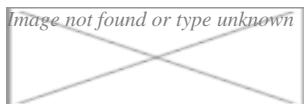
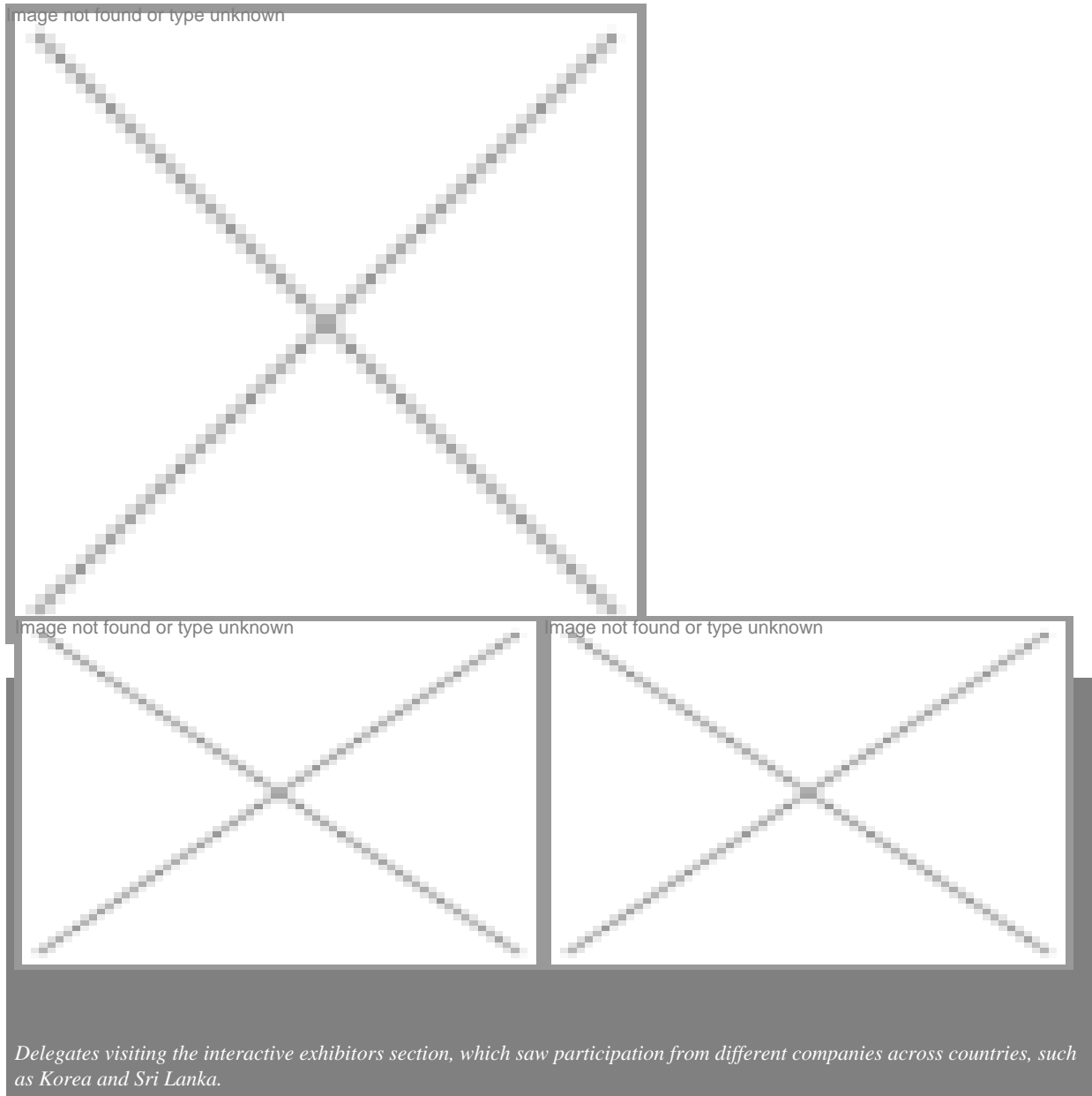


## Hyderabad plays host to Industry Interaction

08 March 2012 | News



With a view to optimize opportunities in bio businesses worldwide, BioAsia 2012, held from February 9-11, 2012, at the Hyderabad International Convention Center in Hyderabad, provided a platform for facilitating partnerships and networking between different Asian companies. The event saw participation from around 600 delegates from 40 countries, including the US, Korea, Belgium, Germany, Iran, Singapore, Nepal and Africa. BioAsia 2012 not only allowed for comprehensive

interactions through an international buyer-seller meet, which saw participation from 45 sponsored international buyers from 17 countries, but also facilitated in-depth discussion of the current trends in the biotech industry across Asia.

