Electronic Supporting Information for

First Cu-Nanostar as Sustainable Catalyst Realized through Synergistic Effects of Bowlshaped Features and Surface Activation of Sporopollenin Exine

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Section A: (i) General Information

Lycopodium powder (Microtroniks Quali-tech Chem) was purchased from amazon (India) Pvt Ltd. The deionized water (DI-H₂O) was obtained using the Merck-Millipore water purifier system. CuCl₂ was purchased from Loba Chemie. All the reagents were purchased commercially (Tokyo Chemical Industry (India) Pvt. Ltd. and Sigma Aldrich) including polyethyleneimine (PEI, Mw ~750,000 Daltons by LS, 50 wt% in H₂O, Sigma Aldrich) and used without any further purification.

(ii) Instrumentation

<u>Attenuated total reflection Fourier transform infrared (ATR-FT-IR) spectroscopy</u> Transmission spectra were measured using an Agilent Cary 660 spectrometer in the range of $4000-500 \text{ cm}^{-1}$.

<u>Powder X-ray diffraction (PXRD)</u> was performed using a Bruker D-8 advanced diffractometer in the 2θ range of $30-80^{\circ}$.

¹<u>H- and ¹³C-nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectra</u> were measured on a Bruker Advance-II spectrometer at 400 MHz and 100 MHz, respectively, using DMSO- d_6 or CDCl₃ as solvent. The chemical shift was reported in parts per million (ppm) relative to tetramethylsilane (TMS) as the internal standard. Data for ¹H-NMR and ¹³C-NMR are reported as follows: s = singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet, dd = doublet of doublets, m = multiplet.

<u>X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS)</u> spectra were recorded using a PHI 5000 Versa Probe high-performance electron spectrometer, coupled with monochromatic Al-K α radiation (1486.6 eV) operating at an accelerating X-ray power of 50 W and 15 kV. The sample was outgassed at 25 °C in a UHV chamber ($<5 \times 10^{-7}$ Pa) before the measurement.

<u>Inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometer (ICP-MS)</u> was used to estimate the amount of copper in the catalyst using ICP-MS, Agilent Technologies 7700 series. Then, 2 mg of sample in 10 mL of aqua regia were digested in the microwave for 2 h at 185 °C. The resulting solution was diluted and analyzed using ICP-MS.

<u>Transmission electron microscopy (TEM)</u> images and elemental mapping were acquired on a Jeol TEM 2100 Plus operating at 120 kV. Samples were prepared by depositing a drop of diluted nanoparticle solution on a 300 mesh TEM gold grid and dried under vacuum for 24 h. <u>Gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS)</u> analysis was performed using an Agilent GC-MS (5977C) with triple Axis Detector with long life triple channel EM mass detector with (5%-phenyl)-methylpolysiloxane nonpolar column. GC-MS operating conditions: The initial oven temperature was 50 °C, maintained for 1 min and then ramped to 270 °C at a rate of 5 °C/min followed by holding for 3 min at 270 °C. The initial temperature of the injector was 50 °C and then programmed at the same rate as the oven. Helium was used as a carrier gas with primary pressure of 570 KPa. The split injection mode was used with a split ratio of 10.0. The injection volume of each sample was 1 μ L. Mass spectrometer settings: electron impact ionization mode with electron energy of 70 eV, ion source was set at 270 °C and scan mass range *m/z* 50–550. *Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA)* was performed using a thermogravimetric analyzer (Perkin Elmer STA 8000) at an N₂ flow rate of 10 mL/min and a heating rate of 10 °C/min.

<u>The diffuse ultraviolet-visible reflectance spectra</u> were measured using a Shimadzu UV/Vis spectrophotometer (UV 2600) with BaSO₄ as an internal standard.

Section B: Experimental Section

Synthetic procedures for catalyst ESP-PEI-Cu^{1/II}O-NS

To obtain large and uniform cavity spore precursor which is free of other genetic materials for the synthesis of ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS nanostars, raw lycopodium clavatum sporopollenin powder, by following the reported procedure.^{S1} Briefly, the synthesis of ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS was achieved by three-step processes.

