

Carborundum to foray into bio-ceramics market

NT Bureau

Chennai, Nov 24:



Cricketer Jonty Rhodes releasing a set of Cerdak products to CUMI chairman M M Murugappan at a press conference yesterday. Also seen are Cerdak director Cobus Kotze and Dr Richard Lemmer.

To expand its business and expertise in high-technology ceramics which finds diverse applications in industries, Carborundum Universal Ltd (CUMI), a leader in abrasives and precision instruments, has entered into a partnership with South African firm Cerdak for marketing its range of bio-ceramics in India.

Patented worldwide, around 24 wound treatment devices would be marketed by CUMI, a part of Rs 6,250 crore Murugappa group, which has diversified interests in abrasives, material sciences, heat resistant technologies and industrial ceramics. 'We are extending our knowledge and experience in traditional applications of ceramics into wound healing devices in bio-ceramics in partnership with Cerdak. And we have plans to enter into newer technologies in bioceramics,' said M M Murugappan, chairman, CUMI, at a press conference yesterday.

The partnership envisaged a joint venture in due course by setting up of a production facility for Cerdak's medical devices to cater to the requirements of Indian hospitals and clinics. 'As the partnership evolves with more demand for Cerdak products, we have a joint venture opportunity with the South African firm,' said Murugappan.

A CUMI team has been working with hospitals and institutions to build a information base in understanding the needs of the wound dressing market, which was estimated at Rs 250 crore. Once the economics and commercial viability in the marketing of Cerdak began to yield the desired results, 'then we could set-up a joint venture facility to produce bio-ceramics for the Indian market,' he explained.

CUMI has the responsibility to protect the intellectual property rights (IP) of Cerdak while selling in India and 'suitable steps would be taken against those who sell spurious products in the market as the inherent character of bio-ceramics has to maintained.'

As the Indian market was serviced by MNCs presently, with this tie-up CUMI would be foraying into bio-ceramics through the distribution of Cerdak products to hospitals and institutions, said K Srinivasan, president, CUMI. 'Initially 3 - 4 products will be fine tuned to make them suitable to Indian customers and hospitals with the stocking points at Chennai. A 2-tier distribution of hospitals and clinics as the first tier and counter sales as the other channel will be in place to market Cerdak,' he informed.

Expected to hit the market from December, the bio-ceramics would be targeted in the South, East and Mumbai, without extending the distribution to Delhi or Northern parts of India until March next year. A technical team for servicing the customers has been set up and CUMI was looking forward to a 'healthy market share' in the next two years.

In Murugappa group, Cerdak has a partner who appreciated the value of IP and shared the vision to foray into new technologies in ceramics, said Corbus Kotze, director, Cerdak. 'We have a big opportunity to enter Indian market through CUMI with this partnership that involved the supply of products and developing the market in the first phase,' he explained.

A Cerdak device consisted of a fabric sachet filled with microporous granules and differed radically from other wound care devices in appearance, action and effect on wounds.

'Cerdak optimises the natural healing process by removing excess moisture to prevent colonisation of surgical wound by bacteria and foreign elements,' said Dr Richard Lemmer, a clinician, and added regeneration of lost tissue occurred much faster with Cerdak.

Early discharge from hospital, reducing the usage of antibiotics and minimising the scar formation, besides acting effectively on the wound even in unhygienic conditions were some of the benefits of Cerdak range of products, officials said. The officials of both the companies would be coming out a with a retail price list of Cerdak products shortly, they said.

As brand ambassador for Cerdak, Jonty Rhodes, South African cricketer, said by associating with the company he was happy

to contribute his mite to humanity as the product reduced the healing process of the wounds.

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