

Portugal approves Venus Remedies' second antibiotic

Our Bureau
CHANDIGARH

PORTUGAL'S drug regulator on Thursday cleared Venus Remedies' antibiotic Lastinem for sale in the country.

This will be the Chandigarh-based company's second antibiotic to receive marketing approval from National Authority of Medicines and Health Products of Portugal this year after Meropenem.

Lastinem, a generic product based on an antibiotic, originally developed by Merck, Sharpe and Dhorne, is already sold in Africa, Latin America, West Asia, Southeast Asia and Commonwealth of Independent States. The product is also under registration in South Africa where the company has already tied up for marketing of this product with one of the leading pharmaceutical companies.

The antibiotic is used to treat abdominal, urinary tract and microbial infections.

The company says that the antibiotic's patent expired recently and Venus Pharma GmbH - the company's German arm - will launch and market the product in

Portugal during the fourth quarter of this calendar year.

"This is a widely used antibiotic in Europe with a market of more than \$300 million. We plan to tap 5% of this market in the coming two to three years. We'll be the second generic company with nearly 30% reduction in prices compared to innovator. So, we expect \$10 million in sales in two to three years of launch. Portugal is fast growing generic market, where generics have already more than 10% of market share. This growth is in line with government policy to increase generics prescription in order to reduce cost of medicines," says the company's chairman and managing director Pawan Chaudhary.

Venus Remedies' scrip closed marginally up at Rs 268.8 after opening at Rs 265.3.

The company is expecting marketing approvals from 10 more countries in Europe in the near future that include the UK, France, Italy, Spain and Germany.

For the quarter ended June 2010, the company posted a net profit of Rs 10.9 crore on sales of Rs 82.17 crore.