Prime Minister exhorts CSIR scientists to focus on ‘time bound delivery’ of technology

On the 75th anniversary celebrations of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) on September 26, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the organisation had to gear themselves up to provide “time bound” delivery of solutions.

Though the CSIR labs had immensely contributed to developing affordable technology – from tractors to diabetic drugs – for the country, it needed to ensure that there was no duplication of research efforts. “There should be a platform such that scientists learn what’s happening in one lab and then orient themselves to new challenges,” he told at the gathering of heads of CSIR labs and recipients of the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Awards, one of India’s most prestigious awards for scientists.

He also exhorted scientists to be cognizant of technological solutions that needed to be immediately implemented, even as scientists worked on research that would yield fruit “50 or hundred years hence.” Mr. Modi stressed on the need for using technology to help farmers double their income by 2022. He added that research was needed for maximising farm output from wasteland as well as increasing output from the same acreage under initiatives such as “per drop, more crop,” or “an inch of land, and a bunch of crops.”

Mr. Modi said concerns over water security were creating an atmosphere of “war brewing between countries over water” but said that it was scientists who had to come up with solutions. “Those who write about such things will write, but (CSIR) scientists have to do more over improving water security, ensuring that water can be used more efficiently and land used better to improve crop varieties.”

The Prime Minister further added that CSIR, which has contributed significantly in the area of health, needs to focus on developing affordable diagnostic solutions, especially given the onslaught of diseases like tuberculosis, chikungunya, dengue, and others, in order to prevent epidemics.

Skill development programme

The Prime Minister’s address was preceded by that of CSIR Director-General, Dr. Girish Sahni, who said that CSIR was launching a skill development programme that would see CSIR laboratories training the unskilled, in industrial applications. The CSIR, said Dr. Sahni, has identified 90 “fast track technologies,” developed by its scientists that could be rapidly brought to market.

Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Awards

The government had recently announced the recipients of the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award for science and technology. Rishikesh Narayanan from Bengaluru-based Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and Suvendra Nath Bhattacharya from CSIR Indian Institute of Chemical Biology, Kolkata were awarded in the biological science category. Partha Sarthi Mukherjee bagged the award in the chemical sciences category, while Sunil Kumar Singh in the earth, atmosphere, ocean and planetary sciences category. In engineering sciences category, Avinash Kumar Agarwal from IIT Kanpur and Venkata Narayana Padmanabhan of Microsoft Research India bagged the award while Amlendu Krishna from Mumbai-based Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and Naveen Garg from IIT Delhi were selected in the mathematical sciences category. Subramanian Anantha Ramakrishna from IIT Kanpur and Sudhir Kumar Vempati from IISc jointly bagged the award in the physical sciences category.

The ‘CSIR Technology Award 2016’ in the life sciences category was bagged by CSIR’s National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) and
Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP), Lucknow for development of herbal composition for management of diabetes. The Dehradun-based CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIO) bagged the ‘CSIR Technology Award’ in the physical sciences and engineering category for developing wax de-oiling technology and its commercialisation at Numaligarh refinery.

The Technology Award for “Innovation” went to CSIR’s National Aerospace Laboratories, Bengaluru for LED-based ‘Drishti’ visibility measuring system. ‘Drishti’ is a visibility measuring system installed at Indian airports to give information to pilots on the visibility at the runway for safe landing and take-off for airports.

GROWTH PROSPECTS

Germany’s Schülke eyes opportunities in Indian infection prevention market with ‘Microshield’ offering

Hygiene & disinfection specialist, Schülke India Pvt. Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of the French industrial gases group, Air Liquide, is looking to consolidate its presence in India with its wide offerings for fighting disease and contamination. The company – which has its headquarters in Germany – recently organised an event in New Delhi to celebrated 25 years of success of ‘Microshield’ in the global healthcare market in the presence of the Ambassador of France in India, Mr. Alexander Ziegler.

The ‘Microshield’ brand has a range of products to suit all types of hand hygiene and skin antisepsis requirements.

