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TIMES CITY

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BCG probe narrows in on lab's ledger

CBI Seizes Documents Indicating Huge Financial Transactions With Pvt Labs

Anand Ram | TNS

Chennai: The CBI, which is currently probing all legal irregularities in the BCG Vaccine Lab (BCGVVL) in Chennai, has seized documents indicating huge transactions with private labs, said its source familiar with the probe.

The documents seized by the facility include a ledger on receipts and payments running into crores of rupees. A CBI official was asked permission of the Interim Director of the lab for questioning the lab's former director, N Elankumaran.

Some of the pages in the ledger entries, copies of which are available with The Times Of India, suggest a payment of Rs 1.5 crore to the former director, who has been removed from the post following a Madras High Court order in July.

Elankumaran is also being probed for the post of Director of Pasteur Institute, Coimbatore. Production at Coimbatore is run by the Central Research Institute (CRI), Kasaragod, which together met the entire national demand for the country's universal programme of immunisation (UPI). It was suspended in January following reports that they did not meet standards of good manufacturing practices.

The government has been procuring vaccines directly from private labs at a higher price.



TIMELINE: CBI is probing ledgers of transactions and bank account

Public sector labs are supposed to be on transactions through the pay of the transactions entered in their ledger. We are in the process of gathering more evidence in this regard.

BCGVVL has been making a profit of Rs 1.5 crore per month with turnover of Rs 1.5 crore. The CBI is investigating the payment of Rs 1.5 crore to the former director, since he is in the rank of Joint Secretary on a previous case of corruption in the ministry of health. We will also seek permission inquesting him in the capacity of Interim Director of BCGVVL," a CBI official said.

The ledger entries make it clear that BCGVVL has been making a profit of Rs 1.5 crore per month with turnover of Rs 1.5 crore. The CBI is investigating the payment of Rs 1.5 crore to the former director, since he is in the rank of Joint Secretary on a previous case of corruption in the ministry of health.

The investigation, initiated soon after the CBI seized documents, was made under a current account no. 0340200001640. BCGVVL is the only firm that has been granted a license in the name of the service BCGVVL.

In a letter dated July 17, the administration officer (who has now been transferred to another post) of the firm had sought details of imports worth Rs 1.5 crore made under the Union health ministry is yet to decide on resumption of vaccine production and distribution by the service BCGVVL.

The ministry is constituted an expert committee to inspect the labs and has issued a report if they could follow the principles of good manufacturing practices.

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Wellington Foundation gives Rs 28L for NAT facility

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: The Chennai Wellington Corporate Foundation on Monday for many hours conducted a blood donation camp at the Nucleus Acid Testing (NAT), a facility launched in April at the Anna Hospital in the interest of improving safety of the blood, and improving blood bank.

NAT, a joint venture of the BCS Foundation, charitable known Blood Bank, would reduce the window period and enable the bank to store blood units for up to 10 days, which would otherwise remain unselected by the blood bank due to the risk of mercury loss for infectious diseases like Hepatitis B, HIV and AIDS.

"Since April 2,500 units of blood were put to both recommended blood test and the NAT facility. Till date we have found 100 units negative for Hepatitis B virus but were positive for HIV. When we tested them, we would have passed them as fit for use," says Dr Srinivas.

The facility will also help the bank establish public sector unit cell bank. The Indian Stem Cell Foundation will collect umbilical cord blood from women immediately after giving birth to store the cord血 for future use in infections, cure and ultimately reduce the need for transfusion in anyone who needed them.

These stem cells would help in curing more than 70 medical conditions including blood cancers and other haematological conditions that affect children.

"We have made the recommendations to the Central but are awaiting the go-ahead. We expect it to come by this week," he said.

The bank has received funds from the foundation for the second time in the last six years.

"We gave them Rs 16.6 lakh in 2002. Now we are giving them this money for an initial phase to help in the transmission of diseases during blood transfusion is minimised," he said.

**ALL FOR SALE****15 from orphanage in Korukkupet taken ill after meal**

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: At least 15 persons including three children, who were residing in an orphanage in Korukkupet, located in the Governmental Orphanages Hospital (GOH) in Tondiarpet on Monday afternoon with symptoms of acute intestinal disorders (AIDS).

The students in the institution are said to be stable. According to the report, ten patients were given CRIS and instated as out-patients. They were then immediately discharged.

However, the condition of the five patients, Duraiswami (4), Arun (2), Noorullah (7), Javed (7) and Nasir (10), who were admitted to the hospital on Monday, worsened on Tuesday morning.

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