director, Rasi seeds, which is currently India's largest Bt cotton seeds company, was chosen the Person of the Year. This was again a unanimous decision. "Ramasami's contributions to the Indian farming community have been invaluable. Besides supplying high quality hybrids in various crops, his company has put the Bt gene in a good background (cotton hybrid) which had greatly benefited the cotton farmers," opined Dr Bansal. In just two years Rasi has expanded its Bt cotton seed business to over Rs 300 crore.

The jury members were in complete agreement with the selection of Dr Villoo Morawala-Patell, CEO, Avesthagen, as the Entrepreneur of the Year. She is a first generation scientist-turned-entrepreneur who founded Avestha Gengraine Technologies, which is focused on the novel concept of preventive personalized healthcare. "Dr Villoo has set up an

impressive company with a sustainable business plan. She has been successfully forging alliances and coming up with products," said Nitin Deshmukh.



Before the discussion on the fourth award category, the Product of the Year award, Dr Krishna Ella, stepped out of the discussion room as his company's product too figured in the list of nominations. This award was given collectively to five Reliance Life Sciences products, which the company recently released. These are AlbuRel, a plasma volume expander; ImmunoRel, purified immunoglobulin G; ReliSeal, a biological glue and hemostatic agent; ReliPlasma, inactivated plasma; and HemoRel A, which is the clotting factor VIII.

Coming to the Special Category award, the jury members chose Kapil Sibal, minister for science and technology and ocean development, in consensus for the BioSpectrum Leadership Award in Biotechnology. All the jury members felt that the minister had gone beyond the call of his duty and given a stupendous boost to the life sciences sector since taking over as the minister in 2004. "Minister Sibal is the most articulate and global spokesperson for the Indian science and technology", said Prof Brahmachari. "He has promoted the Indian science and technology as a brand and positioned it on a special platform", added Dr Ella.

In the next few pages, we have tried to capture the achievements of three remarkable individuals fired by their convictions and beliefs, a cabinet minister who had passionately championed the cause of Indian science and a team of scientists, whose dedication saw a number of excellent biotech products reaching the market in a very short time.

Rolly Dureha