India – a strategic market

Schulke had introduced ‘Microshield’ into its family of infection prevention products in February this year in India. “India is a strategic market for Schülke. We will continue to further develop the strong Microshield brand in India and we are committed to add value to our customers, whether it is through products or through services. Our customers can expect from Schülke innovative hygiene solutions from Experts – for Experts!” commented Mr. Alexander Mueller, the company’s General Manager, Asia Pacific. In India, Schulke has also launched a novel molecule called ‘Octenidine’ – a result of the company’s R&D efforts. “Due to its excellent antimicrobial efficacy and tissue compatibility, ‘Octenidine’ can be used for different topical applications in the field of infection prevention/product contamination in the form of drugs, medical devices & cosmetic products, where fast action and a long lasting effect are required. Examples for such applications are the decontamination of skin of patients colonised with MRSA, the treatment of acute and chronic wounds heavily colonised or locally infected by pathogenic bacteria and the care of central venous catheter insertion sites,” the company informed in a press note released on the occasion.

Schulke currently has some products based on ‘Octenidine’ available in India like ‘Octenisan Wash Lotion’, ‘Octenisan Wash Mitts’ and ‘Octenidol Mouthwash’. The company plans to launch more products in the near future to reach out to more patients.

Schülke and Mayr GmbH was founded in 1889 by Rudolf Schülke and Julius Mayr. Since 1996, it has been a 100% subsidiary of the Air Liquide Group. Schülke divides its activities into two business divisions – Hygiene International and Speciality Chemicals (Special Additives International). Infection Prevention and Industrial Hygiene make up the Hygiene International division.

NEW OFFICE BEARERS

Kashiprasad Murarka is new President of ISCMA

The Indian Speciality Chemical Manufacturers’ Association has announced the election of Mr. Kashiprasad C. Murarka as President of the association for the years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. Mr. Vinay D. Patil will be the First Vice-President and Mr. Gunjan J. Yagnik the Second Vice-President. Mr. Vinit M. Patel was elected as the Honorary Treasurer.
TRADE FAIR

IFAT India, environmental technology expo, held in Mumbai

The fourth edition of IFAT India, an environmental technology trade fair, concluded recently at the Bombay Exhibition Centre, Mumbai. This year, the fair focused on environmental technologies for India like water scarcity, water management & solutions etc.

IFAT India was inaugurated by Mr. Vijay Shivtare, Minister of State for Water Resources, along with industrial dignitaries and Government officials.

One of the key highlights of the exhibition was the ‘Innovation Exchange Forum’, which focused on solutions for sustainable water, waste & resource management in India. Besides keynotes by the Minister and government officials, there were panel discussions and presentations with contributions from organisations, such as German Association for Water, Wastewater and Waste; German Water Partnership, GIZ – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, German and Indian Biogas Association, Indus Media, International Solid Waste Association, University of Applied Sciences and from various companies.

In order to facilitate cooperation between Chinese and Indian Industries, the Foreign Economic Cooperation Office, Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP/FECO) and Messe München India, organised the ‘Sino-Indian Environmental Protection Technology and Industry Dialogue’ within the framework of IFAT India.

COLLABORATION

India to work with ISA for exploration of polymetallic sulphides

India recently signed a 15-year contract with the International Seabed Authority (ISA) for exploration of polymetallic sulphides (PMS) in the Indian Ocean. The contract was signed by Dr. M. Rajeevan, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), and Dr. Nii Allotey Odunton, Secretary General, ISA. ISA is an institution set up under the Convention on Law of the Sea to which India is a party. The ISA earlier approved an application submitted by the Ministry of Earth Sciences for allotment of 10,000-sq. km. area along with 15-year plan of work for exploration of PMS along Central Indian Ridge (CIR) and Southwest Indian Ridge (SWIR) regions of the Indian Ocean.

