Developing nations slam WIPO reform suggestions

The international patent reform plans pursued by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) have been criticized by several developing countries, including India, after they felt it may have an impact on the decision-making powers of national patent offices. Developing nations have cautioned against an increased reliance on international search and examination reports issued by International Search Authorities (ISAs) for respective national patent offices with respect to scrutiny and grant of international patents.

United under a newly formed Development Agenda Group (DAG), a bloc of 20 WIPO members expressed its concerns at the meeting of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) Working Group held in Geneva in June 2010. Apart from India, the group includes Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Cuba, Egypt and Iran. DAG, in its common statement to the PCT Working Group, said it was against ‘automatic validity of international search and examination reports’. It also pointed out that international search and examination reports could not be fully relied on by national patent offices. The group felt technical assistance for strengthening national patent offices should be the key component of the PCT reform. It added that developing nations should be provided enhanced access to effective search systems and good search databases at subsidized rates to facilitate better quality of search and examination.

Stating the PCT treaty mandated transfer of technical expertise to developing countries, DAG said the working group never reviewed or addressed this issue. The group stated the promise of transfer of technology through adequate disclosure in patent applications was the primary benefit that developing countries were supposed to derive from the PCT system. However, this important issue has not been considered by the working group, DAG complained, adding that this was a critical issue from the perspective of maintaining the right balance between the holders of rights and public interest (http://www.business-standard.com).

IPR comes in way of FTA

Negotiations between India and Japan on a pact on trade and investment have got stuck on the issue of intellectual property rights with both sides refusing to budge from their stated positions, though most other issues have been resolved.

Japan wants the bilateral agreement to go beyond the international agreement on IP (TRIPS), while India is not prepared to take obligations that are beyond the multilateral regime. TRIPS-plus commitments would require India to tighten its patents regime further. According to a government official, Japan and India are well on their way to tie up the bilateral comprehensive economic cooperation agreement, but the issue of IPR needs to be settled first. The two countries are keen to wrap up the negotiations so that the pact can be signed during the Indian Prime Minister’s visit in October.

In 2005, India moved to a more stringent product patent regime from one that recognized processes to meet commitments under the TRIPS agreement of the WTO. The country, therefore, is not willing to move to a stricter patent regime which could mean an extended patent protection of more than twenty-years, restricted use of compulsory licences for producing patented medicines for life-threatening diseases or rules that restrict generic competition. India is also having a tough time convincing the EU to keep TRIPS-plus provisions out of the bilateral trade and investment agreement being negotiated between the two (http://economictimes.indiatimes.com).

Kerala Government for inclusion of knowledge commons

The Kerala State Government has sought the inclusion of a new form of IP called ‘knowledge commons’ in the existing patent laws to protect the livelihoods of practitioners of traditional medicine and other forms of traditional knowledge.

The state law minister in his letter to the Central Government has said that the new TRIPS-compatible regime that has been enacted in the country has left the practitioners of traditional knowledge, in particular traditional medicine, in an extremely vulnerable
position. As of now, the patent law recognizes only two forms of intellectual property, namely, private property and public domain. The minister argued that traditional knowledge could not be included either in private property or public domain.

He pointed out in his letter that traditional knowledge cannot become anyone’s private property since lakhs of people derive their livelihood from it. On the other hand, if it is kept in the public domain, though this knowledge cannot be directly appropriated by anyone for exclusive personal gain, it can be indirectly appropriated by someone making a minor modification of an existing practice or existing medicine, and then using it commercially, to the detriment of the numerous traditional practitioners.

The concept of ‘knowledge commons’ was first mooted in the state’s IPR policy which remains a mere suggestion as the State Government cannot enact any law on the subject. The policy suggested that all traditional knowledge should be in the domain of ‘knowledge commons’. The purpose of this suggestion was to prevent MNCs or domestic corporate entities from displacing traditional practitioners by taking advantage of the new patent regime.

