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Glenmark enters cosmetics segment

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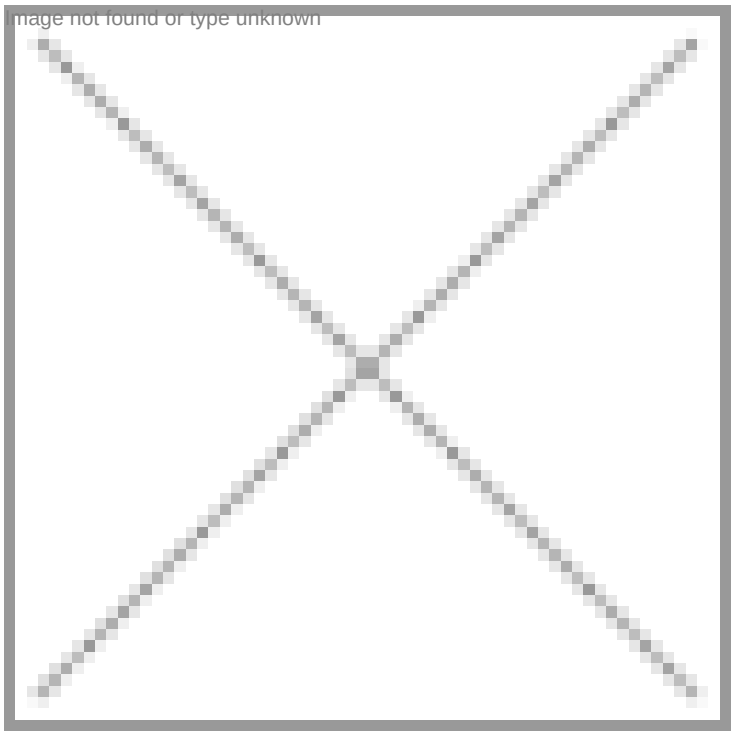

Glenmark has entered the high-end cosmeceutical segment in India with the launch of the Immanence-IDC's scientific and sophisticated anti-ageing product line in India. Glenmark has formed a new division, Glenmark CosmoCare, to pursue opportunities in the burgeoning Indian cosmetics segment.

The IDC line is based on the highly advanced 'Regen 16', a patent-pending technology that simultaneously targets the 16 main mechanisms responsible for skin ageing and offers some of the highest concentrations of cosmetic active ingredients, which in some products is up to 43 percent.

The line of products will be available at clinics of leading cosmetologists and dermatologists in 30 cities across India. Glenmark recently entered into a 10-year agreement with Immanence-IDC to distribute the Canadian company's high-end dermatology products in eight countries, including India, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, Egypt, Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand. Glenmark plans to roll out the range in most of these markets by end of financial year 2012.

Avesthagen forms JV with SAVA Medica

Avesthagen, a fully integrated life sciences and genomic healthcare company, and SAVA Medica, Pune, which is an emerging global pharmaceutical company, have formed a 50:50 joint venture (JV) in Avesthagen's subsidiary, Dhanvantari Botanicals. The JV would market and sell a line of Avesthagen's bioactive products in several countries, including the US, Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa.

Dhanvantari Botanical's products include 11 over-the-counter brands, such as AmlaPure, Ashwagandha, BosWell, Gymnema, ThinkWell, Tribulus, Triphala, TriplaLax, WinterWell, XanoMax and GojiMax. It also includes highly qualified bulk ingredients for the wellness and nutraceutical markets.

According to the agreement, Avesthagen would grant and SAVA Medica Limited will earn exclusive marketing rights for Avesthagen's seven lead, first generation scientifically validated and clinically active research products. This JV sets the footprint of SAVA Medica in the $102 billion global nutraceuticals market.

Sun Pharma reports growth of 18%

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries reported unaudited numbers for the second quarter (Q2) of the fiscal year (FY) 2012 stating that the net sales from operations stood at 1,895 crore, registering a growth of 42 percent over the same quarter last year. The India branded generic sales at 705 crore, excluding third party manufacturing business, grew by 18 percent over Q2 last year. On the other hand, the US-finished dosage sale at $175 million, international formulation sales at $56 million and the EBITDA margin stood at 41 percent. Net profit was 598 crore, equivalent to 32 percent of the net margin.