- i) Raw spores (100 g) were refluxed in acetone (500 mL) for 4 h, filtered and dried to yield deflated spores. After refluxing in 6% KOH solution (500 mL) for 6 h, it was filtered and the process was repeated once more. The spores were washed with hot water (2 × 50 mL), hot ethanol (300 mL), and dried on an open air (15 h). Afterwards, it was suspended in 75% H₃PO₄ (500 mL) and refluxed for 7 days, filtered, washed with water (3 × 600 mL), acetone (500 mL), 2M HCl (600 mL), 2M NaOH (600 mL), once again with water (5 × 500 mL) and acetone (600 mL) successively, and dried in open air to obtain ESP (80 g) as colourless powder.
- ii) The exine capsules (100 mg) were functionalized with PEI (50 mg) in DMF (10 mL) at 50 °C for 24 h using passive encapsulation technique. The solution was centrifuged and was successively with 3×100 mL H₂O and 3×100 mL EtOH and dried overnight in vacuum oven at 50 °C, and was named as ESP-PEI (100 mg) as faint yellow coloured solid.
- iii) Treatment of PEI functionalized sporopollenin (ESP-PEI, 50 mg) with CuCl₂ (100 mg) in EtOH/H₂O 1:1 medium for 2 h and then was centrifuged and washed with 3 × 5 mL EtOH to generate Cu^{I/II}O nanostar (ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS) which was then vacuum oven dried at 50 °C for overnight to obtain 40 mg of faint green colored solid.

Section C: Characterization of ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS.



Fig. S1 (a) TEM of ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS (b) Size distribution curve for ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS.



Fig. S2 (a) TEM (b) HR-TEM (c) An energy dispersive analysis of X-rays (EDAX) of ESP-PEI-Cu^{1/II}O-NS.

Elements	k-factor	Weight (%)
Carbon (C)	2.659	30.50
Oxygen (O)	1.957	25.15
Nitrogen (N)	3.391	0
Copper (Cu)	1.359	28.02
Chlorine (Cl)	1.033	8.61
Silicon (Si)	1.000	7.71

Table S1 TEM-EDAX measurement of ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS.



Fig. S3 (a) TEM image of ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS portion selected for mapping, (b) C, (c) O, (d) Overlapped image, (e) Cu, (f) N.



Fig. S4 TGA decomposition pattern of (a) ESP-PEI (b) ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS.



Fig. S5 Comparative diffuse UV/Vis reflectance spectra of ESP, ESP-PEI, ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS.



Fig. S6 Overlapped XRD spectra of ESP, ESP-PEI, ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS.

A time-resolved study of product yield and copper release: In seven separate 10 mL open round-bottom flasks equipped with a magnetic stir bar, 2 mL of H₂O, azide **1b** (0.134 mmol), and alkyne **2a** (0.134 mmol) were added. Additionally, ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS (2 mg) was introduced into each flask. The reaction mixtures were stirred at 25 °C for varying durations (6–24 h). Afterwards, the product was isolated from the reaction mixture by solvent extraction using CH₂Cl₂, and the yield was determined by ¹H-NMR spectroscopy, using 1,3,5-trimethoxybenzene as an internal standard. The aqueous layer was then centrifuged to separate

the heterogeneous catalyst, and the supernatant was analyzed by ICP-MS to measure the release of copper.



Fig. S7 Graph of copper release versus catalytic product yields over time.



Fig. S8 a) TEM image of reusable ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS after 5th cycle, b) XPS of reusable ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS after 5th cycle.

Section D:

i) Precursors synthesis for CuAAc reaction Synthesis of 2,6-difluorobenzylazide^{S2}



1a. 2,6-difluorobenzylazide was synthesized according to the literature procedure.^[S2] Sodium azide (0.349 g, 5.376 mmol) was added in small portions to 2,6-difluorobenzylchloride (1 g, 4.8 mmol) in H₂O (250 mL) at 40 °C. Then the reaction mixture was stirred at 75 °C for 14 h, and then cooled to 25 °C. The aqueous layer was extracted with CH₂Cl₂ (3×300 mL). The combined organic layers were washed with water and brine, dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄, and evaporated to afford **1a** (0.79 g, 97.4%) as an oily liquid.