Udupi brinjal gets GI tag

The fabled Udupi Mattu Gulla, a vegetable belonging to the egg plant species has been granted geographical indication registration. There are dozens of varieties of brinjal in India but the one that grows in a small stretch between Udyavara river and Malpe in areas like Mattu, Udyavar and Kaipunjalu is a very special type as it has a distinct aroma and texture. The farmers had been fighting for retaining this vegetable from being subjected to transgenic contamination for the last fifteen years and their struggle has now borne fruits.

Botanically referred to as Solanum melongena var esculenta Nees, the variety of Badane commonly found all over India is elongated or round, violet/pink/white/green in colour while Gulla found in the Udupi district of Karnataka is round, green in colour.

Patent News

Ahmedabad law students to aid techies get patents for free

Law students will soon assist engineering students in filing patents for their projects, in a move to circumvent the heavy expenses involved in hiring lawyers to obtain the patents.

Ahmedabad-based www.techpedia.in, an online database hosting the final-year projects of almost 1.5 lakh engineering students, is working out this model with the Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) in Gandhinagar.

Techpedia MD said the idea was conceived because students can hardly afford to hire lawyers who can help them file patents. The basic model is to have law students who have studied patent laws take up these cases at little or no cost and the GNLU will treat these cases as students’ project work, carrying marks.

The Director of GNLU said that he has already approved the idea but it remains to be decided if this will be marked as part of a continuous assessment or a year-end project.

India foils Chinese bid to patent 'pudina'

India has foiled a major Chinese bio-piracy bid to patent the use of medicinal plants 'pudina' (mint) and 'kalamegha' (andrographis) for the treatment of H5N1 avian influenza or bird flu. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), with the help of India’s Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), dug out formulations from ancient Ayurveda and Unani texts, like ‘Cakradattah’, ‘Bhaisajya Ratnavali’, ‘Kitaаб-al-Haawi-fil-Tibb’ and ‘Qaraabaadeen Azam wa Akmal’, dating back to the 9th century, to show that both ‘pudina’ and ‘kalamegha’ have been widely used in India since ages for influenza and epidemic fevers. After receiving exhaustive evidence from CSIR that confirmed India’s stand, the European Patent Office (EPO) on 10 June 2010 cancelled the decision to grant patent to Livzon, a major Chinese pharmaceutical company, on the medicinal properties of pudina and kalamegha for treating bird flu.

HC boost for innovators, orders overhaul of patent process

In a much-needed relief to innovators, the Delhi high court passed a landmark judgment which will bring greater transparency to the process of granting patents and crack down on the practice of filing mischievous pre-grant opposition. Accordingly, the Office of the Controller of Patents has been directed by the court to not only disclose award of patents on a real-time basis, but also electronically circulate patent hearing dates a day before.

The judgment, issued by Justice S Muralidhar, dealt with eight cases; the lead case was Snehlata C Gupte v Union of India. At the core of the legal challenge was the existing process, which resulted in
a time gap between the grant of a patent and the issue of the certificate. This loophole in the process was at times exploited by rival parties to file a challenge even after the patent had been granted. In some instances, parties also filed multiple challenges under aliases. This has now been declared illegal and will invite a penalty. The judgment maintained that once the final order granting the patent is signed by the Controller or the Assistant Controller, it must be immediately placed on the website on the same day so as to eliminate the time gap between the signing of the order and publishing it. This would mean that the patent would come into force on the day when the order is published or the patent certificate is issued.

By imposing a fine of Rs 20,000 on each of the opposers, it was also made clear that serial oppositions by parties associated to each other in any way is, apart from being not maintainable in law, an ‘abuse of the process of law’ (http://www.livemint.com).

Serbia to join the EPO

The government of the Republic of Serbia deposited its instrument of accession to the European Patent Convention (EPC) on 15 July 2010 and is set to become the EPO’s 38th member state on 1 October 2010. European patent applications filed on or after this date will include the designation of the new contracting state, but it will not be possible to designate Serbia retroactively in applications filed beforehand.

The EPO can, however, accord applications filed in September, the filing date of 1 October upon the applicant’s request. Nationals of and residents in Serbia will also be able to file applications under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) with the EPO from 1 October 2010 (http://www.epo.org).

