

## **CSIR to have its own commercial arm**

NEW DELHI: The country's premier scientific research body, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), is working on setting up its own commercial arm. Science and technology minister P K Bansal says it is essential to take pathbreaking research that CSIR is doing to the people.

"We should have a commercial arm of CSIR so that people can benefit from the research that they are doing. It can be in the form of a Public-Private Partnership or an initiative of only CSIR but I feel it is very important to take science to the masses. Right now, there are small groups that work in laboratories towards adoption of technologies but no umbrella forum for it," Bansal said at a function here on Saturday.

His words echo what the Planning Commission had told CSIR some time back. Science and technology secretary S Brahmachari said: "We had formed the Vijay Kelkar Committee to look into the issue right after the recommendation. That report has come in and we will soon take it up. It (commercial arm) will be a professional body and not a PSU."

Beyond its presence in the pharma sector where CSIR has come up with a number of low cost drugs that have been adopted by companies, the other research derivatives from the council have rarely made it to the market. They include low cost computers Sofcomp and Mobilis that created a stir some years ago.

"They were not taken up but after the price of computers fell drastically," Bansal said. One notable exception in this is the tractor technology that was adopted by the private sector and has now been spun into a company with an annual turnover of Rs 2,000 crore, Bansal added.