The government has proposed to open up thirty-seven new R&D labs across the country in order to bring medical technological innovation in the true sense. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, (CSIR) and Indian Government has invited entrepreneurs in the medical technology sector to utilize the Research and Development (R&D) platform for innovation and research. Emphasis on Research and Development will help early detection of disease, increase the survival rate and also substantially decrease the treatment costs.

A MEDICAL COLLEGE IN EACH DISTRICT OF THE COUNTRY: GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

The Planning Commission has made a strong case for strengthening and converting 600 district hospitals into medical colleges over the next decade. Agreeing to this, the government is set to provide financial help to state governments to start a medical college in each of the 600 districts of India. A Planning Commission committee had pointed out that huge shortage of medical staff in rural India was crippling public health services in the villages. In a bid to overcome the shortage which is expected to rise to around 50 percent in the next four years, the government would soon be announcing a scheme to set up a medical college linked with every district level hospital.

BOOST FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

India has suggested a proposal for universal coverage of AYUSH under the country’s flagship National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). This will be a boon for the country’s traditional medicine, under which AYUSH doctors will be available in all public health facilities, that is, primary and community health centres and district hospitals under the 12th five year plan. Also, Ayurvedic medicines will be made available in these centres along with Allopathic drugs. In addition to this, AYUSH department is also looking forward to putting together a composite National Essential Drug List containing both Allopathic and AYUSH drugs.

ANDHRA PRADESH LAUNCHES EMPLOYEES HEALTHCARE FUND SCHEME

The Andhra Pradesh government is set to roll out a comprehensive cashless Employees Healthcare Fund (EHF) scheme for all the government employees, pensioners and their dependent family members from November 1st, 2012. Current estimates said that 7 lakh pensioners and 15 lakh government employees along with their dependant family members, will benefit from the scheme. The EHF will be jointly funded through a monthly premium contribution. The employees including the pensioners will pitch
in 40 percent by way of premium while the remaining 60 percent funding would be done by the state government. The trust would be functioning on the same lines as the Aarogyasri scheme, as far as the treatment modalities are concerned.

GLOBAL NEWS

WHO WELCOMES LANDMARK DECISION FROM AUSTRALIA ON TOBACCO PACKAGING

Australia’s High Court took a landmark decision on tobacco plain packaging act. The move has been welcomed by The World Health Organization (WHO). Major tobacco companies had challenged Australia’s legislation which requires cigarettes and other tobacco products to be sold in plain packaging without any branding. But the tobacco industry’s challenge was dismissed by the High Court. Australia will be the first country to sell cigarettes without branding in the packaging. Tobacco products will eventually kill up to half of the people who use them. Plain packaging is an effective way to de glamourize tobacco marketing and is in line with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

SRI LANKAN HOSPITAL TO BE FUNDED BY INDIAN GRANT OF RS.200 MILLION

India is set to provide Rs. 200 million to Sri Lanka to construct a 200-bed ward complex at the District Hospital of Vavuniya in Sri Lanka’s Northern Province. The Government of India has signed an agreement with Wahid Constructions to build the ward complex as part of its development partnership with Sri Lanka and in response to requirements projected by the Sri Lankan Government. The project will be carried out in cooperation with Sri Lanka’s Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Indigenous Medicine, Northern Province, and is expected to be completed by February 2014.

HALF A BILLION DOLLARS INVESTMENT FOR HIV/AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA

The Global Fund announced its approval of 45 new two year grants totalling $419.2 million to fund prevention, treatment and care services for those affected by HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. The proposals are part of the Transitional Funding Mechanism, established by the Fund’s board in order to ensure that essential programs for patients suffering from these three diseases are not interrupted during shortfalls in financial resources. 11 more proposals which are worth of $91.2 million, have been sent for revision and technical review before approving them later. The Global Fund was created in 2002 by the United Nations, to scale up resources to fight three of the world’s most devastating diseases.

LANCET AND IMPERIAL COLLEGE OF LONDON JOIN HANDS FOR IMPACT OF MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY GLOBALLY

The Lancet and the Imperial College of London have introduced the New Commission on Global Health Technologies. The Commission will examine how medical technology can be used to improve health in low and middle income countries. 40% of healthcare equipment in developing countries is out of service as compared to less than 1% in high income countries. This high failure rate is attributed to the inappropriate medical technologies from wealthy countries. Instead of depending on technologies provided from high income countries, effort towards developing “frugal technologies” or cost-effective technologies have been stressed on. Importance was also given on the
development of effective delivery mechanisms and novel approaches to financing of technologies.

