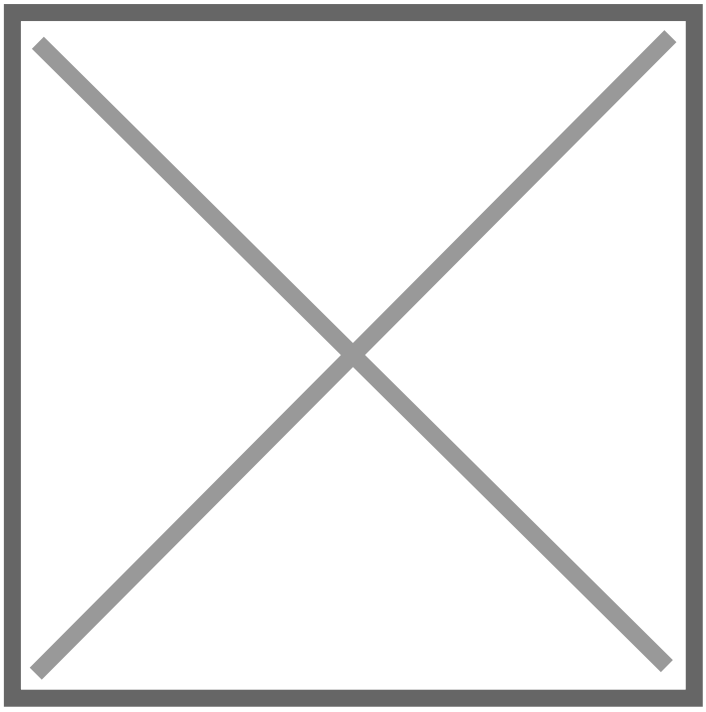
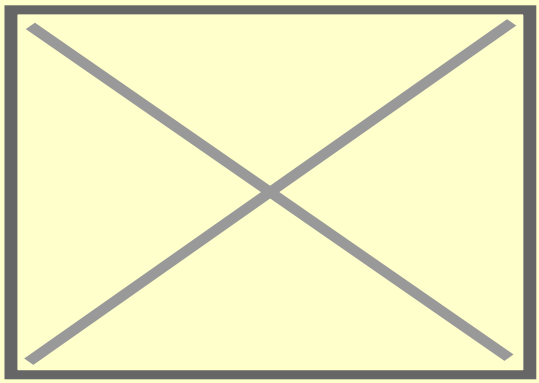


AP may see $136-million biotech investment in the next five years

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Robert Kilpatrick receiving a memento from Lakshmi Parthasarathy, principal secretary, Ministry of Industries, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

BioAsia 2006 attracted over 500 delegates, 58 sponsors and exhibitors and 12000 visitors from 33 countries, reflecting the mood of the biotech industry to collaborate across boundaries.

The state of Andhra Pradesh has witnessed a cumulative investment of approximately $220.7 million (Rs 1000 crore) since 2002. Extrapolating the same, it is estimated that the same companies will invest around $1360 million (about Rs 6,000 crore) in the next five years," said Dr Geeta Reddy, minister of tourism and industries, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Speaking after inaugurating the three-day third in series BioAsia 2006, an annual biotech event organized by the Government of Andhra Pradesh in Hyderabad on February 9, 2006, she said, "Andhra Pradesh today has the proud privilege of being regarded as the number one Bio State of the country and Genome Valley is the first international biotech cluster in the country, which has attracted attention globally. We've consistently pursued proactive policies and undertaken several initiatives to support and promote the biotechnology sector in the state. The state government is providing an additional 300

acres of space for Genome Valley Biotech Park at Medak district."

Delivering the keynote address, Dr MK Bhan, secretary, Department of Biotechnology, outlined the strong measures taken for the promotion of biotechnology by the Indian government and highlighted the role it could play in fulfilling current societal needs by way of generating wealth and employment. He said, "The government has been working on issues on human resources besides other issues like regulatory, setting up of business incubators and biotech parks. It has set up many groups and also allocated resources to rapidly develop initiatives to meet the requirements of the industry."

Addressing the gathering, Dr Anwar Nasim, chairman, National Commission on Biotechnology of Pakistan and president of Federation of Asian Biotechnology Associations (FABA), said, "We are committed for the growth of biotechnology in Asian countries. Four more countries Ã¢â?¬â?? Japan, Korea, Indonesia and Bangladesh - have joined FABA in the last one year. With this the number of members to FABA has increased to 14. The increase in membership has strengthened and boosted our initiatives. We have also formed a tripartite committee between USA-IndiaÃ¢â?¬â??Pakistan to promote biotechnology research activities in the region."

Commenting on the growing co-operation among Asian biotech countries, Dr Anwar Nasim, said, "BioAsia has played a significant role in creating a platform for Asian biotech companies to interact and collaborate. We are delighted to see that the formation of FABA has specially brought India and Pakistan close in the area of biotechnology."

On the occasion, Dr Geeta Reddy presented the Genome Valley Excellence Award Ã¢â?¬â?? 2006 to Dr Guntaka Rama Reddy, Department of Molecular Sciences, College of Medicine, University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis, for his contributions in the field of biotechnology. The US-settled bioscientist of Indian origin is currently working to develop a vaccine for Hepatitis-C. Prof Guntaka was part of the four-member team that discovered proto-oncogenes, the genes that cause cancer. J Michael Bishop and Harold E Varmus, one of the two members, received Nobel Prize for medicine in 1989. Dr MS Swaminathan and Dr William Rutter were the first recipients of the award instituted in 2004 by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. In 2005, the award went to Prof William Haseltine.

