

Novartis files patent suit against Biocon over Galvus

REUTERS

feedback@livemint.com

Novartis AG has taken India's **Biocon Ltd** to court for infringing the patent on its diabetes drug Galvus, the Swiss drug maker said in a statement on Thursday.

The Basel-based firm has filed infringement proceedings and is seeking an injunction against Biocon at Delhi high court to try to stop the Indian company launching a generic version of Galvus, also known as vildagliptin.

In a hearing that took place on 28 March, the court ordered that Biocon cannot manufacture, sell or export vildagliptin until the next court hearing, Novartis said in an emailed statement.

"A robust and predictable intellectual property (IP) system is an essential pillar of an innovative life science industry," Novartis said.

Galvus is one of the company's best-selling medicines, achieving \$1.2 billion in sales last year.

In a statement, Biocon said it respected all valid intellectual property in India. "Biocon has not been issued any injunction on vildagliptin; nor has Biocon launched the product in India. There is no impact on our immediate plans for this product," the company said.

India's drug market has proven a headache for big pharma, with the government imposing wide-ranging price cuts and authorities overruling patents as they strive to make medicines affordable for the 70% of people living on less than \$2 a day. But with 1.2 billion people increasingly seeking both on- and off-prescription drugs, the market is too big for global drug makers to ignore.

This is the second patent battle Novartis has had over Galvus in India. On 5 March Delhi high court granted a preliminary injunction against generic drug maker **Wockhardt Ltd** for infringing the basic compound patent on vildagliptin, Novartis said.

Wockhardt has challenged the validity of the patent at the Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) and the case is ongoing, the Swiss drug maker added.

PKG
3.4.14

Dypr
9.4.14

TD, MC

Patent