Synthesis of 4-methoxyphenylazide^{S3}



1b. *p*-Anisidine (1g, 0.008 mol) was dissolved in H₂O/HCl 9:4 in a round bottom flask and stirred at 0-5 °C. NaNO₂ (551 mg, 0.008 mol) dissolved in H₂O and was added dropwise to the flask with continuous stirring then aqueous solution of NaN₃ (520 mg, 0.008 mol) was added to the reaction mixture and was allowed to stir at 25 °C for 2 h. The resultant mixture was extracted with CH₂Cl₂ and washed successively with H₂O (3×100 mL). Organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄ and the solvent was evaporated to afford **1b** (0.96 g, 80.7%) as a yellow liquid.

Synthesis of phenylazide S3

1c. Aniline (1.47 mL, 16 mmol) was dissolved in H₂O (25 mL) and conc. H₂SO₄ (5 mL) was added at 0 °C. Then NaNO₂ (1.28 g, 18.5 mmol) dissolved in H₂O (7 mL) was added dropwise. Followed by hexane (24 mL), and NaN₃ (1.26 g, 19.3 mmol) in H₂O (10 mL) was added and the reaction was stirred for 3 h at 25 °C. The organic phase was separated, washed with H₂O (3 × 50 mL), dried with MgSO₄ and filtered. The solvent was removed in vacuo, yielding compound **1c** (1.44 g, 75.4%) as pale-yellow oil.

ii) General procedure for ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS catalyzed azide-alkyne cycloaddition reaction



A 10 mL open round-bottom flask with a magnetic stir bar was charged with 1 mL of H₂O, azide **1a-c** (1.0 equiv.), alkyne **2a-e** (1.0 equiv.) and ESP-PEI-Cu^{I/II}O-NS (1 mg) was added. The reaction mixture was allowed to stir at 25 °C and reaction was monitored through thinlayer chromatography (TLC). After completion of the reaction, the product was separated from the reaction mixture by the solvent extraction in CH₂Cl₂ (3 × 10 mL), washed with H₂O and the organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na₂SO₄. The solvent was removed *in vacuo* to yield the triazole **3a-n** product.

iii) Spectral details of triazole products:

1-(2,6-difluorobenzyl)-4-phenyl-1H-1,2,3-triazole



3a.^{S4} ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 5.67 (s, 2H), 6.99 (t, *J* = 7.88 Hz, 2H), 7.29-7.32 (m, 1H), 7.35-7.41 (m, 3H), 7.78 (d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 2H), 7.81 ppm (s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 41.59 (t, ³*J*_{CF} = 3.97 Hz), 111.03 (t, ³*J*_{CF} = 18.77 Hz), 111.87-112.13 (m), 119.62, 125.89, 128.31, 128.92, 130.62, 131.58 (t, ³*J*_{CF} = 10.47 Hz), 148.26, 161.56 ppm (dd, ^{*1*}*J*_{CF} = 249.86, Hz, ³*J*_{CF} = 6.91 Hz)

1-(2,6-difluorobenzyl)-4-(p-tolyl)-1H-1,2,3-triazole



3b.^{S2 1}H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): $\delta = 2.36$ (s, 3H), 5.66 (s, 2H), 6.96-7.00 (m, 2H), 7.20 (d, J = 7 Hz, 2H), 7.32-7.41 (m, 1H), 7.69 (d, J = 8.12 Hz, 2H), 7.73 ppm (s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO- d_6): $\delta = 21.37$, 41.51 (t, ³ $J_{CF} = 3.97$ Hz),111.07 (³ $J_{CF} = 18.78$ Hz), 111.86-112.11 (m), 119.26, 125.78, 127.80, 129.67, 131.54 (t, ³ $J_{CF} = 10.11$ Hz), 138.14, 148.33, 161.59 ppm (dd, ¹ $J_{CF} = 6.86$, ³ $J_{CF} = 7.29$ Hz).