Dr Geeta Reddy also released a Compendium of Biotechnology Organizations in Andhra Pradesh compiled by Ernst & Young and newsletter gene Hap brought out by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

BioAsia 2007 website unveiled

After three days of sessions and exhibits, BioAsia 2006 came to a close on February 11, 2006. Speaking at the valedictory function, Lakshmi Parthasarathy, principal secretary, Ministry of Industries, Government of Andhra Pradesh, said, "The summit has lived up to its promise of being a platform for bridging the Asian and global biotech communities. We have been successful in attracting over 500 delegates, 58 sponsors and exhibitors and 12000 visitors from 33 countries that reflects the mood of the biotech industry to collaborate across boundaries. We plan to take this success to new heights in the years to come."

On the Sidelines

Panel stresses on biocluster development

On the first day of BioAsia 2006, ICICI Knowledge Park hosted a panel discussion on Bio Parks at Genome Valley. Dr MK Bhan, secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Government of India along with the state representatives from Uttaranchal, Maharashtra, Punjab, Delhi and West Bengal discussed the significance of biocluster development in India. He emphasized the need for states and the Centre to work in synergy in pursuit of creating a biocluster.

There was also a need felt for world-class quality training centers for clinical trial investigation. And it was decided to identify a top medical college in each state to elevate it to a Center of Excellence with state-of-the-art technology and research facilities.

The panel decided to set up Bio Parks Authority of India, steered by a high powered committee, along the lines of Software Technology Parks of India, to bring down bureaucratic delays and clear the hurdles in the implementation of biotech parks. Dr Bhan assured the Andhra Pradesh government of all the support and co-operation for the setting up of a clinical research trials institute to address the needs of drug discovery companies in the state.

TiE launches Hyderabad Biotech Chapter

On the second day of BioAsia 2006, The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) launched its Hyderabad Biotech Chapter. The chapter will work in synergy with the Indian School of Business and Ernst & Young to promote promising entrepreneurs in the field of biotechnology by providing them the right opportunities. Srinivas Akkaraju from JP Morgan Partners will support the TiE Hyderabad Biotech Chapter from the US.

Speaking at the launch of the Hyderabad Biotech Chapter, J A Chowdhary said, "It was only imperative for us to start the biotech chapter here considering the frenzy of activities happening in the city of Hyderabad in the area of biotechnology. We received about 60 business proposals last year, out of which about 12 people were asked to make their presentations. Two-three of these are likely to get their funding too very shortly."

He further invited all budding biotech entrepreneurs to submit their business plan. These business plans will be then evaluated and short listed by the TiE-ISB Connect panel. The selected few will then be required to make presentations to a team of renowned VCs.

As a success on to TiE-ISB Connect 2005, there will be another event- TiE- ISB Connect 2006 in September. However, interestingly the scope of the event has been expanded from only IT to cover retail, infrastructure and biotech as well.

"Ernst & Young releases "Health Quotient"

Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy, chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, at the third Ernst & Young CEO Conclave which coincided with BioAsia 2006, released Health Quotient, an Ernst & Young report on the challenges and opportunities in the Indian pharmaceuticals, biotech and healthcare sectors. Health Quotient gives insights into the global generics market and how the untapped potential in the domestic Indian market, weapons of mass protection (vaccines) from India and a surge in medical tourism could drive the growth in this sector.

"Hyderabad is a happening place in biotechnology space. We see it with a lot of opportunities for bio partnerships. And we are committed for BioAsia. We expected 100 meetings for BioAsia 2006. As many as 62 companies registered with us and at the end, 30 meetings took place at the event," said Dr Robert Lee Kilpatrick, partner, Technology Vision Group LLC.

Sharing his views Dr A Ashok, director, Department of Biotechnology, Government of Andhra Pradesh said, "BioAsia 2006 achieved its objective of providing an interactive platform for academia, bio entrepreneurs, policy makers, scientists and students while strengthening the linkage between academia, research, industry and the government. It provided a forum for all stakeholders to communicate, connect and exchange trends in this sector. BioAsia 2006 was successful in creating networking opportunities, forging alliances and collaborations. It has rightly served the purpose of showcasing the Genome

Valley and reiterating its status as the biotech hub of India."

More than 60 eminent scientists and business leaders, from diverse backgrounds, presented and exchanged views on issues as myriad as biofuels, clinical trials, investing opportunities in biotech, venture funding et al. Amongst other topics that were discussed, special focus was on drug licensing, leveraging logistics to enhance supply chain management in pharma and biocluster development in India.

The exhibition stall of Saint Gobain Performance Plastic was adjudged the best at the valedictory ceremony of BioAsia 2006. This was followed by Pooja Lab Equipments and PharmaTech Scientific Systems taking the second place and Sun Microsystems and Locus Enterprises sharing the third spot for the best exhibition stalls.

Lakhmi Parthasarathy set the stage for the next year's event by unveiling the website for BioAsia 2007, which will be held from February 15-17 next year.

Narayan Kulkarni in Hyderabad