NEWS

More facilities for university research

University research in India will get a boost from access to major facilities of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) when the proposed Inter-University Consortium for DAE Facilities is set up. A memorandum of understanding for the setting up of the Consortium has been signed by Prof. Yash Pal, Chairman, University Grants Commission (UGC), and Dr M. R. Srinivasan, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission.

The Consortium will allow greater interaction between university students and teachers and scientists at DAE's institutions. DAE's research facilities, particularly the Dhruva reactor at Bombay, the Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre at Calcutta, and the Synchrotron Radiation Source Centre at Indore, will be accessible to university researchers.

The UGC has earlier established the Nuclear Science Centre, an inter-university centre for research in nuclear sciences, at the Jawaharlal Nehru University campus, New Delhi, and the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Pune. There is also a proposal for an inter-university centre for high-energy physics at Delhi, Jammu or Chandigarh.

The setting up of the Consortium and the centres is in line with the recommendation, in the National Policy on Education 1988, of autonomous national research facilities within the university system.

Restriction enzymes to be made in India

India's first venture capital biotechnology company that will make enzymes for genetic engineering has been launched. The new company, Bangalore Genei Private Ltd, Bangalore, will make restriction enzymes. It has been set up by Dr P. S. Babu, a theoretical physicist-turned-molecular biologist, and Dr K. Prasad, an immunologist, both of whom have been associated with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore. A large part of the funding for the company is by the Technology Development and Information Company of India (TDICI).

The new company will obtain the know-how for the manufacture of the enzymes from Astra Research Centre, Bangalore, which does research in medical biotechnology and is developing diagnostic kits for a variety of tropical diseases. The Centre for Genetic Engineering, IISc, will also assist the new company.

Restriction enzymes are currently being imported by individual user laboratories and in bulk quantities by the CSIR Centre for Biochemicals, New Delhi. The new company will initially make the more important and commonly used restriction enzymes.

Twenty-five years of radio astronomy at TIFR

The radio astronomy group of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay, completed twenty-five years of work in April this year. The event was celebrated at Udhagamandalam (Ooty) on 20 April. A two-day international symposium on 'The large-scale structure and evolution of the universe' and an open house for students and general public at the radio astronomy centre were also held.

The celebration was inaugurated by R. Venkataraman, President of India. Prof. Virendra Singh, Director of TIFR, recalled that R. Venkataraman, as Minister of Industries of the Government of Madras,

had helped acquire the land in Ooty for setting up the centre. Dr M. R. Srinivasan, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission, Prof. M. G. K. Menon, Scientific Adviser to the Prime Minister, and Prof. Govind Swarup, Director, Giant Metre-wave Radio Telescope Project of the TIFR, recalled the contributions of Meghnad Saha, S. Chandrasekhar, Homi Bhabha, D. S. Kothari and M. K. V. Bappu.

The facility at Ooty includes a metre-wave radio telescope. The TIFR group, headed by Prof. Govind Swarup, has made significant contributions. The Ooty radio telescope has provided accurate positions, sizes and flux densities of more than a thousand radio sources. The group has also discovered a giant radio galaxy in the southern hemisphere of the sky. TIFR has plans to build the world's biggest radio telescope at Narayangaon near Pune by 1993.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PROF. J. V. BHAT–EUREKA FORBES AWARD FOR RESEARCH IN MICROBIOLOGY

The award (Rs. 10,000) is for excellence in research in microbiology conducted in a laboratory in India over the last 5 years (1985–89).

For details and application/nomination forms write to: The Prof. J. V. Bhat Memorial Committee, c/o Dr Yvonne Freitas, P.O. Box 80, G.P.O., Bombay 400 001.

Entries must be received by 15 September 1989.

PROF. T. R. GOVINDACHARI 60TH BIRTHDAY COMMEMORATION AWARD IN ORGANIC CHEMISTRY

The award (Rs. 5000) is to be made to a distinguished Indian organic chemist working in India with a minimum of 15 years' teaching and research experience.

Applications/nominations containing bio-data (4 copies), a five-page summary of research accomplishments, a list of publications, and one set of reprints must reach The Registrar, University of Madras, Madras 600 005, by 14 September 1989. For conditions of award send a self-addressed and stamped (Rs. 1.50) envelope.