Polymetallic sulphides – containing iron, copper, zinc, silver, gold and platinum in variable constitutions – are precipitates of hot fluids from upwelling hot magma from deep interior of the oceanic crust, discharged through mineralised chimneys. PMS in the Ocean Ridges have attracted worldwide attention for their long term commercial as well as strategic values. By signing the 15-year contract, India’s exclusive rights for exploration of PMS in the allotted area in the Indian Ocean will be formalised. Further, it will enhance India’s presence in the Indian Ocean where other players like China, Korea and Germany are active. The programme will be implemented by the Ministry of Earth Sciences, with the participation from various national institutes and research laboratories & organisations.
LOGISTICS

Chemical supply chain forum held in Mumbai

A ‘Chemical Supply Chain Forum’ was held alongside the ‘10th Express Logistics & Supply Chain Conclave 2016’ in Mumbai recently. Organised by Kamikaze B2B Media, the logistics & supply chain conclave hosted several co-located industry tracks across two days.

In a keynote address, Dr. Jonathan Beard, Head-Transportation & Logistics Consultancy, Arcadis, Asia, pointed out that the rate of growth of global trade had slowed down considerably. He underlined the subdued rate of growth in the container shipment sector in India in recent years. He noted that even though air traffic was rising, the air cargo sector has been struggling in recent years.

At the chemical supply chain forum, industry experts gave insights into how to reduce overall costs in logistics processes and gain more supply chain transparency.

Collaborative supply chain strategy
Mr. P.S. Haridas, VP – SCM, Navin Fluorine International Ltd., called for a collaborative supply chain strategy in an organisation, whereby all business units are involved in the procurement strategy. There is also a need for better “alliance management” between vendors, suppliers and customers to reduce costs, he said.

Mr. Haridas highlighted the example of Indian Chemical Council’s ‘Nicer Globe’ initiative, which has paid rich dividends to his company and other members in terms of better management of supply chain issues.

Key challenges
Mr. Nilesh Jha, Director – Purchasing – India SC, Australia, New Zealand, Huntsman International (India) Pvt. Ltd., identified the key challenges in logistics as reliability, cost efficiency, lead times, serviceability to customers, among others. He stressed the need for chemical firms to employ modern analytics tool to analyse the humungous amount of data from sources like ERP, GPS, RFID, bar coding, etc. that the companies collect as part of their supply chain activities.

Apart from the chemicals forum, other co-located events at the supply chain event focussed on topics like FMCG, hi-tech, automotives, pharmaceuticals, e-commerce, procurement strategies, IT and value chain synergy. These forums debated on how leaders operating supply chains across industries achieve superior business performance.

IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Tata Chemicals Europe receives government fund for soda ash facility in UK

Tata Chemicals Europe has opened a new £5.5-mn turbine, which will efficiently provide energy for its soda ash business in Cheshire, UK. The turbine – the beneficiary of a £2.5-mn European Regional Growth Fund grant from the UK government – is housed at Tata Chemicals’ Winnington CHP (combined heat and power) plant, which as a result performs at more than 80% efficiency. “Anyone involved in synthetic soda ash manufacturing will know that it’s an energy-intensive industry, where the cost of energy makes up the largest part of the overall cost base. This turbine allows us to provide power for our manufacturing process and produce soda ash much more efficiently,” Mr. Alan Runciman, General Manager for soda ash, Tata Chemicals Europe, commented.

“As the UK’s sole manufacturer of soda ash, it is crucial that we remain a reliable and long term partner to the UK glass, detergent and chemical industries, all of which rely heavily on our product and service. Significant investments in our business such as this should therefore be seen as investments in the future of our customers and UK manufacturing,” Mr. Craig Thornhill, head of sales for soda ash, Tata Chemicals Europe, added. In 2013, Tata Chemicals acquired Winnington CHP so that it could take full control of its energy costs. Since then, the company’s energy team have been very busy maximising this state-of-the-art CHP plant’s efficiency and thereby dramatically reduce its carbon footprint. The plant itself is now capable of powering 200,000 homes – an area the size of Liverpool. In September 2016, this culminated in the opening of a new steam turbine.

The £5.5-mn investment has transformed the CHP plant, making it one of the most efficient CHP plants in the UK. The project will ensure that soda ash and sodium bicarbonate have affordable energy for the next decade and beyond.

