

## **Nitya Sharma at Hilleman Labs and Amity University awarded the prestigious Prime Minister's Fellowship**

- Hilleman Labs partners with Amity University for the *Prime Minister's* Fellowship Scheme for Doctoral Research
- Nitya Sharma, a PhD (Immunology) scholar at Amity University is working on the development of immunodiagnostic assays for meningococcal antigens at Hilleman Labs

New Delhi, 22 December, 2016: In yet another showcase of promoting young scientists and recognising local talent, Hilleman Laboratories, a first-of-its-kind joint-venture partnership between MSD and the Wellcome Trust, has partnered with Amity University. Amity University, Noida is a research and innovation driven university having more than 725 patents. To foster, academia - industry partnership, Amity University extended its partnership to Hilleman Labs. Under this partnership, Ms. Nitya Sharma, a PhD (Immunology) scholar at Amity Institute of Virology and Immunology (AIVI) of AUUP and a recipient of Prime Minister's Fellowship has initiated research on Hilleman Labs Project on the development of immunodiagnostic assays for meningococcal antigens, under the supervision of Dr Manoj Kumar Chhikara as her industry mentor and Dr. M. Martha Premlatha as her University mentor.

Ms. Sharma went through a rigorous selection procedure before being presented with the Prime Minister's Fellowship Award. After initial selection, her project was presented to the Apex Council, the highest decision-making body of this Scheme, which is chaired by former secretary of the Department of Biotechnology, Dr M K Bhan and has representation from both industry and academia. After being awarded by the Council, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Hilleman Laboratories, Amity University and the student.

Elaborating further, Dr. Manoj Kumar Chhikara, Director, Research & Development, Hilleman Laboratories, said, "*Nitya* has been selected out of several meritorious students from various disciplines at national level because of her truly outstanding academic achievements. She is a bright scientist and is working very diligently on the Project. I am sure that she will make a substantial contribution to the project and also gain relevant industry experience. This Scheme not only promotes young scientific talent but it also changes *industry's mind-set* in investing in R&D. It further enhances the Academia-Industry collaboration."

On being awarded the Fellowship, Nitya Sharma commented, "*Being selected for the Fellowship* has been very encouraging and I am humbled to receive this honour. I feel indebted to Prof. (Dr.) W. Selvamurthy (President – Amity Science, Technology & Innovation Foundation, and Director General – Amity Directorate of Science & Innovation), Prof. Narayan Rishi (Advisor, AIVI) and Dr. Premlatha for associating me with Hilleman Labs. I owe my gratitude to Hilleman Laboratories and to Dr. Chhikara, in particular, for providing me a stimulating and highly motivating environment to enhance my knowledge and expertise through advanced research."

Prime Minister's Fellowship Scheme for Doctoral Research is a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) between Science & Engineering Research Board (SERB), which is an autonomous body under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, and

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). The scheme awards 100 'Doctoral Research Fellowships' every year with applicants drawn from different disciplines of Engineering and Life Sciences. Due to the highly competitive nature of the scheme, less than 80 fellowships have been conferred in the first three years of its inception.

#### About Hilleman Laboratories

Hilleman Laboratories is a first-of-its-kind joint-venture partnership formed between MSD a global research-driven pharmaceutical organization and Wellcome Trust, a global charitable foundation dedicated to human and animal health by supporting the brightest minds. Hilleman Laboratories has been named after renowned scientist and father of modern vaccines Dr. Maurice Hilleman. His dedication to making a difference through the practical application of vaccine research and delivering vaccines to people in need forms the core mission of Hilleman Laboratories.

Hilleman Laboratories aims to become a global voice for vaccine development and access for public health in the developing world. For further information, please visit: [www.hillemanlabs.org](http://www.hillemanlabs.org).