Patent applications pending at the Indian Patent Offices

As on 30 June 2010, 78,792 patent applications are pending before the government for grant of patents, with mechanical engineering and chemicals segment accounting for nearly a third of the requests, the Parliament was informed by Commerce and Industry Minister, in a written reply to Lok Sabha.

He added that the requests are pending mainly due to the considerable increase in the number of patent applications filed with the office after 2003-04. He also said that in order to dispose of the pending requests for examination, the government has created 200 new posts of Examiners of patents and designs. In the mechanical engineering segment 14,134 patent applications were pending, followed by chemicals segment (11,633), electronics (8,192), communication (6,507) and pharmaceuticals (6,322) (http://www.business-standard.com).

Numbering system for granted Chinese patents

Chinese patent applications were previously given a first publication number ending with an ‘A’ at the publication stage and a new different publication number ending with a ‘C’ at the grant stage. Only the application number would remain the same on both documents. For example, a typical application could have an application number 200410103699.0 and be published as CN 1638312A, while the granted patent would still carry the same application number but be published as CN 100369392C.

Recently this system has been changed so that the grant publication number now ends with the letter ‘B’, rather than ‘C’, and the number itself is the same as in the earlier ‘A’ publication. This brings the publication numbers of Chinese patents into line with the format used by the UK and European Patent Offices (http://www.lexology.com).

Novartis challenges USPTO patent extension policy

Novartis AG has filed a suit against the USPTO, claiming that the agency’s interim method for recalculating patent term adjustments in the light of Wyeth v Kappos has effectively cut short 11 of the drug maker’s patents. Novartis and its Novartis Vaccines Diagnostics Inc unit lodged a complaint in the US District Court seeking extensions on the patents ranging from five to 435 days.

According to the suit, the USPTO has committed the same errors in calculating adjustments to the Novartis patent terms that were invalidated by the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in its decision in Wyeth. The appeals court held that the agency had misinterpreted both the law governing patent term length and a clause barring the double-counting of overlapping prosecution delays. The USPTO and the US Department of Justice opted not to seek further review of the decision and instead established an interim procedure for recalculating patent term adjustments in keeping with the Federal Circuit's interpretation of the law.

The drug maker is seeking a court order requiring the agency to recalculate the patent term adjustments in accordance with Wyeth and to adopt Novartis’ tabulation of the extensions on the 11 patents-in-suit (http://blogs.forbes.com).
EU proposes new solution for EU-wide patent

The European Commission has put forward a new compromise solution to try to break a 30-year impasse that is preventing the adoption of a European Union-wide patent system.

Under the current patent system, getting a Europe-wide patent costs 10 times as much as it does in the US, mainly due to the complex translation requirements, the Commission said. Despite the existence of a single European Patent Office (EPO), patent holders have to translate patents into the language of every EU member state in which they want the patents validated. A European patent validated in 13 EU countries costs about EUR20,000, of which nearly EUR14,000 is spent on translation. According to the commission, an equivalent US patent will cost about EUR1,850.

Under the new proposal, all EU patents would be examined and granted in German, English or French. A patent application can still be filed in other EU languages, but it will be always translated into one of the three languages by the EPO, in which it is then legally binding. In the case of a patent dispute, the patent holder may have to pay for further translation costs if the infringement process is taking place in a different language, the Commission added.

The Commission's proposal will need unanimous acceptance by the union's 27 member states, some of which are known to still oppose losing their own languages from the system. Heated discussions are likely during the coming months, as the commission and the council hope to hammer out a compromise.

Most patent applications in Europe are filed in English, with German and French the two other most common languages for applications.

However, some practical elements of the proposal remain to be worked through in collaboration with the EPO. The major stumbling block is that the Munich-based organization is an independent body with 37 members and is not controlled by Brussels.

It cannot impose its will on the EPO and will have to convince the patent organization to reimburse some translation costs for EU firms. In cases where the EPO might reimburse the cost of translating a patent into French, English and German, Brussels wants these funds to come from the fees paid in applying for the proposed EU patent. However, EU sources said it was not the intention to pay translation costs for non-EU countries which are members of the EPO, such as Switzerland or Turkey (http://online.wsj.com, http://www.euractiv.com).

