

Bharat Biotech raises installed capacity

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Hyderabad: City-based vaccine manufacturer Bharat Biotech International Limited has crossed a milestone by increasing its production capacity to over 100 million doses of hepatitis B vaccine annually. Revac-B, the vaccine whose commercial production began in January this year, is also in the process of being registered for exports to other countries.

Speaking to newsmen here on Wednesday, Bharat Bio managing director Dr Krishna Ella said the expansion had been carried out at a cost of Rs 21 crore. Since the commencement of the commercial production, the company had sold 3 million doses, he said. Recently, it had received orders worth Rs 4 crore from the government of Haryana, and the municipal authorities of Ahmedabad and Chennai for their immunisation programmes.

Touching upon the achievements of the company in its first year of operations, Dr Ella said the Bill Gates foundation had approached the company for its various immunisation programmes in the third world countries. It had also received Rs 1.4-crore genome therapy grant for conduction research on a drug for improving cardio efficiency from the department of science.

Talking about the future of the company, Dr Ella said, "If we go by the number of human genome projects under way all over the world, biotechnology is going to be a promising field along with information technology in the next millennium." The company, whose focus is basically on R&D, had adopted globally accepted 'good clinical process' (GCP), he added. On the cost per dose factor, Dr Ella said the cost was inversely propotional to the volumes; that is as the volume rise the cost per dose would slide. Therefore, if the government takes up immunisation programme on a large scale, the prices could be further brought down drastically, he said.

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