The soda ash business has reduced its carbon footprint by 10% in the past three years and a further 15% is planned for the next 5 years.
BLEAK SCENARIO

‘Vegetable oil import increasing, oilseed production poor’

Increased import of vegetable oil, coupled with low oilseed production paints a disappointing picture of the country’s vegetable oil industry, stakeholders said on the occasion of the AGM of Solvent Extractors’ Association (SEA) of India and ‘Globoil 2016’ organised by Teflas and SEA at Goa in September. Speakers at the event also expressed hope that the GST could be a game changer and a shot in the arm for the vegetable oil industry.

Mr. Sandeep Bajoria, Chairman, Globoil & CEO, Sunvin Group, said that India was the world’s leading cooking oil importer and there was a need to “adopt policies to promote domestic oilseed production”. “But that has not been happening,” he said, noting that imports of vegetable oil have almost reached 70% in the current fiscal.

“Oil seeds and pulses are the biggest sufferers and the period between 1995 and 2015 should be considered as the lost decades for these commodities. Practically no growth in oilseed and only marginal increase in pulses was witnessed in this period,” pointed out Mr. Atul Chaturvedi, CEO, Adani Wilmar Ltd., at the inaugural session. He stressed on the importance of investment in research to increase productivity of oil seeds in the country.

Soymeal exports to rise sharply

India’s soymeal exports will jump sharply to 1.4-mt in 2016-17 compared with 0.2-mt a year earlier, said edible oil analyst, Mr. Thomas Mielke. “Soybean crushing is going to rise due to higher production,” Mr. Mielke, editor of the Hamburg-based newsletter Oil World. But since demand for soymeal would not be good due to cheaper supply of feed grains, “soymeal prices need to correct to stay competitive,” he said. India competes with South American countries like Argentina and Brazil for soymeal exports.

Palm oil production to recover in 2017

According to leading industry analyst, Mr. James Fry, global palm oil production would recover in 2017, increasing by 4-mt in the first half of next year from corresponding period in 2016. “The 2017 first half rebound will almost offset the 2016 first half collapse,” said Mr. Fry, Chairman of commodities consultancy, LMC International. He also projected a rise in global palm production in the second half of 2017 by over 2-mt from same period this year. 2016 palm oil production was impacted by the ‘El Nino’ dry weather in Southeast Asia, which hurt major producers like Indonesia and Malaysia.

Mr. Fry also forecast that crude palm oil prices would ease to $650 a tonne on FOB basis in November and December, and move up in January to February before falling to $550 next year, based on a Brent crude oil forecast of $45/barrel. “The 2017 first half rebound will almost offset the 2016 first half collapse,” he said.

‘Hike in import duty of edible oils – but no duty difference’

Earlier at the SEA AGM, Mr. Pravin Lunkad, President SEA said the Government hiked the import duty on crude edible oils to 12.5% and on refined edible oils to 20%. This provided partial relief for the producers of domestic edible oils, but it however did not address the issue of duty difference between crude and refined edible oils, leaving the door open for increasing import of RBD Olein.

Mr. Lunkad also highlighted the need to permit sowing of GM oilseed crops in the country for increasing productivity and production of oilseeds to bridge the gap between demand and supply of domestic oils and better availability of oilcake/oilmeal for feed industry.

He also urged the government to allow import of oilseeds and oilcakes at ‘nil’ duty to enable its processing in the country and to help the industry to promote the ‘Make in India’ call given by our Prime Minister. The production of oilseeds in the country has declined in the last two years; otherwise also, it is stagnant in the range of 26-mt to 30-mt per year over the years.

Atul Chaturvedi is new President of SEA

At the AGM, Mr. Atul Chaturvedi, CEO, Adani Wilmar, was elected as the new President of the Association.

