

DRDO team eyes improved vitiligo remedy

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New Delhi: Herbal drug Lukoskin developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for management of leucoderma or white skin patches seems to be finding greater acceptance among patients suffering from the medical condition that carries huge social stigma. Buoyed by the positive results, the DRDO team is now working on an improved version of Lukoskin.

In a recognition for the drug's efficacy, the Narendra Modi government conferred DRDO senior scientist Hemant Pandey with the prestigious "Science Award" on National Technology Day for developing Lukoskin to fight vitiligo, the medical term for the disease that causes loss of skin colour in blotches.



As people mark June 25 as World Vitiligo Day, Dr Pandey, who presently heads herbal medicine division of the DRDO's lab Defence Institute of Bio-energy Research (DIBER) at Pithoragarh said he is working on an advanced version of Lukoskin which is presently manufactured and marketed by Delhi-based AIMIL Pharma Ltd.

"There are various remedies of vitiligo — allopathic, surgical and adjunctive. But none of the therapies has satisfactorily cured the disease. These are either costly or have very low level of efficacy and develop side-effects like blister and irritation in the skin with the result most of the patients discontinue the treatment," said the scientist

Vitiligo is not contagious or life-threatening. The world wide incidence of leucoderma has been reported to be 1-2 per cent. In India, its incidence is around 4-5 per cent.

"We developed the formulation from Himalayan herbs after exhaustive scientific studies," said Dr Pandey, who earlier received the Agri-Innovation Award for developing the Lukoskin that is available in the form of ointment and oral liquid.

The ointment has seven herbal ingredients having properties such as skin photo-sensitiser, anti-blister, anti-irritation, anti-septic, wound healing and copper supplementing properties while the oral dose has been formulated to check the emergence of new spots, added Dr Nitika Kohli, an ayurveda expert.

In some parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat, incidence of vitiligo is as high as 5-8 per cent, much about the national average of 1-2 per cent.

"This skin disorder is considered a social stigma in India where people confuse it with leprosy which, in fact, is bacterial infection," added Dr Pandey.

But this auto-immune condition can be life-altering. Some people develop low self-esteem and serious depression, an observation which prompted Dr Pandey to work on advanced version of Lukoskin drug for better results.

The fact that vitiligo does not impact one's physical activities is demonstrated by some of the celebrities and public figures who carried out their public life without any inhibition. These include people like late American singer Michael Jackson and Union minister S.K. Gangwar.

<https://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/240619/drdo-team-eyes-improved-vitiligo-remedy.html>

“DRDO hits upon cure for leucoderma”

As part of the convention, the seventh “Swayavaram” was held to enable wedlock for the leucoderma affected men and women

Tiruchy: The ‘Leucoderma Awareness Movement-India’ has appealed to the Central and State Governments to create scientific awareness about the disease and give the same importance to observing ‘World Leucoderma Day’ on par with observances of ‘World Day’ for other diseases.

Movement’s national secretary K. Umaapathy briefing newsmen on the resolutions adopted at the National Convention on ‘Vitiligo-2019’ to mark the ‘World Leucoderma Day’ held here on Sunday, said that a resolution to that effect was adopted.

He said the meeting also wanted the TN Government to include the treatment of leucoderma in the Chief Minister’s comprehensive health insurance scheme, to include a lesson on the disease in the curriculum in all educational systems like CBSE, State board, etc. They also appealed to the Union Government to recruit persons who are having leucoderma for the Indian Army, he added. He further said leucoderma is neither a hereditary nor infectious disease and the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) has evolved a medicine for curing it.



As part of the convention, the seventh “Swayavaram” was held to enable wedlock for the leucoderma affected men and women, he added.

<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/240619/drdo-hits-upon-cure-for-leucoderma.html>

◆ APN NEWS

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Assam police arm themselves with chili-grenades to tackle crime

By Bhupen Goswami

Guwahati : The Assam Police have armed themselves with an interesting new weapon in their fight against crime: a grenade made using the world’s hottest chili, the ‘bhoot jolokia’. The chili grenades have finally been added to the arsenal of the Assam Police, along with many varieties of tear gas shells. At more than a thousand times stronger than the average cooking spice the ‘bhoot jolokia’ chili is set to cause a potent explosion on more than just the taste buds. The new kind of ‘weapon’ has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), and a concoction of hand grenades with ‘bhoot jolokia’ with be used to deal with law breakers and disperse angry mobs.



According to reports, the Assam Police also plans to use the highly potent ‘bhoot jolokia’ to disperse angry protestors. In 2009, scientists at India’s Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) announced plans to use the peppers in hand grenades, as a nonlethal ways to control rioters by pepper sprays or in self-defence. The DRDO said bhut jolokia-based aerosol sprays could be used as a “safety device”, and “civil variants” of chili grenades could be used to control and

disperse mobs. Chili grenades made from Bhut jolokia were successfully used by the Indian Army in August 2015 to flush out a terrorist hiding in a cave. It may be mentioned that the the Bhut jolokia, also known as ghost chili pepper, ghost chili and ghost jolokia, is an inter-specific hybrid chili pepper cultivated in the Northeast Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland and Manipur. The hotness of the bhut jolokia, is measured in Scoville heat units and comes in at a massive 1,001,304 — that is nearly twice as hot as Mexico’s red savina that used to hold the record at 577,000.

<https://www.apnnews.com/assam-police-arm-themselves-with-chili-grenades-to-tackle-crime/>



Mon, 24 June 2019

India scraps Israel anti-tank missile deal after DRDO says will deliver

Government officials associated with the approval of the deal said Israel has been informed about the contract being abandoned in favour of DRDO, which claimed that it was developing a similar missile at a lower price in partnership with VEM Technologies Ltd

By Amitav Ranjan

New Delhi: India has scrapped a \$500-million deal with Israel for the purchase of Spike anti-tank missiles from defence contractor Rafael Advanced Defense Systems after indigenous developer Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) claimed that it could deliver an alternative within two years.

Government officials associated with the approval of the deal said Israel has been informed about the contract being abandoned in favour of DRDO, which claimed that it was developing a similar missile at a lower price in partnership with VEM Technologies Ltd.

Officials said domestic production of the missile was favoured as DRDO’s effort in creating a man-portable anti-tank guided missile (MPATGM) was “progressing fast” with the second stage of testing concluded. The DRDO claimed it successfully test-fired the MPATGM at the Ahmednagar range last September.

Although Army officials were sceptical of DRDO’s claim on meeting its promised deadline and operational requirements, the Defence Ministry opted for DRDO as it would fulfil the government’s “Make-in-India” initiative. The ministry, said officials, now prefers a home-grown anti-tank missile rather than depend on time-consuming imports.

Officials said India last year delayed the purchase of Spike missiles from Rafael for fear of being dragged into another controversy at a time when the purchase of the French fighter jet Rafale was being disputed by the main Opposition Congress party ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

At the time, the reason given was that the Spike missiles needed to undergo additional tests to prove its infrared system in the country’s high-temperature environment. The Army was said to be sceptical of the missile’s performance in the hot western deserts adjoining Pakistan.

However, the DRDO offered to deliver thousands of indigenous MPATGM by 2021, almost the time it would take Rafael to deliver its Strike missiles, said officials.

India’s deal with Israel for 321 Spike launchers and 8,356 missiles was initially struck in October 2014 after the Defence Ministry selected Spike over the US-made FGM-148 Javelin. But it was scrapped in December 2017 in favour of DRDO.

It was “reauthorized” in January 2018 following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s visit to India and Rafael opened a production facility in India last August with local partner Kalyani Group.
<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-israel-spike-anti-tank-missiles-drdo-5796306/>