

Trade-Technology E-Zine 7
(Centre for International Trade in Technology)

Bharat Biotech to invest Rs 325 crore

Bharat Biotech International Ltd. will be investing Rs 325 crore in clinical research and setting up a manufacturing facility. This is part of its focus on innovation. About Rs 250 crore will be invested in clinical research activities and Rs 75 crore in setting up a new facility in the existing campus in Hyderabad. The funds would be mobilised through internal accruals, grants from the Department of Biotechnology and international agencies.

Bharat Biotech is working on a number of vaccines that are in phase I and phase II clinical trials. The vaccine on Chikungunya is in phase I clinical trials. Other vaccines related to Rotavirus, Typhoid, Malaria, Japanese Encephalitis and H1N1 have completed phase II. In addition, Bharat Biotech is also developing a biopharmaceutical drug for cardiovascular problem. The company has a basket of 10 vaccine products, which is led by hepatitis B vaccine in volume of sales.

(The Hindu Business Line, 03 February 2010)

Siemens to invest Rs 1,600 cr in Indian infra over 3 years

Europe's largest engineering group, Siemens AG, is planning to invest Rs 1,600 crore over the next three years in Indian infrastructure, including energy, ports, airports and health care. A major portion of this would be directed at the domestic renewable energy sector, with the company investing Rs 500 crore for manufacturing of wind turbines for the Indian market. The shipping of these turbines would begin in 2012.

(Business Standard, 3 February 2010)

Private Equity investments in SMEs down 68% in 2009

Private Equity (PE) investments in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in India fell by 68% in 2009 to \$580 million (around Rs 2,670 crore) from \$1,824 million (around Rs 8,390 crore) in 2008.

According to data compiled by Venture Intelligence, a Chennai-based research firm which tracks PE investments, SMEs had attracted PE investments worth \$1,454 million (around Rs 6,670 crore) in 2007.

While describing this as a "temporary phenomena", industry experts said that PE funds were poised to invest an estimated \$5 billion (around Rs 23,000 crore) in India. Some sectors that are fast picking up are infrastructure, education, health care and food and beverages, among others.

According to a World Bank report, India has 13 million SMEs in the manufacturing and services sector. One of the greatest challenges for them is the current credit crunch. "Their (SMEs') access to funding has been constrained, which is affecting their ability to invest in capital goods, environmentally friendly technologies, and job creation," the report added.

The number of PE investment deals in 2009 was 81, compared to 187 in 2008, a drop of around 56%. In 2007, the number of deals executed by SMEs was 175.

(Business Standard, 02 February 2010)

Tech transfer nods from India

US companies have got maximum approvals for technology transfer from India since 1991, cornering 22% of the total sanctions, says a government statement. According to the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, India cleared 8,080 foreign technology transfer projects since 1991.

(Business Standard, 01 February 2010)

Indian engineers to help Swiss scientists study brain circuits

Scouting for IT architecture brains, Swiss scientists on Blue Brain project have zeroed in on PIT Solution. The Blue Brain Project is the world's first comprehensive attempt to reverse-engineer the mammalian brain. The \$3-billion project is expected to be completed by 2018," Brain Mind Institute of Swiss Federal Institute director Henry Markram said.

The Blue Brain project is billed as an audacious attempt to build a computerised copy of a brain— starting with a rat's brain, and then progressing to a human brain— inside one of the world's most powerful computers. Propelled by Swiss Federal Institute, it is an international project involving several countries and ethics monitoring by UN bodies. India is yet to be part of the project.

(The Financial Express, 30 January 2010)

Nod for changes in norms for SME cluster development

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved modifications in the guidelines of Micro and Small Enterprises – Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP), a move that will enhance the maximum project cost for Common Facility Centre to Rs 15 crore from the existing Rs 10 crore. The Government contribution for the project will be 70 %.

The modifications will also see enhancement of the maximum project cost for infrastructure development being doubled to Rs 10 crore with the Government contribution of 60 per cent. Similarly, the maximum project cost for soft intervention has been enhanced to Rs 25 lakh from Rs 10 lakh earlier with the Government contribution of 75 per cent, while the cost ceiling for preparation of Detailed Project report for Common Facility Centre and or infrastructure development has been enhanced to Rs 5 lakh.

The implementation of modified MSE-CDP will facilitate in enhancing the sustainability, productivity and competitiveness of the micro and small enterprises, the statement adds.

(The Hindu Business Line, 29 January 2010)