DNA patent ruling hinders Monsanto

A decision by the European Court of Justice on a DNA patent held by global seed company, Monsanto has caused a stir in the biotechnology industry, with concerns that the ruling could limit the protection companies enjoy on their European patents.

Since 1996, Monsanto has held a European patent on genes that give soya beans resistance to the company's Roundup herbicide, specifically the active ingredient glyphosate. But the firm has not managed to obtain a patent in Argentina, where soya-bean crops (known as Roundup Ready) expressing the glyphosate-resistance genes can be cultivated without a licensing agreement. Argentinean growers are exporting soya meal harvested and processed from these crops to Europe, especially the Netherlands.

In an attempt to recoup payments it has not yet managed to get from Argentinian growers, Monsanto had sued importers such as Cefetra, based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, to try to prevent this practice, claiming that the imported soya meal contained the DNA sequence that it had patent protection for in Europe.

The European Court of Justice based in Luxembourg ruled on 6 July 2010 that Monsanto could not bar imports of the soya meal. It argued citing the fact that the DNA in the soya meal was not performing the function for which Monsanto had gained patent protection in the first place.

The ruling is being viewed as the first test of the EU's biotechnology directive, passed in 1998, which set down policy on what kind of genetic material was patentable, and on what protection that patent enjoyed.

The court decision also highlights existing uncertainties in the biotechnology directive, such as its hazy definition of 'genetic material', and whether the DNA's 'function' is the production of a particular protein (with all its uses), or a specific use of that protein (http://www.nature.com).

ViiV opens HIV portfolio to generics firms

GSK and Pfizer’s ViiV Healthcare JV will make its entire drug portfolio available to generics manufacturers and 80 per cent the global HIV-infected population. The plan will see ViiV provides non-branded drug makers with royalty-free licenses to manufacture all 16 of its products, including Combivir, Viracept and Ziagen, for patients in developing and low-income countries.
The offer is available to generic manufacturers operating in 69 of the most HIV-burdened countries, although further details have not been disclosed. ViiV has also promised to make patents for all future pipeline products to non-branded drug makers operating in these countries, including product like the novel integrase inhibitor it is developing in partnership with Japan’s Shionogi. The rationale, as its CEO explained, is that the way HIV infection is treated in developing countries is evolving and this requires a different approach to the provision of medication (http://www.in-pharmatechnologist.com).

**It took 5 years to patent corneal stem cell therapy**

It took five years, more than seven challenges from scientists from across the globe and several rounds of arguments with an expert committee before a few Chennai-based scientists managed to obtain the process patent for growing stem cells of the cornea on a synthetic gel to be used in transplants. A team of scientists from Sankara Nethralaya and Nichi-In Biosciences (private) limited (NCRM) of Japan have successfully tested scaffold-less stem cell transplant in the eye on rabbits. In 2003, a team of scientists identified a synthetic thermo-reversible gel, which liquefies when cooled. Mebiol gel, manufactured by a Japanese firm, was used as a scaffold to grow the rabbit's corneal stem cells. The stem cells of the cornea, located in an area called limbus, multiplied rapidly in the gel. The stem cells were then loosely injected into the eyes of 12 rabbits blinded due to ocular surface damage. The little amount of gel that remained with the stem cells kept it glued to the site. It was then bandaged with a contact lens. In rabbits, besides restoring vision it reduced infection rates.

But scientists from across the globe had raised objections on the type of genetic markers and other technical details such as molecular versions of the cells, time of harvest, collagens used. According to the director of NCRM, persuading everyone delayed the process enormously but eventually the process patent was obtained (http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com).

**Copyright and Trademark News**

**WIPO copyright body fails to agree on instrument for visually impaired**

Talks in the WIPO’s copyright committee broke down without agreement, dashing hopes that member governments would soon be able to agree on how to loosen international copyright rules in order to ease access to print material for the blind and visually impaired. WIPO’s Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR) had to adjourn its four-day session in June 2010, without agreement on the draft conclusions.

Once again exceptions and limitations to copyright protection, particularly to ease access to copyright-protected works for the visually impaired, were among the most significant issues discussed during the committee’s session.