There were many interesting aspects to the event this year. A Power 20 Breakfast meeting with Dr Seth Berkley, chief executive officer, GAVI Alliance (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation), provided industry leaders an opportunity to discuss matters of grave importance. Dr Seth Berkley was also the recipient of the Genome Valley Excellence Award for his commitment to the betterment of human health as a physician, epidemiologist and for being a leading advocate in public health and vaccines. The Genome Valley Excellence Award was also awarded to Merck, US, for its commitment to patient health and vaccine research and was received by Mr Kevin Ali, president of the firm's emerging markets.

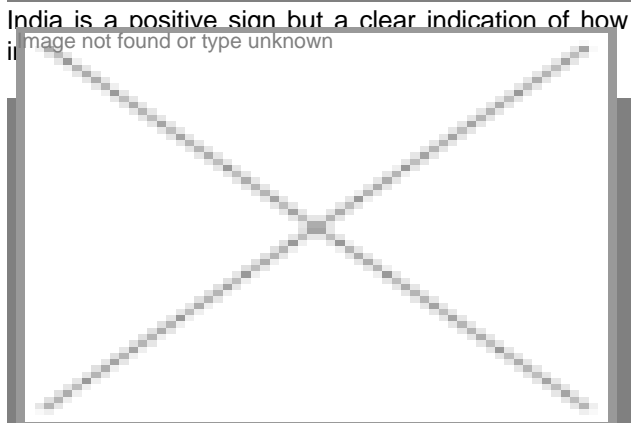
The Federation of Asian Biotech Association Special Award was given to Mr Cyrus Mistry, deputy chairman and chairman-designate of the Tata Group, for his relentless efforts in establishing the SP Biotech Park (now Alexandria Knowledge Park) at Hyderabad, which in many ways paved the way for the rise of the Genome Valley. The BioAsia Special Award was given to Mr Karun Rishi, president, US-India Chamber of Commerce. One of the new features of the event this year were the workshops that were held in collaboration with educational institutes. This attracted a lot of attention from students and academicians alike.

Vaccine policy in India With Hyderabad being an important seat of discovery and manufacturing in India for vaccines that are supplied the world over, it was only apt that a special focus be given to the vaccine industry at this congregation of industry companies supply over 40 percent of the world's vaccines, lack of immunization rates. Discussion on the Indian National Vaccine Policy



*Dr P V Appaji, CEO, Pharmexcil (left), in conversation with Dr Krishna Ella, CMD, Bharat Biotech, and Dr Rajesh Jain, JMD, Panacea Biotech.*

Dr Berkeley emphasized the need to formulate strategies in order to implement the recommendations of the policy. "Indian companies have made great progress in the last few years in providing vaccines worldwide. However, the recent WHO delisting of a few companies can affect the overall image of the quality offered by Indian companies. The challenge in the vaccine industry today is how to take quality seriously. A strong national regulatory body is needed that can make the standards for domestic as well as international use, strong," he said. Dr Nata Menabde, WHO representative designate to India, said, "There is a great lesson to be learnt from the success of the polio immunization drive in India. With no live case being detected in over a year, vaccination campaigns like that for polio have only re-emphasized the need for sustained surveillance by the country. The National Vaccine Policy of



*Dr Seth Berkley, CEO, GAVI, receiving the Genome Valley Excellence Award from Mr Kiran Kumar Reddy, Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh*

Innovative business models for CROs In view of big pharma cutting down on R&D spendings, local CROs across Asia are looking to form strategic partnerships that can help them progress. Mr C S N Murthy, CEO, Aurigene Discovery Technologies, elaborated on this when he said, "Big pharma would be looking to cut down on their early phase

