

ground radiation (HBR) from thorium-containing monazite sand. According to Sainis, people have been living in this area for centuries and generations. Several research studies have been carried out, including chromosomal studies, DNA damage studies and newborn deformities. No ill-effects have been found

until now. Out of the 144,000 newborns that were studied, 62% came from HBR areas and 30% from normal background areas. Yet there was no difference in the incidence of cancer, stillbirth or Down's syndrome. Even with continuous chronic radiation in these areas, no changes were detected at the molecular level. Accord-

ing to Sainis, the possible explanation could be adaptation.

---

**Parul R. Sheth**, E-705/706 Kalp Nagri, Vaishali Nagar, Mulund (West), Mumbai 400 080, India.  
e-mail: parulrsheth@gmail.com

---

## R&D in Indian life sciences sector gets incentives from UK

To give a boost to Indian companies for effective translation and commercialization of life sciences projects, the UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) and the Life Science Investment Organization (LSIO) are promoting certain funding and tax incentive schemes. The UK offers a turnaround period of 54 days for non-CE marked (CE marking signifies that the product conforms to all European Community [EC] directives that apply to it) clinical trial approvals in the medical field. It helps countries like India build a body of evidence in support of CE marking in Europe, to ensure that it provides

medical technologies to patients 2–3 years ahead of the US and up to five years ahead of Japan. The schemes are relevant today for life sciences companies to commercialize medical innovation globally in the context of rising costs, risk and complexity of R&D. Adam M. Hill, Healthcare and Medical Technology Specialist, LSIO explained 'considering the fact that the global medical technology market is expected to double to approximately £300 billion by 2015, UK is establishing strong strategic relationships with high-growth markets like India. A culture of low cost, robust

innovation has made the life science industry in India a leading destination when searching for healthcare solutions'. Along with the government-backed schemes and incentives, the Medical Charities in the UK are actively investing in India. The Wellcome Trust, London (a global charitable foundation dedicated to achieving extraordinary improvements in human and animal health) continues to build upon its commitment to affordable healthcare.

---

**S. K. Ashwini**, Science Writing Intern.  
e-mail: sk.ashwini007@gmail.com

---

## Biocon successfully launches ALZUMAb for psoriasis patients in India

Nearly 10–20 million Indians suffer from psoriasis, an immune-mediated disease that affects the skin. Biocon has launched its first biologic drug ALZUMAb for psoriasis on 10 August 2013. This drug offers a new treatment option with a less aggressive dosing regimen and a longer treatment-free period, ensuring

better patient compliance and convenience. According to the announcement made by Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairman and Managing Director of Biocon, this is the world's first novel anti-CD6 (cluster of differentiation 6 is a human protein encoded by *CD6* gene) antibody to treat psoriasis. The drug has been devel-

oped using proteins, sugars and other living entities of the cell of living organisms and not by artificial chemicals. It took 10 years for Biocon to develop this drug. It will be sold in the market at about half the price of similar drugs manufactured by multinational companies.

K. V. S.

---

## Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill 2013

The Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2013 was introduced by Jayanthi Natarajan, Minister of State for Environment and Forests, Government of India in the Rajya Sabha for strict enforcement of law to protect wildlife. The Bill provides the legal framework for the protection of various species of wild animals, management of their habitat and also for the regulation and control of

trade in the products derived from them. The Bill has the provisions for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Fauna and Flora. CITES is an international agreement that aims to ensure that international trade of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. The Bill also proposes stricter deterrents for crimes related to sale, purchase and

transfer of animals, their parts or products listed in various schedules. For more details see [http://164.100.47.5/newcommittee/press\\_release/bill/Committee%20on%20s%20and%20T.%20Env.%20and%20Forests/wildlife-E.pdf](http://164.100.47.5/newcommittee/press_release/bill/Committee%20on%20s%20and%20T.%20Env.%20and%20Forests/wildlife-E.pdf)

---

**K. V. Soumya**  
e-mail: soumyakori89@gmail.com

---