Visually impaired people have in recent years complained about the low number of books available to them in accessible formats, even in the richest countries. This ‘book famine’ has been exacerbated by the fact that copyright exceptions are national in scope, with the consequence that one book might be transcribed into Braille (or made available in other accessible formats, such as text-to-speech) on several separate occasions by specialized organizations in different countries, even if those countries share a common language.

At the current session, varying proposals were put forth by several groups. Despite differences, countries
seemed to agree on the need to work towards an agreement that took into consideration the four proposals put forward. In the end, however, no agreement could be arrived at. The main point of disagreement centred on the wording of a request asking the WIPO secretariat to prepare a comparative table of the four proposals, as well as to organize informal consultations in Geneva to advance work towards an international consensus regarding copyright limitations and exceptions for persons with print disabilities.

During its session, the SCCR also addressed two other longstanding issues on its agenda: the protection of audio-visual performances and the protection of broadcasting organizations. A number of countries called for renewed momentum to advance international discussions on the protection of performers in the audiovisual industry. Discussion on all these issues will continue at the copyright committee’s next session from 8 to 12 November 2010. It is likely that countries will meet informally before then to try to reach an agreement on how to proceed with limitations and exceptions concerning people with print disabilities (http://ictsd.org).

DMCA changes: Copyright rules made more flexible

The US Copyright Office has made new changes to the DMCA including some very significant ones. Every three years, the office examines American copyright to see how it needs to be adjusted to account for changes in technology. One of the things that is looked at is DRM (digital rights management) technology that affects the ability of people to make use of works in a way that does not infringe copyright, such as using a brief clip in a classroom for educational use.

After the changes made, following six classes of work are exempt from DMCA prosecution for circumvention of access measures:

1 Films on DVD that are being copied in order to ‘accomplish the incorporation of short portions of motion pictures into new works for the purpose of criticism or comment’ by college and university professors and students engaged in documentary filmmaking or making noncommercial videos
2 Computer programs that allow use of legitimately purchased software on the user’s phone if there is no other way to allow the program to be run on the device.
3 Computer programs that allow the user to use their phone on a different network.
4 Video games whose DRM is being circumvented for the purpose of security tests.
5 Computer programs with obsolete dongles (a dongle shall be considered obsolete if it is no longer manufactured or if a replacement or repair is no longer reasonably available in the commercial marketplace)
6 Ebooks that contain access controls that prevent enabling a book’s read-aloud function or screen readers (http://www.daniweb.com).

Member States address non-traditional marks

Member States of the Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks, an international treaty setting standards for trademark registration procedures, took an important decision to define rules for the representation of a number of non-traditional marks such as hologram, motion, colour, position and sound marks. This is the first time that an international treaty makes explicit reference to non-traditional marks and sets out rules for their representation in trademark applications. It is a significant acknowledgement that subject matter for brands goes beyond the traditional signs for which trademark protection is usually sought.

While the actual number of trademark registrations representing non-traditional marks remains modest, it is a clear sign that the intellectual property community is responsive to the evolving needs of the branded goods industry (http://www.wipo.int).

Indian Trademark Act amended

The Indian Trademarks Act, 1999 has in place Schedule IV enlisting the classes under which various goods and services may be applied for trademark registration. The Schedule is in line with the mandate of Nice Classification, an international system followed to classify goods and services. Schedule IV under the Act has now been amended to bring the same in conformity with the Ninth Edition of the Nice Classification. Through a notification in the Gazette of India dated 20 May 2010, the numbers of classes under the Schedule have been increased from 42 to 45. Class 42 earlier covering ‘Other services’ has been replaced to include the following:

42 Scientific and technological services and research and design relating thereto; industrial analysis and research services; design and development of computer hardware and software.
43 Services for providing food and drink; temporary accommodation.

44 Medical services, veterinary services, hygienic and beauty care for human beings or animals; agriculture, horticulture and forestry services.

45 Legal services; security services for the protection of property and individuals; personal and social services rendered by others to meet the needs of individuals.

The result of this change is that the same has brought a place for more specific services, which originally found a place amongst those covered under the erstwhile Class 42.

