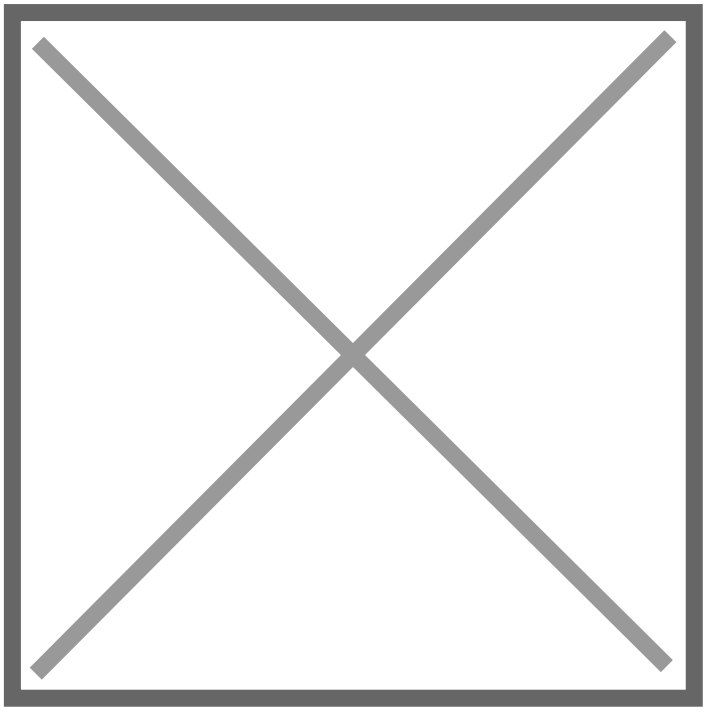
BioSpect
the business of Bi
24 years of leveraging the business of Bio
www.biospectrumindia.co

BioShakers - Padma Awards

11 February 2005 | News



It rains Padma Awards on Biotech Leaders

Barely five years old, the biotechnology sector has been hovering over the fringes of the Indian industry so far. Not any more. It has been thrust to the forefront swiftly on January 26 when the nation celebrated the 55th Republic Day. The nation's highest civilian honors were bestowed on seven industry leaders and five of them happened to be the captains of biotech and life science companies. As the icing on the cake, two eminent personalities who have been great supporters of biotech too have been given the Padma awards.

Awardees

1.

Bhai Mohan Singh (**Padma Vibhushan**- founder of Ranbaxy)

2.

Dr Martanda Varma Sankaran Valiathan (**Padma Vibhushan**- Chitra tilting disc valve developer)

3.

Y K Hamied (**Pamda Bhushan**- founder, CIPLA)

4.

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (**Padma Bhushan**- Biocon)

5.

Varaprasad Reddy (**Padma Bhushan**-Shantha Biotechnics)

6.

Prof V S Ramamurthy, Secretary, Dept of S&T (**Padma Bhushan**)

7.

Azim Premji of Wipro (**Padma Bhushan**)

8.

Cyrus S Poonawalla (**Padma Shri**- Serum Institute)

Never in the history of these coveted awards that a small section of the industry grabbed the entire limelight. A report from the biotech heartland about the unprecedented show of nation's attention on the Rs 3,200 crore industry, all set to breach the $1 billion mark this year.

It is a proud moment for the biotech and life sciences industry. Out of the 96 Padma Awardees for this year, seven are business people-Dr Bhai Mohan Singh of Ranbaxy, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw of Biocon, Varaprasad Reddy of Shantha Biotechnics, Dr Yusuf Khwaja Hamied of Cipla, Dr Cyrus Soli Poonawalla of Serum Institute of India, Azim Premji of Wipro and Dr Brijmohan Lall Munjal of Hero. Out of these seven names, the first five have very strong roots in the life sciences industry, and the sixth awardee, Azim Premji of Wipro has some biotech connection through Wipro Life Sciences division.