**NEW TECHNOLOGY MAY FREE DIABETICS FROM DAILY INJECTIONS**

According to a research published in the journal, ‘Biomaterials’, a new technology could free Diabetic and Cancer patients from the daily necessity of painful routine injections. This can be achieved by releasing the required drug dosage over six months. The University of Cambridge researchers led by Oren Scherman, a Cambridge chemist, have developed injectable, reformable and spreadable hydrogels which can be loaded with proteins or other therapeutics. It can last a maximum of six months. The rate of release can be controlled according to the ratio of materials in the hydrogel. The research has been patented by Cambridge Enterprise, the University’s commercialization group.

**ALZHEIMER’S TAKES MORE RAPID TOLL ON WOMEN THAN MEN**

Women suffering from Alzheimer’s deteriorate faster than men, even when both are apparently at the same stage of the disease, warn researchers. A study among Alzheimer patients found that women show greater loss of their mental faculties than men. A review of data from fifteen studies and analysis of studies by researchers involving 828 men and 1238 women discovered that men with Alzheimer’s consistently and significantly outperformed women with the disease across five cognitive areas examined. The analysis, led by Professor Keith Laws, was published in the ‘Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology’. There could be a hormonal explanation, he said, because women lose Oestrogen supplies after the menopause which plays a key role in the brain.

**A BREAKTHROUGH IN MALARIA VACCINE BY AUSTRALIAN RESEARCHER**

Australian researchers have made a new breakthrough in the quest for a vaccine against Malaria, which snuffs out a million lives every year, particularly of children. The findings show that people who develop immunity to Malaria develop antibodies that primarily target a protein known as PfEMP1, which is produced by Plasmodium Falciparum, causing most cases of Malaria. These findings unlock the mystery of which Malaria proteins, known as Variant Surface Antigens (VSA’s), could be targeted by an effective vaccine to achieve immunity against the disease. The findings are a major advance towards developing an effective medicine and have been published in the ‘Journal of Clinical Investigation’.

**THIN DIABETICS MAY BE MORE IN DANGER THAN OBESE ONES**

A study published in the ‘Journal of the American Medical Association’, has revealed that thin Diabetics are more likely to die than the overweight or obese ones. The researcher reviewed the data of more than 2500 people over decades and came to this conclusion. Researchers couldn’t link the relation between greater BMI (Body Mass Index) that might protect someone with Diabetes. The findings should be taken as a wakeup call for non-obese Diabetics who may feel comforted because they are not overweight or obese.
A BRIEF REVIEW ON THE IIHMR - NEW DELHI'S FOURTH FOUNDATION DAY
(AADHAR – 2012) CELEBRATIONS

August 18th marks a special day on the calendar of IIHMR - New Delhi, being celebrated as its Foundation Day. Keeping up with the tradition of the Institute, the day was commemorated with much grandeur. Mr. M L Mehta, Trustee Secretary of the IIHMR chaired the evening as the Chief Guest. Dr. L S Chauhan, Director of National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) attended the event as the Guest of Honor. Mr. Manipal Singh Bhanot, General Manager (Operations), Max Shalimar and also alumnus of IIHMR, attended the festive evening as the eminent guests.

Proceedings of the evening started with lightening of the lamp. Director IIHMR, Dr. L.P. Singh, addressed the gathering by congratulating the faculty, staff and students on completion of one more successful year. He shared laurels achieved by the team in previous financial year while elucidating his expectations and upcoming challenges in this year.

Mr. M. L. Mehta, in his speech, shared how the IIHMR society came into existence on the initiative of Dr. Ashok Agarwal (Trustee and founding member of IIHMR). He shared his experience with the institution and remembered how the organization started a path breaking landmark in Indian healthcare sector and became the pioneer in the industry. Mr. Mehta expressed his interest in enhancing collaborations with the state governments in areas of public sector capacity building.

The guest of honor, Dr. L. S. Chauhan, expressed his pleasure in being a part of the evening. Continuing his speech, he affirmed the inherent complexity of the healthcare industry while attributing human resource as the most significant pillar of the industry. He deliberated on the role of continuous training and strategic placement of competent work force for ensuring utilization of scarcely available resources. Dr. Chauhan appreciated the contribution of IIHMR Delhi along with its graduate students in adding new dimensions to the field of health management and health information technology of the system across the country. In the conclusion, he articulated his pleasure in working synchronously for leveraging the competencies of both the organizations.

Mr. Mahipal Singh Bhanot elaborated on the changing face of the industry while emphasizing the adoption of hospitality culture within the healthcare as a winning strategy. Further on, while addressing students, he pointed out the relevance and necessity of developing mastery of each course for achieving personal and professional growth. He called upon the graduate students to build themselves and become facilitators, not administrators in order to revolutionize the country's health scenario. He ended his speech by wishing luck and prosperity to all the students.

The evening witnessed numerous cultural performances by the students which together made the event joyous and memorable. The occasion ended in much pomp and show along with adding another convivial memory to the history of the Institution.