methyl 1-(2,6-difluorobenzyl)-1H-1,2,3-triazole-4-carboxylate



3c.^{S2 1}H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 3.82 (s, 3H), 5.74 (s, 2H), 7.18 (t, *J* = 8.28, 2H), 7.49-7.56 (m,1H), 8.85 ppm (s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 41.35 (t, ³*J*_{CF} = 3.61 Hz), 51.83, 110.83 (t, ³*J*_{CF} = 18.77 Hz), 11.85-112.09 (m), 129.47, 131.90 (t, ³*J*_{CF} = 10.47 Hz), 138.49, 160.56, 160.81 ppm (dd, ³*J*_{CF} = 248.02, ³*J*_{CF} = 7.29 Hz).

1-(2,6-difluorobenzyl)-4-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1H-1,2,3-triazole



3d. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 3.83 (s, 3H), 5.66 (s, 2H), 6.92-7.00 (m, 4H), 7.33-7.41 (m, 1H), 7.69-7.74 ppm (m, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 41.50 (t, ³*J*_{CF} = 3.97 Hz), 55.45, 111.10 (t, ³*J*_{CF} = 15.88 Hz), 11.86-112.12 (m), 114.33, 118.82, 123.37, 127.20, 131.54 (t, ³*J*_{CF} = 10.47 Hz), 148.13, 159.76, 161.57 ppm (dd, ¹*J*_{CF} = 279.96, ³*J*_{CF} = 6.86 Hz).

4-(4-chlorophenyl)-1-(2,6-difluorobenzyl)-1H-1,2,3-triazole



3e. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 5.67 (s, 2H), 6.99 (t, *J* = 7.88 Hz, 2H), 7.35-7.42 (m, 3H), 7.73-7.77 ppm (m, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 41.93 (t, ³*J*_{*CF*} = 3.97 Hz), 112.23-112.49 (m),120.01, 127.27, 127.45, 129.44, 131.99 (t, ³*J*_{*CF*} = 10.01 Hz), 134.39, 135.38, 147.55, 163.12 ppm (dd, ¹*J*_{*CF*} = 249.82, ³*J*_{*CF*} = 6.86 Hz).

4-(4-bromophenyl)-1-(2,6-difluorobenzyl)-1H-1,2,3-triazole



3f. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 5.67 (s, 2H), 6.99 (t, *J* = 7.64 Hz, 2H), 7.34-7.41 (m, 1H), 7.52 (d, *J* = 8.48 Hz, 2H), 7.68 (d, *J* = 8.40 Hz, 2H), 7.74 (s,1H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 41.61 (t, ³*J*_{CF} = 3.97 Hz),110.88 (t, ³*J*_{CF} = 18.77 Hz), 111.90-112.16 (m), 119.72, 122.28, 127.40, 129.59, 131.67 (t, ³*J*_{CF} = 10.10 Hz),132.07, 147.22, 161.53 ppm (dd, ³*J*_{CF} = 249.82, Hz ³*J*_{CF} = 6.50 Hz).

methyl 1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1H-1,2,3-triazole-4-carboxylate



3g.^{S5 1}H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 3.88 (s, 3H), 3.99 (s, 3H), 7.04 (d, *J* = 9.00 Hz, 2H), 7.65 (d, *J* = 9 Hz, 2H), 8.42 ppm (s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 52. 78, 56.05, 115.42, 122.93, 126.07, 130.15, 140.82, 160.86, 161.60 ppm.

1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-4-phenyl-1H-1,2,3-triazole



3h.^{S6 1}H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 3.87 (s, 3H), 7.03 (d, *J* =8.88 Hz, 2H), 7.34-7.38 (m, 1H), 7.43-7.47 (m, 2H), 7.68 (d, *J* = 8.88, 2H), 7.90 (d, *J* = 7.88 Hz, 2H), 8.12 ppm (s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 55.78, 114.93, 117.97, 122.32, 125.95, 128.46, 128.95, 130.52, 130.67, 148.35, 159.98 ppm.