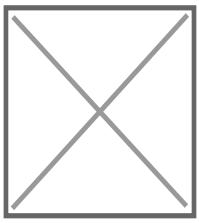
The profile of the biotech industry is further enriched with awards for Dr Martanda Varma Sankaran Valiathan (Padma Vibhushan) and Prof. V S Ramamurthy, Secretary, Department of Science & Technology (Padma Bhushan). Dr Valiathan is primarily a cardiac surgeon who received his surgical qualifications in the UK and cardiac surgery training at the Johns Hopkins and Georgetown Hospital in the US. He has pioneered biomedical research in India and is credited with the development of artificial heart valves-Chitra tilting disc valve (which is now commercially available)-blood bags, oxygenerators, vascular grafts etc. He has published several research papers on endomyocardial fibrosis cardiac surgery, biomaterials and artificial internal organs, health and health policy. He undertook the monumental work to bring out the foundational text of Indian Medicine in Sanskrit-Charaka Samhita.

And Prof. Ramamurthy is a major supporter of biotech by funding companies like Biocon, Shantha and Bharat Biotech through the Technology Development Board (TDB).It is not often that so many people in any one single field are recognized. This is

an acknowledgement of the importance and impact of biotechnology. BioSpectrum and the industry congratulate each one of these winners, who have tirelessly contributed to the success of this industry in particular and society in general.

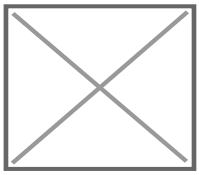


Padma Vibhushan -
Bhai Mohan Singh



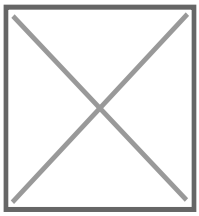
Bhai Mohan Singh started Ranbaxy in the early Sixties. The pharma company came into being in Amritsar in the 1950s when Ranjit Singh and Gurbux Singh, employees of a Japanese pharmaceuticals company, fused their names to form Ranbaxy. Some years later, Bhai Mohan Singh took charge of the company and nursed it into a pharmaceutical giant with a global presence.

Padma Bhushan -
Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw



She is a much sought after biotech pioneer who has been referred to as "India's Biotech Queen" by *The Economist.* She is the first recipient of *BioSpectrum Person of the Year Award in 2003*

Padma Bhushan -
K Varaprasad Reddy



"This award is not meant for me personally but for Shantha for its contribution in biotechnology and its societal impact by way of creating a biotechnology wave in the country, and also making life saving drugs at affordable cost without compromising on quality."

Padma Bhushan -
Dr Yusuf Khwaja Hamied



Dr M K Bhan, secretary, DBT

said, "I am very delighted that people associated with the biotechnology industry have been honored. This is a recognition of enterprise as they are the drivers of this new industry and providers of modern healthcare to the country."

Dr Manju Sharma, former secretary, DBT,

said, "I am delighted to see the recognition given to those who have contributed significantly to the growth of biology and biotechnology in the country. Biotechnology certainly would pay rich dividends in future, provided the industry joins hands with academia and this has already started."

Anil Kapur, vice president, Stakeholder Relations - Asia, Novo Nordisk

, said, "The fact that so many of this year's Padma Awardees are related to biotechnology and particularly the pharma industry is not only an honor to these illustrious individuals but also a recognition by the government and civil society to the tremendous contribution that the pharmaceutical industry has made to alleviate human suffering. This recognition augurs well for improving private-public partnership in the future to deal with the many difficult health challenges that we face going forward for prevention and treatment of the double burden of illness-communicable diseases and non communicable diseases,"

Varaprasad Reddy, CEO, Shantha Biotechnics,

reacted thus: "I am overjoyed to know that among the awardees, eight are from the biotechnology sector. This proves that the government has given emphasis to science and technology while announcing the Padma Awards this time. The government has realized the importance of entrepreneurship as well as proactive and friendly bureaucracy (award to Prof. VS Ramamurthy). The latest trend in selecting the awardees shows that our country is not only rich in fine arts but also in science and technology oriented disciplines. Looks as if the days of 'Nehruvian scientific temperament' are back."

