76TH RAMANAVAMI MUSIC : A performance by S Aishwarya and group Madhurai TNS Krishna, MR Gopinath, HS nd Sukanya Ramgopal. **Today at Fort High unds, Chamarajapet, 4.45pm**

POETRY | **TUESDAYS WITH THE BARD:** Students of Azim Premji University read and write poetry in class. The event will be led by Ms Athena Kashyap. **Today at Urban Solace, Ulsoor, 7pm**

EXHIBITION | **THE PERSISTENCE OF FORM:** This art exhibition by Vijay Nagvekar and Runa Biswas focuses on the vibrancy, sensitivity, richness and depth of Indian art. It highlights creative nuances of the artists with varied styles and media. **Today at Gallery Third Eye, Yemalur, 10.30am**

Tech firm creates affordable kit for detection of cancer

At ₹15k, Test Must Be Prescribed By Doctors, Says Strand

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: Indian Institute of Science founded Strand Life Sciences in partnership with the Mazumdar-Shaw Medical Foundation has developed a cancer diagnostic kit that can assess the likely occurrence of the chronic disease at one-fourth of the current diagnostic costs.

Strand, a Bangalore-based technology company in the field of genomics, has patented intellectual property to help early detection of breast and ovarian cancer among Indian patients by analyzing DNA sequences.

Heredity is a major factor in the recurrence of cancer through generations. Brca I, Brca II, and TP53 are the three genes that can mutate and cause breast or ovarian cancer.

Breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer among Indian women with approximately 1.5 lakh new patients being diagnosed every year. Nearly 7 lakh Indians die of some form of cancer every year, while over 10 lakh are newly diagnosed with the disease.

Strand's cancer detection tests will be carried out at the Mazumdar-Shaw Centre for Translational Research located in Electronics City, at a cost of Rs 15,000 per screening. The results of the test would be delivered in two to three weeks. Dr Vijay Chandru, chairman and CEO of Strand Life Sciences, said the company was able to re-engineer costs using its core strength of bioinformatics (applying computer science, statistics, mathematics and engineering to process biological data) and lowering the cost of chemical reagents used in the test by 30% to 40%.

Cancer detection tests using traditional technology cost between Rs 50,000 and Rs 80,000 in India and about $2,000 to $3,000 abroad, said Dr Vijay Chandru, chairman and CEO of Strand Life Sciences

Cancer detection tests using traditional technology cost between Rs 50,000 and Rs 80,000 in India and about $2,000 to $3,000 abroad, said Dr Chandru. "This test would only be carried out on a doctor's prescription, typically a family doctor who knows the history of the patient," he said, adding that many citizens were being led astray by fly-by-night operators who advertise similar tests but do others.

The role of genomics in detecting the occurrence of cancer and the awareness among women about the benefits of early detection came into prominence last year after Hollywood star Angelina Jolie underwent a breast removal surgery. It was then reported that Jolie undertook the surgery as family hereditary could have potentially placed her at a high risk of getting breast cancer.

Will encourage research

'We believe this collaboration will help us foster innovation and encourage in-depth research in the genomics space, thereby providing better care for patients with cancer and other genetic diseases

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw | CMD, BIOCON AND FOUNDER, MAZUMDAR-SHAW MEDICAL FOUNDATION

TIMES VIEW

Cancer treatment becomes more effective when the symptoms are detected early. But when cancer screening tests themselves are priced high, the cost can put off patients and the consequences are often tragic. Which is why initiatives like the affordable cancer diagnostic kit developed by Strand Life Sciences and Mazumdar-Shaw Medical Foundation are reassuring. This will bring more people under the detection umbrella and help minimize the deaths caused by late or undetected cancer. This will also act as a reference point for future research using traditional technologies in India.

The extreme form of prevention would be the removal of one's breasts and ovaries. However, if there is a risk, Chandru said one could also change lifestyle patterns to reduce the risk of the genes mutating. "Regular check-ups like mammography would also have to be undertaken on a routine basis," he added.