1,4-bis(4-methoxyphenyl)-1H-1,2,3-triazole



3i.^{S7 1}H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): $\delta = 3.87$ (d, J = 7.36 Hz, 6H), 6.98-7.65 (m, 4H), 7.68 (d, J = 9 Hz, 2H), 7.83 (d, J = 8.76 Hz, 2H), 8.02 ppm (s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): $\delta = 55.50$, 55.80, 114.47, 114.93, 117.17, 122.31, 123.24, 127.29, 130.79, 148.25, 159.90, 159.94 ppm.

1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-4-(p-tolyl)-1H-1,2,3-triazole



3j.^{S8 1}H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 2.37 (s, 3H), 3.86 (s, 3H), 7.02 (d, *J* = 9.00 Hz, 2H), 7.25 (d, *J* = 5.72 Hz, 2H), 7.67 (d, *J* = 9.00 Hz, 2H), 7.78 (d, *J* = 8.12 Hz, 2H), 8.06 ppm (s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 21.44, 55.76, 114.90, 117.61, 122.28, 125.85, 127.69, 129.70, 130.72, 138.32, 148.42, 159.92 ppm.



3k.^{S9 1}H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 3.84 (s, 3H), 7.18 (d, *J* = 9.00 Hz, 2H), 7.71 (d, *J* = 8.52 Hz, 2H), 7.83-7.90 (m, 4H), 9.26 ppm (s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 55.66, 115.01, 120.10, 121.23, 121.77, 127.30, 129.70, 130.01, 132.06, 146.12, 159.43 ppm.

4-(4-chlorophenyl)-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1H-1,2,3-triazole



31.^{S7 1}H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 3.85 (s, 3H), 7.18 (d, *J* = 9.12 Hz, 2H), 7.58 (d, *J* = 8.52 Hz, 2H), 7.85 (d, *J* = 9.16 Hz, 2H), 7.95 (d, *J* = 6.48 Hz, 2H), 9.26 ppm (s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 55.67, 115.02, 120.10, 127.79, 127.03, 129.17, 129.36, 130.03, 132.65, 146.09, 159.44 ppm.

1,4-diphenyl-1H-1,2,3-triazole



3m.^{S10 1}H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 7.37-7.41 (m, 1H), 7.49-7.54 (m, 3H), 7.62-7.65 (m, 2H), 7.96 (d, *J* = 8.36 Hz, 4H), 9.30 ppm (s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 119.63, 120.03, 125.36, 128.27, 128.74, 129.01, 129.96, 130.26, 136.66, 147.34 ppm.

methyl 1-phenyl-1H-1,2,3-triazole-4-carboxylate



3n.^{S11 1}H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 4.00 (s, 3H), 7.48-7.58 (m, 3H), 7.76 (d, *J* = 7.24 Hz, 2H), 8.52 (s, 1H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 52.52, 120.98, 125.70, 129.72, 130.01, 136.50, 140.72, 161.20 ppm.

¹H-, ¹³C-NMR and mass spectral profiles of triazole-products



Fig. S9 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K) spectra of **1a**.



Fig. S10 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K) spectra of **1b**.



Fig. S11 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100) MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (c) GC-MS spectra of **3a**.



Fig. S12 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (c) GC-MS spectra of **3b**.



Fig. S13 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆, 298 K, (c) GC-MS spectra of **3c**.



Fig. S14 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K, (c) GC-MS spectra of **3d**.



Fig. S15 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K, (c) GC-MS spectra of **3e**.



Fig. S16 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K, (c) GC-MS spectra of **3f**.



Fig. S17 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K, (c) GC-MS spectra of **3g**.



Fig. S18 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K, (c) GC-MS spectra of **3h**.



Fig. S19 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K, (c) GC-MS spectra of **3**i.



Fig. S20 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K, (c) GC-MS spectra of **3**j.



Fig. S21 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆, 298 K, (c) GC-MS spectra of **3**k.



Fig. S22 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆, 298 K, (c) GC-MS spectra of **3**I.



Fig. S23 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆, 298 K, (c) GC-MS spectra of **3m**.

Fig. S24 (a) ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K), (b) ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 298 K, (c) GC-MS spectra of **3n**.

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