

Bharat Biotech targets Rs 800 cr turnover by '07

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Hyderabad, Oct. 16: TARGETING a turnover of Rs 800 crore by 2007 and seeking to emerge a global player in the biologicals market, Bharat Biotech International Ltd has lined up a slew of products that it has developed through a smart mix of collaborative research and scientific institutional funding.

The first of these products would be the world's first vegetarian or non-bovine typhoid vaccine, christened Tybar, which is slated for launch in November, Chairman and Managing Director Dr. Krishna M Ella told ET.

The Rs 26 crore Bharat Biotech currently has two products in the market, the hepatitis-B vaccine Revac-B and anti-diarrhoeal probiotic product biogit. The market for the typhoid vaccine in India, which is pegged at over Rs 60 crore and is expected to grow at a rate of 25% annually, has so far been met through imports, Dr Ella said.

The new product has been developed in collaboration with the National Institution of Health (NIH), USA and took over two years and Rs 12 crore in investments that includes the installation of production facilities. Despite being the first of its kind in the world, Bharat Biotech has decided not to file for patents on it preferring to keep it a proprietary product, Dr Ella said.

Some of the other products slated for early launch include streptokinase, used for dissolving blood clots, an epidermal growth factor (EGF), in various forms while other products like vaccines for malaria (MVI), rotavirus, and insulin are in the pipeline.

While the market for streptokinase is estimated at around Rs 80 crore in the country, Bharat also plans to enter the insulin market, which has a Rs 250 crore market, to increase turnovers, Dr Ella said. However, the company is pinning its long-term hopes on products like the rotavirus vaccine being developed in collaboration with CDC Atlanta, and the malaria vaccine (MVI), both of which should be ready for commercialization within three years, he added.

Close to two lakh children die every year in India alone due to rotavirus which is the most common cause of severe diarrhea among children to the extent of 6 lakh worldwide. Elaborating on his strategy for growth, the technocrat-turned-entrepreneur, who has the distinction of setting up what he claims to be the largest biological facility in Asia-Pacific, said success in the segment would depend on lining up a timed release of multiple products to keep the cash flowing in while developing a market base.

Agreeing that market development has been a weak link in the chain, Dr Ella said he was scouting for a big player to market the long list of products expected to be rolled out in the next few years. "I am open to a pharma company that is willing to take up a stake in my company. But it has to be a company with vision", he added.