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Gates Foundation to invest $35 mn

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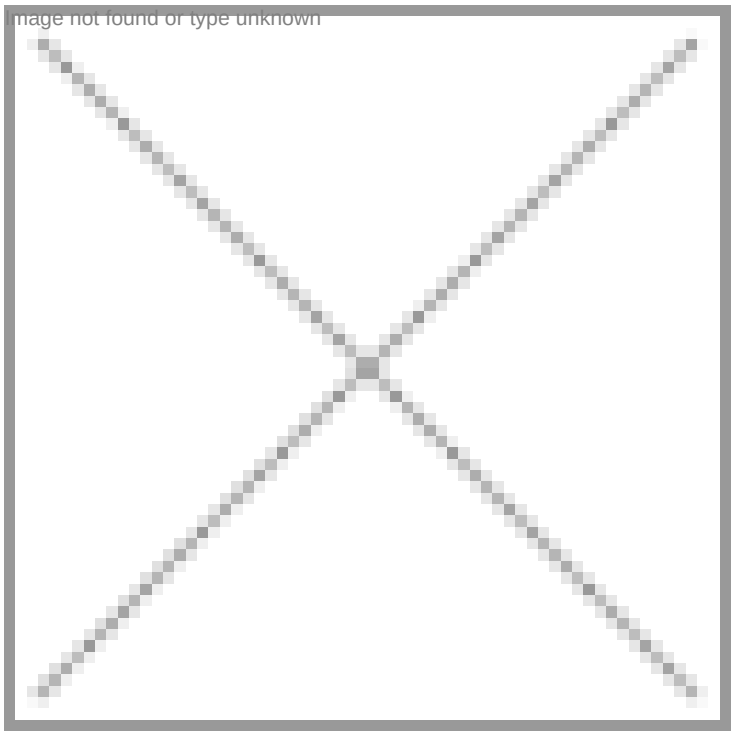

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will invest $35 million in grants to expand the pipeline of groundbreaking ideas that can help women and children live more prosperous and healthy lives. The foundation has announced new family health initiatives that include preventing preterm birth, managed in partnership with the Global Alliance for the Prevention of Prematurity and Stillbirth (GAPPS), which is an initiative of Seattle Children's. The foundation will invest $20 million in the discovery and development of interventions to prevent preterm birth and stillbirth by limiting infection and improving nutrition. Also, it will invest $15 million in research to discover the causes of growth faltering during the first 1,000 days of life and to identify effective and affordable interventions to promote healthy growth. In addition, the Gates Foundation announced $9 million in funding for a new related initiative, Biomarkers of Gut Function and Health.

Scientists decode pigeonpea genome

Considered to be an orphan crop due to lack of research attention until few years ago, a group of 31 Indian scientists from Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institutes, state agricultural universities and Banaras Hindu University, led by Professor Nagendra Kumar Singh from ICAR's National Research Center on plant biotechnology at New Delhi, decoded the genome of pigeonpea, the second most important pulse crop of India. Availability of the pigeonpea, arhar, genome sequence will accelerate development of new varieties and hybrids with enhanced productivity. The genome of the popular arhar variety 'asha' was assembled using long sequence reads of 454-FLX second generation sequencing technology resulting in 511 million base pairs of high quality genome sequence information. The scientists have identified 47,004 protein coding genes in the arhar genome, of which 1,213 genes are for disease resistance and 152 genes for tolerance to drought, heat and salinity that make it a hardy crop.

Regional center of IIPR in Karnataka

The Indian Institute of Pulses Research (IIPR), Kanpur, UP, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the

University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad, Karnataka, for the establishment of a regional research center and off season nursery at Dharwad, in Karnataka. At present, the center will function from the sericulture building of the university. It will cater to the research and extension needs of pulse crops like blackgram, greengram, chickpea and pigeonpea grown in south Indian states including Karnataka.

The center will also act as an off-season nursery during the summer for advancing breeding material of chickpea, lentil and peas. In addition, the center will develop location specific technologies for pulses and would contribute to capacity building of line department officials and impart need-based training to pulse growing farmers in association with the UAS, Dharwad. Dr N Nadarajan, director, IIPR, on behalf of secretary, DARE and director general, ICAR and Dr H S Vijay Kumar, registrar, UAS, Dharwad signed the MoU in presence of Vice Chancellor Dr R R Hanchinal.

TB detecting E-nose to get funding

A new hand-held device called the Electronic Nose, which has the potential to diagnose TB in symptomatic patients, was awarded a $950,000 grant from Grand Challenges Canada and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on Novemeber, 07, 2011. The funding will help determine whether the E-nose is able to detect TB immediately and non-invasively from the patient's breath. The development of the E-Nose is a collaboration between the International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, New Delhi, India, and Next Dimension Technologies, California.

C-CAMP initiative in Bangalore

Center for Cellular and Molecular Platforms (C-CAMP), a Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, initiative and a part of the Bangalore Bio Cluster, which has completed one year on November 14, 2011, will be setting up a faculty of innovation and entrepreneurship in next one year.

Announcing this at the C-CAMP technology conclave in Bangalore, Professor S Ramaswamy, CEO, and co founder of C-CAMP said, â€œWe are looking at incubating at least two enterprises in the next 12 months. We have ear marked abou 50 lakh for this new initiative.â€? C-CAMP, which recently became the first international Association of Biomolecular Research Facilities chapter in India and the Southeast Asian region, is providing technology training programs to generate a pool of experts.