DA Prasanna, president of Manipal AcuNova

, said, "I have worked closely with Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and Azim Premji. In 1992 when I was a Board member of Vittal Mallya hospital, a family member had died of a heart ailment and that time Bangalore had no cathlab. It was Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw who ensured that the hospital got one. Her interest in art did not stop at buying art. She has helped artistes to find root in Bangalore. I think Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw's success lies in putting ideas to action,"

K V Balasubramaniam, managing director, Indian Immunologicals Ltd

, said, "The awardees richly deserved the awards for making our pharma and biotech sectors very competitive and for having brought in a high-level of international recognition."

SV Veerramani, vice president, Indian Drug Manufacturers Association, Mumbai

, said, "It is heartening to note that six industrialists from the biotechnology sector have received Padma Awards for 2004. This only goes to show the importance given by the government for biotechnology and its development. It is also nice to know that industrialists are being recognized for their contribution of knowledge, expertise and employment generation."

Alok Gupta, country head, life sciences and biotechnology, YES Bank Ltd,

said, "It is very heartening to note that the efforts and dedication of these eminent personalities and pioneers in their areas of life sciences and biotechnology have been awarded due recognition."

Dr KK Narayanan, managing director, Metahelix,

said, "It is notable that at least three of the Padma Awardees this year are from the biotechnology industry. While each of them richly deserve the recognition for their outstanding contributions to this sector, their selection also signifies the growing recognition of the importance of this sector for the growth of our economy and welfare of our people."

Prof. D Balasubramanian, director of research, LV Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad,

said, "Bhai Mohan Singh first helped his friends Ranbir Singh and Gurbax Singh to set up a pharmaceutical company, and then took it over upon their request, calling it Ranbaxy (after them) and made history. Yusuf Hamied will be known for a long time for his public-spirited move in supplying anti-AIDS drugs to Africa at affordable rates, a trend that forced major pharma giants to follow suit. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw is undoubtedly the queen of the Indian biotech industry. She is a lady of grit, determination and spirit and people know little about how she struggled in the early 1980s to make her dreams come true. Varaprasad Reddy is a man with foresight and it was he who started the modern vaccine revolution in India."

Prof. V S Ramamurthy, secretary, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India

, said, "By awarding a number of people and entrepreneurs associated with the biotechnology industry, the government has sent a clear message that this is a sunrise technology and industry. I am very happy that Varaprasad Reddy (CEO, Shantha Biotechnics) has been able to make a mark in this area. The T DB had provided assistance to Shantha Biotechnics in its initial stages. Through Reddy's efforts, today, the recombinant hepatitis vaccine is now available at one-twentieth of its cost in India. And he has not confined himself to that vaccine alone. Similarly, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw is like a role model for the industry. What she has been able to achieve is extremely commendable. Biocon has set a benchmark for others companies operating in this area."

Dr Y Koteswar Rao, executive vice president and head, Chembiotek Research International Pvt Ltd

, said, "It is for the first time that the government has awarded these many civilian awards to scientists and scientists-turned-entrepreneurs. This encourages the advancement of science in our society. It reflects the arrival of a new era wherein knowledge based industry is the hope for the future and also indicates the support of the government towards this endeavor."

Nitin Deshmukh, director, ABLE,

said,"I am happy and pleased to know that the promoters of the early movers in the field of biotechnology-Shantha Biotechnics, Biocon and Serum Institute of India-have been recognized by the government of India for their contribution to this upcoming and emerging sector. It's very credible and also a sign of excitement for the industry."

Lila Poonawalla, chairperson, DeLaval Pvt Ltd and former managing director of Alfa Laval (India)

said "All the awardees have individually and collectively put India on the global world map. We should feel proud of all these individuals who have had the vision and have made it their mission to contribute to the world of technology, which will contribute to the well being of people."