In his acceptance speech Mr. Chaturvedi said, “Our industry today is passing through troubled times. No one is happy. The farmer is gradually losing interest in oilseed cultivation. The
oilseed production has stagnated around 28 to 30 million tons during last two decades and the yields have been woefully low at around 30% of world average. The crushing industry too continues to suffer big time due to paucity of seeds. Oil imports into India have risen to such a level that we have practically forfeited our “edible oil security”. Today 70% of our needs are met by imports. Even with such high imports the refining industry continues to suffer as India imports almost 40% of its palm requirement in the form of refined palmolein. The interests of oilseeds farmer, crushing and refining industry are closely intertwined and not mutually exclusive. A vibrant crushing industry is as much the need of the hour as a thriving refining industry”. Mr. Abhay Udeshi, Chairman, Ihsedu Agrochem Pvt. Ltd., (Jayant Agro Group), was elected as Vice President of the association. Mr. Ajay Jhunjhunwala, Managing Director, J.R. Agro Industries Ltd. will be the new Secretary and Mr. Sunil Mundra, Director, Kamal Solvent Extractions Pvt. Ltd. will be the Treasurer.

CUSTOMER MEET

Lubrizol organises personal care seminar in Mumbai

US-based speciality chemicals firm and a Berkshire Hathaway company, Lubrizol, recently organised a personal care seminar in Mumbai in association with its distributor Arihant Innochem Pvt. Ltd., highlighting its offerings for the personal & home care industries.

Lubrizol’s business segment – Advanced Materials – offers specialty polymers, polymer-based additives and chemical additives used in everyday consumer and industrial applications. The segment’s Personal and Home Care business manufactures a broad range of essential ingredients used in fast-moving consumer goods for bath and shower, hair care, skin care, and surface, dish and fabric care. The ingredients offered essentially modify physical properties, enhance functional performance, ease of use, and deliver aesthetic benefits to support key consumer product claims.

Lubrizol’s Personal and Home Care business has technical, service and application laboratories strategically located around the world, with each one focused on co-innovation with customers to address market dynamics and trends in the particular region. The company operates an application development centre in Mumbai.

Protecting hair

At the seminar, Ms. Narjis Askar, Global Technical Marketing Manager, Lubrizol, presented on how the company’s ‘Merquat’ high molecular weight polymers protect hair from high temperatures, leaving it stronger and less susceptible to breakages, while also providing longer lasting straightening without frizziness. “Upto 40% of damage caused to the hair cortex during thermal straightening can be prevented when using ‘Merquat’ polymers as pre-treatment,” she informed.

Ms. Askar also gave spoke about hair repair shampoo formulations with ‘Merquat’ polymers. “These quarternised acrylates transform damaged hair into hair that appears healthy, soft and smooth,” she observed. Ingredients for achieving optimum hair colour protection in shampoo formulations were also highlighted by Ms. Askar.

Skin care ingredients

Mr. Amit Nandgaonkar, Deputy Manager, Personal & Home Care, spoke about ‘Carbopol Smart’ polymers, which deliver exceptional clarity, suspension and elegant rheology to formulations, while also enhancing mildness, skin feel and foam aesthetics. These can be used to formulate a wide range of products from traditional body and hand cleansers to high pH soap-based cleansers. Lubrizol experts also presented new products and concepts in the areas of skin care (sun protection and colour cosmetics) during the event.
Top Stories

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TIE-UP

Pidilite ties up with US-based WD-40 Company for multi-purpose spray

Pidilite Industries Ltd., the adhesives and industrial chemicals manufacturer, has entered into a sales and distribution tie-up with the US-based WD-40 Company, which makes household chemicals (including its signature lubricant brand WD-40) that solve problems in workshops, factories and homes around the world. The American firm has joined with Pidilite Industries, the maker of ‘Fevicol’ adhesive, to distribute and sell its WD-40 Multi-Use product in India.

“WD-40 Multi-Use product is a well-known global brand and is also popular in India. We already cater to the industrial maintenance segment, hardware and auto retail customers with current brands like MSeal and Fevikwik. We look at WD-40 Multi-Use product as synergistic with our overall strategy to introduce larger ranges of products for this segment to better serve the need of customers and consumers. We aim to significantly expand distribution and awareness of this product,” said Mr. Apurva Parekh, Director, Pidilite.

Peter Forster, regional director of distributor markets for WD-40 Company, added, “The development of the product goes back to 1953. Working in a small lab in San Diego, California, it took us 40 attempts to get the water displacing formula worked out. But it must have been good because the original secret formula for WD-40 Multi-Use product – which stands for water displacement, perfected on the 40th try – is still in use today. We are delighted to partner with Pidilite to offer WD-40 Company products to Indian consumers. We expect they will find them extremely useful, just as millions of existing consumers have worldwide.”