This is a major step forward for India in the trademark domain as this decision has sent a strong message to the international community that India not only has the objective but is also competent to sign the Madrid System (http://indianipinfo.blogspot.com, MIP Week, July / August 2010).

Google wins landmark Adwords copyright case

The European Court of Justice has ruled in favour of Google in a decision that could have wide-reaching implications for online advertising. Judges have confirmed that using other companies' names as online advertising keywords is not an infringement of European trademark law. This news will be a major boost to Google’s revenue-generating Adwords service. The decision follows a long-running battle between Google and trademark owners.

The case involved temporary cabin maker Portakabin and its competitor Primakabin. Primakabin chose the keywords ‘portakabin’, ‘portacabin’, ‘portokabin’ and ‘portocabin’ as its search terms for Google Adwords. The last three variations were chosen so that Internet users searching for the company would not miss Primakabin’s ad due to a minor spelling mistake.

The judgment by the Luxembourg-based court, Europe's highest legal authority, accepted that when a user searches Google on the basis of one or more words, the search engine will display the sites which appear to best correspond to those words. It further allowed that customers of Google’s paid-for Adwords service may choose whichever words they want, within reason, without infringing trademark law (http://www.netimperative.com).

US trademark for ‘bhang’ laced chocolates

Chocolates as such are considered intoxicating for many, and an American entrepreneur now wants to give it a new high by lacing the bitter-sweet dessert with very much an Indian intoxicant ‘bhang’ and trademark it too. The product, to be produced and sold in the US for now and possibly in India later, will be called ‘bhang: The original cannabis chocolate’ and the New Mexico-based chocolatier has sought a trademark for the same. If the trademark is granted, the word ‘bhang’ cannot be used for a chocolate or candy product by anyone else. Synonymous with Hindu festivals like Holi and Shivratri, ‘bhang’ is one of the few legally available preparations of cannabis plant in India (http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com).

Key Patents

Patent for rHuPH20 enzyme platform

Halozyme Therapeutics Inc has been issued a US Pat No 7,767,429 claiming its proprietary recombinant human hyaluronidase enzyme platform (rHuPH20). The patent includes claims to the human PH20 glycoprotein, PEGylated variants, the glycoprotein produced by recombinant methods, and pharmaceutical compositions with other agents, including antibodies, insulins, cytokines, anti-infectives and additional therapeutic classes. A broad European counterpart, EP1603541, has also been granted to Halozyme. Specifically, the patent deals with compositions of matter and pharmaceutical compositions for rHuPH20 including the purified hyaluronidase glycoprotein, chemically modified forms of the hyaluronidase glycoprotein, including PEGylated variants, compositions comprising the recombinant hyaluronidase glycoprotein in product-by-process format, pharmaceutical compositions comprising the hyaluronidase glycoprotein and pharmaceutically active agents, including biologics, peptides and small molecules (http://www.tradingmarkets.com).

Suven gets patents for two CNS drugs in Japan

Suven Life Sciences Limited has secured two product patents from the Japanese Patent Office (JPO) for two of its new chemical entities (NCEs), indicated for the treatment of disorders associated with the central nervous system (CNS).

According to the invention patent disclosure, the compounds are useful in the treatment of cognitive impairment associated with neurodegenerative disorders like Alzheimer's disease, attention deficient hyperactivity disorder, Huntington's disease, Parkinson and schizophrenia (http://www.business-standard.com).
GlycoMimetics patents

GlycoMimetics Inc, a clinical-stage biotechnology company developing a new class of glycobiology-based therapies for a broad range of indications, has been issued two patents by the USPTO covering the company’s lead drug candidate and related compounds. US Pat No 7,728,117 specifically covers GMI-1070, the drug presently in clinical trials of patients with vaso-occlusive crisis of sickle cell disease. The second patent, US Pat No 7,741,312 contains claims covering a family of molecules that includes and extends beyond GMI-1070.

GlycoMimetics’ lead drug candidate, GMI-1070, is a glycomimetic antagonist of E-, P- and L-selectins, and inhibits a key early step in the inflammatory process that leads to leukocyte adhesion and recruitment to inflamed tissue. A phase-2 clinical trial of GMI-1070 in patients with sickle cell crisis was initiated in June 2010 following the completion of two phase-1 studies and a pilot study in sickle cell patients.