Pentavalent vaccine in 2012

Indian Immunologicals hopes to release its pentavalent vaccine in 2012. The vaccine would consist of DTP, HiB, HepB vaccines and would be in accordance with the recommendations of the WHO, which recommends to introduce the pentavalent vaccine in a phased manner in order to replace the trivalent vaccine as part of the universal immunization program.

Indian Immunologicals is also involved in the development of an oral human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine for cervical cancer. Mr Anand Kumar, deputy managing director, Indian Immunologicals, said the product is one-of-its-kind and is currently under clinical trials. Other products in the pipeline include a chikungunya vaccine and a recombinant tick vaccine.

Erythropoeitin tech to sell for $5 mn

Transgene Biotek announced the sale of technology for recombinant human Erythropoietin (rh-EPO) to TSS EXPORTGmbH FZE, which is one of the group companies of the TSS Group, for $5 million. The transfer and sale of this technology is expected to be completed over a period of approximately five to six months.

The company is also in the process of expanding its own in-house infrastructure to augment production capacities for DHA, an omega three fatty acid and tacrolimus. Both active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) are being aimed at the non-regulated markets. The company's management is also in talks with a number of manufacturers in Europe and North America for strategic partnerships.

BIRAC gets cabinet approval

The Government of India gave its approval for setting up the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), as 'not-for-profit' section 25 company, on November 24, 2011. BIRAC, which has a vision to make India globally competitive in biotech innovation and entrepreneurship, is expected to stimulate, foster and enhance the strategic research and innovation capabilities of the biotech industry in India, particularly SMEs.

The company will operate with a core budget for its regular activities and recurring expenses for human resources and operational cost with an initial outlay of 70 crore for two years. Besides providing support services such as IP facilitation, legal and contracts, regulatory and clinical trial facilitation, mentoring and capacity building, BIRAC will also provide early and late stage funding, including Small Business Innovation Research Initiative, Biotechnology Industry Partnership Programme and ignition grant. The company will also take care of the technology transfer and acquisition in national priority areas. Besides that it will be also involved in technology development in the form of incubators and parks across the country.

Use of bio-fertilizers on the rise

A study of available data indicates that the use of bio fertilizers is increasing in India. The study reveals that the total area coverage under bio-fertilizer use is less than three percent of the total cultivable area in the country. Mr Harish Rawat, minister of state for agriculture and food processing industries, in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha in November, replied that the total production of bio-fertilizers was 25,065 metric ton (MT), 20,040 MT and 37,998 MT during 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 respectively. The use of organic manures and bio-fertilizers is being promoted through various schemes, such as the National Project on Organic Farming, the National Horticulture Mission, Horticulture Mission for North-East and Himalayan States and the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana.

Vaccine industry, academia deliberate

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India, organized a symposium titled 'Vaccines â€“ from Discoveryto Translation' in New Delhi. The objective of the event was to bring industries and academia together in the field of vaccine R&D, and provide a scientific basis for future vaccine design and development. The event saw participation from 100 leading experts from different fields of vaccinology in both its human and veterinary domains. The symposium facilitated valuable

cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches among researchers, often narrowly focussing on their specific diseases or methods.

The major points on which most of the speakers and panelists agreed included the furthering of the mandate successfully, significant focus on moving forward with novel ideas that will improve understanding of how vaccines can be designed, developed and delivered, particularly against diseases where past research has not been successful.

Health sector to get 2.5% of GDP

The healthcare sector in India will get a boost as the Planning Commission has increased budget for the sector by 0.7 percent, from 1.8 percent to 2.5 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Ms Syeda Hamid, member of Planning Commission, said that this will be a very big jump. She said that to strengthen the National Immunization Programme there is a need to bring confidence in the community and people to avail this help. She added that year-on-year achievement has to be recorded in order to get maximum benefits. The planning commission will insist on the fact that what is spent, has to be commensurate in result. For the outreach programme, she suggested that interaction of local police, anganwadi workers and religious heads of different sects would have to help in mobilizing the people.

BMS & FICCI organize conference

Bristol-Myers Squibb, India, in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), organized a roundtable conference on 'Developing Capacities to Tackle Chronic Diseases' in Delhi on November 14, 2011, on the occasion of World Diabetes Day. The conference was supported by India Health Progress (IHP), an initiative aligned at ensuring access of healthcare to all. The event was aimed at creating awareness about the prevalence of acute and chronic diseases, and the dire and immediate need to spread prevention awareness about these diseases. In addition, the discussions clearly brought out the important role that will have to be essayed by insurance providers in terms of making drugs more affordable and accessible to patients.

