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Japan Rising

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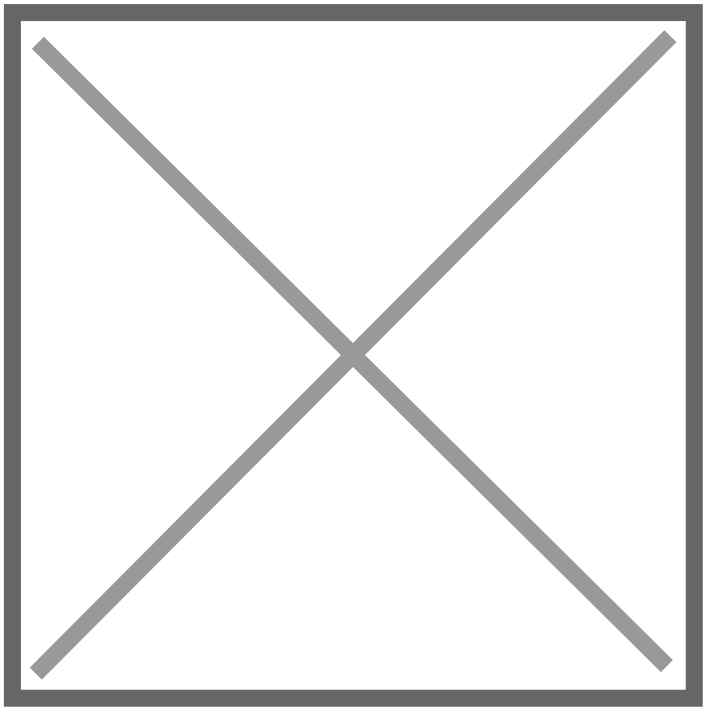

Japan Rising

BioSpectrum captures the undercurrent of changes that are running through the Japanese life sciences industry. A special report from Bio Expo held at the Tokyo Big Sight.

Electronic giant, Sony, digital camera leader Canon and automobile giant, Toyota - Japan has some of the world's best-recognized brand names, known for their reliability and quality. And these giants hold their own against the US, and Europe-based competitors.

In the life sciences sector, Japan has the world's second largest pharma, biotech and medical instruments market. But its largest pharma company, Takeda Pharmaceuticals ranks only 15th in the global list of pharma giants and is not very well known outside the country. This is something that has been agitating the country's policy makers and business leaders alike for sometime.

The government has opened up the sector with a slew of regulatory reforms, attractive incentives to venture capitalists to invest in life science companies and selling its success story to the world in every possible way.

These efforts seem to be paying off.

The 6th International Bio Forum and BioJapan in Tokyo from June 20-22, 2007 held at the Tokyo Big Sight in the sprawling eastern part of the capital city was an attempt to showcase the best of Japan in life sciences. Organized by Reeds Exhibitions Japan, the show combined the InterPhex, API and Pharma Machinery Expo together. The BioJapan show stole the thunder with an array of international speakers for the conference and over 650 exhibitors. With nearly 20,000 visitors from the biotech community participating in the event, BioJapan has certainly emerged as the largest event in the industry in the Asia Pacific region.

Almost every speaker in the special conference sessions spoke about the need to raise the profile of the country's biotech industry. It doesn't pay to be insular. Go to the world, just like their counterparts from the other industrial sectors have, was the underlying theme of the event. The industry itself was made up of a few big players till a decade. A systematic approach has now led to the unleashing of the entrepreneurial energy in the country. Japan is also loosening its stringent regulatory systems to facilitate introduction of tried and tested products from abroad with minimum hassles.