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The longer-term strategy is to scale up our operations in India: Rajeev Kumria, GM, HEL India

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HEL, a global developer and manufacturer of innovative laboratory tools for process optimisation, safety, and scale-up, announced the appointment of Rajeev Kumria as General Manager, HEL India. The announcement follows the recent news that HEL is expanding operations in India by moving to a wholly-owned subsidiary in the country. Kumria reveals more about India plans



How do you foresee the Indian market in terms of the growth of your business?

Our decision to move to a direct entity in India is directly due to the growth potential. We've seen very encouraging performance through our distributor in the country recently. When this is coupled with India's macro trends and market conditions, we feel this will become a rapidly growing region. Science and technology are huge growth sectors in India – coupling the core of fine chemicals and pharmaceuticals with the growing biotechnology industries and battery development technology, we see a very strong fit between our capabilities and the Indian market needs.

What are the new offerings in the innovative laboratory tools space for the biotech & pharma industries?
We feel that there are three areas where we can bring significant impact to the marketing in India for biotech and pharma

1. Shifting the current paradigm for bioreactors to higher yields and greater efficiency for industrial biotech applications and improving ease of use of these approaches. Especially understanding and designing high-pressure fermentation systems.
2. Supporting the design of safe and commercially effective processes for industrial-scale synthesis, including pharmaceuticals. We believe that there are more cost-effective ways to study the thermal profile of chemical reactions for safe process development. It is a sad fact that India has seen an unfair share of industrial accidents at chemical plants – we want to help designers reduce that risk significantly, which will help build a safer, healthier, more sustainable world.
3. Getting scientists up and running quicker. Our studies show that scientists have a learning curve when using new equipment, which decreases overall productivity. A lot of the interaction with equipment is through a software interface. Our equipment is often running potentially dangerous studies – high pressure, high temperature, and using flammable substances. Our investment in developing the labCONSOL system interface is how we help our customers navigate this issue. We're continuing to innovate and update this interface to make working with demanding, potentially dangerous applications safe and as efficient as possible.

How much is being invested in opening facilities in India?
That's a topic that we keep under constant review in the highly changeable world we live in post-COVID.

What are your plans in terms of hiring new talent in India wrt to biotech and pharma expertise?
Our focus will be on the right facilities and continuing to build up a team that focuses on the customer. My appointment is the first step – with my experience across a broad range of scientific companies being an accelerator to our growth. Our current customers should also feel reassured about the continuity of support during this transition period. We have experienced service and support engineers who have been working in India for many years, and they are staying with the business in our new HEL owned entity.

Are you planning to invest in new technologies such as AI, ML etc. within the Indian facility?
We are a global technology company. It isn't easy to pinpoint technologies to one specific location or geography. Our strengths lie in hardware and software that allows researchers to work with demanding and potentially dangerous applications

safely. What drives us isn't the specific inclusion of technology like artificial intelligence, virtual reality, etc. As you might expect, we continue to review the technology landscape and include approaches that support our broader aims.

Tell us about the company's growth plans for the next five years in India?
Of immediate focus is making sure that we continue to support our existing customers in India while building up our new business. Our longer-term strategy is to scale up our operations in India, such that it is one of the major geographies for the H.E.L Group. It's fair to say that no options are on or off the table at this point, but like many businesses, the last two years have taught us to remain agile with our plans, as the world can suddenly change around us. We will continue to focus on making the world healthier, safer, and more sustainable for everyone.

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