Consultations on stem cell guidelines

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) will hold public consultations on ICMR-Department of Biotechnology (DBT) Guidelines for Stem Cell Research and Therapy (2007) on December 17, 2011 at New Delhi. The consultation is aimed to generate consensus among all stake holders of the northern region, including New Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Jammu and Kashmir.

Indians need better MS treatment

Multiple Sclerosis International Federation (MISF) has called for urgent action and better treatments to be made available for Multiple Sclerosis (MS) patients in India. A summit conducted by the MSIF in New Delhi saw participation from leading MS specialists from the US, UK and India. The summit addressed a gathering of approximately 400 persons that included delegates from 48 countries, special invitees from the government, donors, supporters from corporate houses and the city's select individuals.

Experts revealed that although there was no cure for MS, there is a great deal of ongoing research in the field and there continues to be a focus on the immune system in investigational therapies. There are many drugs that can slow down the progression of the disease. Disease modifying drugs (DMDs) are drugs that affect the long-term progression of MS. In addition, scientists are trying to develop techniques that allow brain cells to generate new myelin (nerve layer) or that prevent the death of nerves.

Food associations seek ban on GM foods

With the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India (BRAI) Bill likely to be tabled in the winter session of Parliament, two of the leading Indian food associations have declared themselves as GM-free. The Kerala Roller Flour Millers Association and the Kerala Bakers Association in separate letters has asked the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MOFPI) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to put an immediate ban on open air releases of GM food crops and deemed it essential that the policymakers safeguard the interest of the food processing sector in India.

Greenpeace has supported the initiative. According to the statement issued by Greenpeace, the denial of GM ingredients by such major players of the Indian food industry, like Kerala Roller Flour Millers Association, which has a turnover of 2,000 crore, and Kerala Bakers Association that has an approximate turnover of 4,000 crore annually, underscores the seriousness of the issue GM foods has in India due to associated risks of contamination, consumer rejection and resultant monetary losses. Greenpeace demanded that the government should take into consideration the massive opposition that GM crops are facing in the country from all stake holders and redraft the BRAI Bill.

Lupin acquires I'rom Pharmaceuticals

Lupin's Japanese subsidiary, Kyowa Pharmaceutical Industry, has entered into an agreement with I'rom Holdings, an integrated Japanese healthcare provider, to acquire up to 100 percent of the outstanding shares of its subsidiary, I'rom Pharmaceutical (IP). Established in 1947, IP is a specialty injectables company, headquartered in Tokyo. For the fiscal year ending March 2011, IP recorded sales revenues of 358.8 crore ($69 million). IP has a significant presence in the diagnosis, procedure and combination-based (DPC) hospitals within Japan.

Molecular Connections grows swiftly

Molecular Connections, a pioneering in silico discovery services company, has been ranked 24th on the Deloitte Technology Fast 50 India 2011, which is a ranking of the 50 fastest growing technology companies in India. The rankings are based on percentage revenue growth over three years. Molecular Connections grew by 131 percent during this period.

Mr Jignesh Bhate, CEO, Molecular Connections, credits the sharp customer focus and employees' best-in-class talent with the company's astounding revenue growth over the past three years. He says that the strong employee-customer interaction, which is a part of Molecular Connections' corporate culture, always makes customers happy with the quality and value of the services they get and in return motivates employees to offer best of their efforts to enhance customer relationship.

Stem cell research facility at CCMB

The Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology (CCMB), part of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), has opened a new facility, Clinical Research Facility for Stem Cell Technologies and Regenerative Medicine, at its campus in Hyderabad where in clinicians and scientists will come together to provide cell-based therapies for patients.

The new facility came up with the funding to the tune of 24 crore from the Department of Science and Technology and CSIR, and is one of a kind in the country. The CCMB has tied up with the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, Hyderabad, to work together to provide cell-based therapies to patients. Critical patients who have serious problems relating to liver, heart and spinal cord will be immensely benefited with this facility.

Insulin delivery device launched

Biocon has launched its re-usable insulin delivery device, INSUPen, in India. A world-class, differentiated device based on proprietary German technology, INSUPen is a first-in-class reusable delivery device. It is designed for efficiency, accuracy and safety and can deliver both Basalog and Insugen, thus maximizing patient convenience.