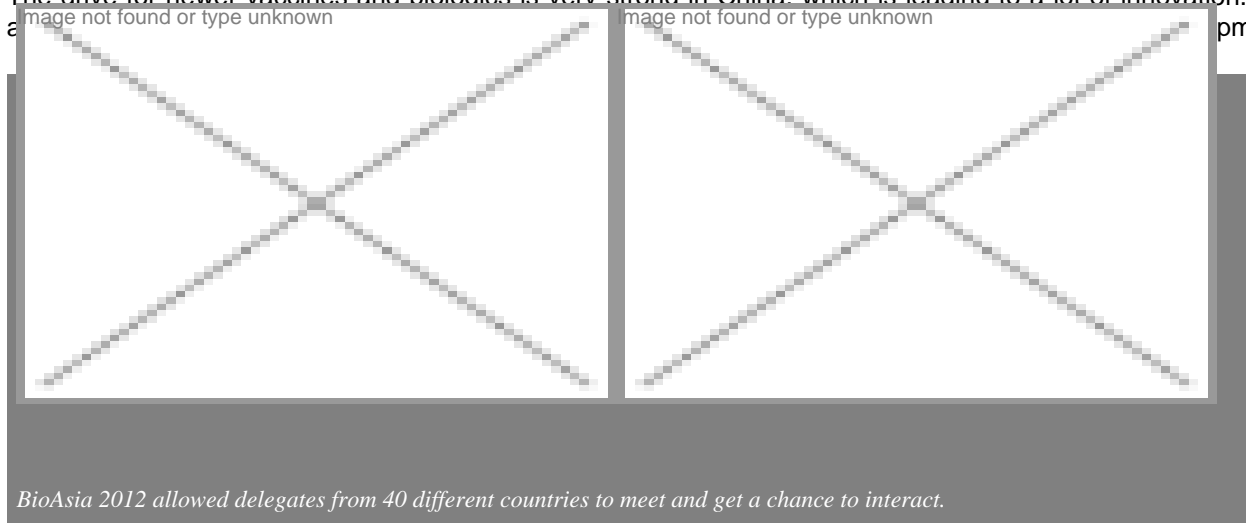
development budgets due to the expected losses that they will face once the patents of their blockbuster drugs start to expire. At such a time, CROs need to reinvent themselves and find innovative models to sustain themselves rather than just rely on traditional models and build on their individual strengths.â€?

India vs China With major MNCs such as Quintiles, Merck and AstraZeneca having announced major investments at their facilities in China during the last one year, a raging debate amongst those gathered at BioAsia 2012 seemed to center around the growing investments in the Chinese biotech industry. Industry experts from diverse backgrounds, such as investment banking, biotechnology, local vaccine industries, CROs and pharma majors were of the opinion that the Chinese government showed its support to the life sciences industry through various initiatives, which attracted them to invest in China.

Dr Krishna Ella, chairman, Bharat Biotech, opines, â€œGlobally, the Indian vaccine industry is recognized for making path breaking achievements. Regulatory challenges are making it difficult for Indian companies, but since India is an emerging economy, things like regulation will take time. Although India supplies over 40 percent of the world's vaccines worldwide, lack of political will has resulted in India having very low immunization rates. The Chinese government has been very supportive of the Chinese vaccine industry. The government purchases almost all of the vaccines produced by the firms. The Indian government needs to show similar support.â€?

Mr Kewal Handa, MD, Pfizer India, provided the perspective of a leading MNC when he said, â€œChina provides a competitive price, domestic attractiveness and most importantly, a clear regulatory mechanism. All these factors provide a very attractive package for MNCs to invest in China.â€?

Mr Hasit Joshipuria, VP, South Asia and MD, GSK India, echoed this sentiment. â€œAs health is a central as well as a state subject in India, a lot of regulatory mechanisms for introducing new vaccines are not clear,â€? he says. Dr Wenyong Wang, MD, merchant and investment banking, Burril & Company, presented a different perspective to this debate when he said, â€œThe biologics and vaccine industry started more than two decades ago in China and hence is more mature than India. The drive for newer vaccines and biologics is very strong in China, which is leading to a lot of innovation. Also, the Chinese government.â€?



Many were also of the opinion that India has a very strong base by establishing current good manufacturing practices(cGMP) qualified manufacturing plants for the production of biologics. Notwithstanding the regulatory hurdles, the industry in India made a lot of progress and carries the potential to do so in the future as well. The general sentiment echoed by all those who were present was that the time is ripe to accelerate development in the biotech industry in India along with government support.

**Manasi Vaidya** in Hyderabad