

To,

The Sun Pharma Science Foundation Science Scholar Awards 2021 committee  
OFFICE OF SUN PHARMA SCIENCE FOUNDATION

30<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2021

Sub: Letter to nominate Mr. Manoj Kumar for Sun Pharma Science Foundation Science Scholar Award 2021

It is my great pleasure to write this nomination letter for Mr. Manoj Kumar, who works as a Ph.D. scholar at CSIR-IGIB. I have interacted with him closely during his Ph.D. research for the last five years and observed in him keen scientific acumen and approach to problem-solving.

His understanding of CRISPR diagnostics and previous knowledge generated in our lab allowed him to work on a project, where we tried to characterize FnCas9 for a low-cost and rapid SARS-CoV-2 detection assay (FELUDA). During the course of this, he came up with another low-cost way to discriminate parent SARS-CoV-2 and its major variants. Which led to provide him with an interesting opportunity to learn and work closely to understand how to repurpose a basic lab-oriented biochemical assay for on-demand for societal benefits in a very short period during abrupt health emergencies. In addition, Mr. Manoj has played a vital role in the commercial rollout of India's first CRISPR diagnostic platform, TataMD CHECK powered by FELUDA.

As a group leader and close collaborator with his thesis advisor Dr. Debojyoti Chakraborty, I have found in Mr. Manoj a dedicated and hard-working student with an eagerness to adapt and explore a new and competitive field of research. Working with a team of students and him in his capacity have contributed integrally to the work submitted for this prestigious award, and I enthusiastically recommend him for the Sun Pharma Science Foundation Science Scholar Award 2021.



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