Multi-purpose maintenance product

WD-40 Multi-Use product is a multi-purpose maintenance product with more than 2,000 uses. It protects metal from rust and corrosion, penetrates stuck parts, displaces moisture, lubricates moving parts, and removes grease and grime from most surfaces. WD-40 Multi-Use product is used by traders and do-it-yourselfers to get their jobs done right in more than 176 countries and territories around the world. It is used in numerous consumer and industrial markets, including automotive maintenance and repair, construction, farming, heating ventilation and air conditioning, maintenance repair and operations, and home improvement.

Through this seamless integration, WD-40 Company and Pidilite Industries respectively aim to expand the reach and range of their offered products to the Indian market. This agreement will allow the WD-40 brands to have a larger reach and support the network expansion, while making it extensively available to consumers.

GNFC, Santosh Agrochem plan purified wet lime facility

Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilizers & Chemicals Ltd. (GNFC) will build a purified wet lime facility in collaboration with Santosh Agrochem in Bharuch, Gujarat, with an estimated investment of Rs. 50-crore. “The company has signed a joint venture (jv) agreement with Santosh Agrochem LLP for setting up a purified wet lime project having capacity of about 345 metric tonnes per day (mtpd) at Bharuch, Gujarat. The project will be implemented in two phases through a jv company, named Calciwell Chemtech Pvt. Ltd. (CCPL), at an estimated cost of Rs. 50-crore,” GNFC said in a stock exchange filing.

While GNFC will hold 10% in CCPL, Santosh Agrochem will own the remaining 90% stake.
L’Oreal skin-whitening products contain mercury: Maharashtra FDA

The Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has said that its tests have found amounts of mercury in five skin-lightening products of the country’s third-largest cosmetics company, L’Oréal India. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the presence of mercury in skin-lightening products can lead to kidney damage and a range of skin ailments.

Test reports of the Maharashtra drug regulator show the presence of 0.6 parts per million (ppm), 1.02 ppm, 1.69 ppm, 1.87 ppm and 2.38 ppm of mercury, respectively, in L’Oréal’s Garnier Men Power Light Intensive Fairness Facewash, Garnier Men Power Light Sweat+Oil Control Fairness Moisturiser, L’Oréal Pearl Perfect Fairness+Soothing Cream/Night, L’Oréal Pearl Perfect Fairness+ Moisturising Cream/Day and L’Oréal Pearl Perfect Re-Lighting Whitening Facial Foam.

The tests on the five L’Oréal products, which were manufactured at the company’s Chakan plant in Pune, were done in April this year. As per the The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, “no cosmetic containing mercury compounds shall be manufactured” in India.

Consequently, the state FDA – after testing the products through the Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS) method – has deemed the products as “adulterated” in its test reports after finding considerable amounts of mercury.

The French cosmetics major has, however, maintained that mercury levels in their products were below detectable levels. “This report by the Maharashtra FDA dated April 2016 is in total contradiction with the test we conducted jointly with them and the multiple tests we have done with independent laboratories in India, France, Germany, Japan and Singapore. Mercury traces were below detectable levels in all of the tests,” the L’Oréal India spokesperson said in response to a query by The Indian Express.

“As a responsible company, we of course do not use mercury in our products in India or anywhere else in the world. We have challenged this last FDA report and the methodology used and are awaiting a report from the Central Drug Laboratory (CDL) in Kolkata. We will continue to work closely with the FDA to clarify this discrepancy,” the spokesperson said.

LAW SUIT

Reckitt Benckiser takes Advertising Standards Council of India to High Court

Reckitt Benckiser has sued the Advertising Standards Council of India before the Delhi High Court over the self-regulatory advertising organization’s findings of false advertising for the company’s Dettol soap brand. After hearing consumer complaints against RB, ASCI has urged the company to change its claim that the soap offers “100 percent germ kill.” RB has secured a temporary stay prohibiting the ASCI to take action against the company and its marketing for the Dettol brand.