

## **Bharat Biotech bags national R&D; award**

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**Hyderabad, Dec. 6:** Among the few indigenous life-saving vaccine manufacturers, Bharat Biotech International Ltd is one of the leading players based here which has recently bagged the 'Best R&D; 1999' award in pharma sector from the Government of India (Department of Scientific & Industrial Research).

Krishna Ella managing director of Bharat Biotech said that this was the second consecutive year in which a biotechnical phara company is getting the national award for the same Hepatitis-B research and that too from Andhra Pradesh (last year the award went to city-based Shantha Biotech). "Our aim is to be innovative not imitative," he said adding "we are making the vaccine without using heavy metals (generally used) which in no way reduces the efficacy of the vaccine. On the other hand, it is highly safe especially since it has to be administered to new borns." He is convinced that Hepatitis-B vaccine is an absolute necessity for infants and "not for commercial reasons," he asserted.

Bharat Biotech's present vaccine (Hepatitis-B) capacity is 100 million doses and its "utilisation is just 10 per cent," said the MD. Though priced at around Rs 250 per dose, the lowest among other competitors of the same product, "the price structure is not reaching the consumer," he said. The company is into life saving drugs like cardio-vasculars, anti-diabetic drugs with a view to making them affordable. The company has started registering for marketing the vaccine in a number of countries.