INSUPen was launched by Biocon chairman and MD, Dr Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, at a gala event. INSUPen is abreakthrough in diabetes delivery device. It is the first German technology pen offering the best user-friendly features.

Advinus completes study on GKM-001

Advinus Therapeutics has successfully completed a 14-day proof-of-concept study in 60 Type II diabetic patients on its lead molecule, GKM-001, a glucokinase activator. The results of the trial show effective glucose lowering across all doses tested without any incidence of hypoglycemia or any other clinically relevant adverse events. The clinical trials on GKM-001 validate the company's pre-clinical hypothesis that a liver selective Glucokinase activator would not cause hypoglycemia (very low blood sugar), while showing robust efficacy.

GKM-001 belongs to a novel class of molecules for treatment of type II diabetes. It is an activator of Glucokinase (GK), a glucose-sensing enzyme, found mainly in the liver and pancreas. Being liver selective, GKM-001 mostly activates GK in the liver and not in pancreas, which is its key differentiation from most competitor molecules that activate GK in pancreas as well. The resulting increase in insulin secretion creates a potential for hypoglycemia, a risk GKM-001 is designed to avoid. Advinus has the composition of matter patent on GKM-001 for all major markets globally.

Both the single ascending dose data, in healthy and type II diabetics, and the Multiple Ascending Dose Study in Type II diabetics has shown that the molecule shows effective glucose lowering in a dose dependent manner and has excellent safety and tolerability profile over a 40-fold dose range. GKM-001 has the potential to be â€œfirst-in-classâ€? drug to address this large, growing and yet poorly addressed market.

AvestaScan Genome Scan launched

Manipal Health Enterprises (MHE) signed an agreement with Avesthagen for the launch of AvestaScan Whole GenomeScan (WGS) service. A whole genome scan of an individual or patient would provide information to understand his or her own genetic make-up that would lead to an increased awareness about the predisposition to a particular disease(s). The 28

diseases, which are covered by AvestaScan include major types of cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, schizophrenia, Alzheimer's, asthma, anemia and arthritis. The whole genome scan will be carried out on DNA extracted from saliva or buccal swab provided by the individual. The results of the analyses will be available to the individual through an on-line secure web portal.

USFDA approval for Strides' injection

Onco Therapies, a wholly owned subsidiary of Strides Arcolab, received US FDA approval for Carboplatin Injection 10 mg/ mL packaged in 50 mg/ 5 mL, 150 mg/ 15 mL, 450 mg/ 45 mL and 600 mg/60 mL multi-dose vials. The product will be manufactured at Strides' oncology complex in Bangalore, which received approval from the European regulatory authorities in June, 2010. The US market for generic Carboplatin is approximately $35 mn whereas the combined European market for Carboplatin stood at $138 mn. Carboplatin is part of the oncology portfolio licensed to Pfizer in January 2010 for the US market and will be launched shortly.

Sisco Research acquires Madras Biotech

Sisco Research Laboratories (SRL) completed the acquisition of Chennai-based biotech company, Madras Biotech. The value of the deal remains undisclosed. Madras Biotech engages in the manufacture of a range of products suitable for advanced molecular biology and biotechnology techniques, typically DNA and protein markers and PCR products. Due to the growing potential in the biotechnology industry, SRL introduced its own BioLit range of products to the research markets in India and overseas. SRL will begin the next phase of streamlining and merging of operations of this division into the SRL framework and will invest in further expansion and R&D. Mr Akash Agarwal, director, SRL, says, â€œThis acquisition is all the more important for us since it marks the first ever acquisition deal by SRL in its 37-year-old history.â€?

Eppendorf center gets ISO 17025:2005 accreditation

Eppendorf India's Pipette Calibration Centre in Chennai has received ISO 17025:2005 accreditation from National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL). The Centre can now calibrate any make of piston stroke pipette and issue certificate as per the guidelines of the NABL. This is the first-of-its-kind accreditation in the industry for piston stroke pipette.

The NABL provides laboratory accreditation services to laboratories that are performing tests/calibrations in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025:2005 and ISO 15189:2007 for medical laboratories. These services are offered in a non-discriminatory manner and are accessible to all testing and calibration laboratories in India and abroad, regardless of their ownership, legal status, size and degree of independence.