GMI-1070 has been shown to be active in several models of diseases in which leukocyte adhesion and activation play a key role, including vaso-occlusive crisis of sickle cell disease. By inhibiting selectin interactions, GMI-1070 may be able to decrease the enhanced cell adhesion that results in vaso-occlusive crisis. In preclinical studies, GMI-1070 restored blood flow to affected vessels of sickle cell animals experiencing vaso-occlusive crisis. GMI-1070 is also being evaluated in preclinical studies for the treatment of certain hematologic cancers, where selectin-mediated cell adhesion and migration is known to play a key role in the disease process.

Patents granted for nanocolumn technology

IQE PLC, a supplier of advanced semiconductor epitaxial wafer products and wafer services to the semiconductor industry, announced that NanoGaN Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of IQE, has been granted two separate patents in relation to its nanocolumn technology for the production of advanced blue and green lasers and LEDs. Patent 2008-549935 has been granted by the Japan Patent Office to NanoGaN and protects the proprietary nanocolumn technology for producing high quality, free-standing gallium nitride substrates, which are critical for manufacturing high quality blue and green semiconductor lasers and ultra high brightness LEDs for solid state lighting. A second patent, no 2446471, has been granted by the UK patent office to protect the process for manufacturing semiconductor devices such as laser diodes, LEDs and solar cells, directly onto the proprietary nanocolumn platform. The production of advanced blue and green semiconductor lasers and ultra high brightness LEDs requires stable, high quality substrates with minimal defects to increase yield and therefore reduce manufacturing costs (http://www.marketwatch.com).

CardioMag Imaging receives patents from US and China

CardioMag Imaging Inc received two patents; one in the US and one in China to protect key aspects of its technology that can, non-invasively, safely, rapidly and more reliably than ECG, detect early symptoms of heart disease without the use of injections or radiation.

The US patent is entitled ‘Use of machine learning for classification of magneto cardiograms’ while the Chinese one is entitled ‘Method for classifying cardiography data’. The objective of these patents is to improve and facilitate human interpretation of real-time MagnetoCardioGraphy (MCG) diagnostic testing results based upon computer processing aided artificial intelligence. MCG screenings can save many lives and healthcare costs as well as monitor both the efficacy of pharmacological treatments and recovery from invasive cardiac procedures (http://www.prnewswire.com).

Chirra Electronics gets its first patent grant

Bangalore based Chirra Electronics Private Limited obtained a patent from the Indian Patent Office for the invention titled ‘A zero voltage switching circuit’. Chirra Electronics, is into design and manufacturing of customized Switched Mode Power Supply (SMPS) and DC-DC converters. The company also offers services on custom designs, development of prototypes and third party testing devices.

The granted patent is about switching circuits and more precisely circuits that achieve true zero voltage switching. The circuit employs a secondary switching unit, which is designed with a resonant reset scheme in a forward converter. The secondary switching unit with the rest scheme helps in achieving zero voltage switching in a forward converter. Further, zero voltage switching is achieved with no loss in the duty cycle and reduced power loss. The circuit also improves the efficiency, reliability and electromagnetic interference effects (http://indianipinfo.blogspot.com).
Intellect Neurosciences gets US patent for Alzheimer’s vaccine

Intellect Neurosciences, a biopharmaceutical company with an internal preclinical and clinical-stage pipeline and licences with major pharmaceutical companies covering products in late-stage clinical trials, has received a notice of allowance from the USPTO for RV01 and RV02, the company’s two lead vaccine candidates. According to the CEO of Intellect, a vaccine of this nature, which is analogous to a flu shot, is considered as the ultimate quest in Alzheimer’s research. Intellect, demonstrated through animal data that this method of vaccination can be used to generate highly specific antibodies in blood that bind a specific toxin, which accumulates in the brains of Alzheimer’s patients, while avoiding binding to the amyloid precursor protein, which has important physiological functions in the brain and other tissues (http://www.marketwatch.com).