

Gujarat Joins the Biotech Bandwagon

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BioGujarat

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To Host Guajrat Bio in Ahmedabad on Sept 10-11

Gujarat has stepped up the tempo on promoting biotech and pharma sectors in the state. Last September under the aegis of a three-day global investors summit, called Vibrant Gujarat, it hosted a conference on pharma biotechnology in Gujarat for the first time. That being the first conference in pharma biotechnology, it was able to attract the attention of the industrialists and investors. Investment to a tune of Rs 350 crore were announced for various projects like the setting up of BT park in Vadodara, green house technology plant, International Pharma and Biotechnology Park and plasma fractionation center.

Taking the cue from last year's success of Vibrant Gujarat, the stage is now set for the next leap, the first exclusive biotech summit in the state. The Government of Gujarat, Gujarat State Biotechnology Mission (GSBTM) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) are organizing, BioGujarat, an exposition-cum-conference on biotechnology during 10-11 September 2004. BioGujarat will be held in Ahmedabad at the Grand Bhagwati. The theme chosen for the event is "Unleashing the Potential".

The theme is apt for the occasion as Gujarat is known for its entrepreneurial culture and has a well-developed industrial infrastructure. And is now determined to attain a premier position in the national economy. BioGujarat aims at identifying the scope and opportunities in biotechnology and serve as a platform for the industry to meet, network and forge new business

tie-ups.

The government of Gujarat has a State Biotechnology mission to facilitate the development of biotechnology in the state and extend the benefits of this technology to various sectors, including the industrial sector and society at large. The state has national level academic and research institutions, a well-developed higher educational infrastructure too. The biotechnology policy is yet to be declared, which is likely to happen during the show.

BioGujarat promises to have technical sessions on topics such as "Biopharmaceuticals: The Pharma and Biotech Blend", "Meeting the Challenges of Food Production: The Opportunities in Agricultural Biotechnology", "Biotechnology in Gujarat: Synergizing Opportunities & Issues", Industrial Biotech: Yeast in bakery to biofuels, Trends and New Vistas in Biotech, Opportunities in Marine Technologies. In addition to exposition and one-on-one business meetings, leaders from the industry and key policy makers like Dr M K Bhan, secretary, Department of Biotechnology, government of India, Dr Swati Piramal of Nicholas Piramal and Dr PK Ghosh of Cadila Pharmaceuticals are making presentations. Even International speakers are expected to make presentations at the event.

Last year, Rajesh Kishore, the then secretary, department of science and technology, government of Gujarat, who was instrumental in organizing this conference said, "The critical thing is not in organizing the event but to keep the momentum going. That will take lot more efforts. We will put in that kind of efforts and organize four more events in different sectors of biotechnology such as agribiotechnology, industrial biotechnology, marine biotechnology and bioinformatics before the end of this fiscal." And this year's BioGujarat is an extension of those key objectives.

Biotechnology has been high on the radar of the government since last year. The government signed a MoU with Ganesh Housing Corporation Ltd to set up International Pharma & Biotechnology Park at Ahmedabad. Further, the government is key to facilitate the existing industry to further their biotechnology ventures. It may be noted that Gujarat's pharmaceutical sector accounts for around 45 per cent of the total pharmaceutical output in the country. Major players like Zydus Cadila, Alembic, Sun Pharmaceuticals, Torrent Pharmaceuticals, Cadila Pharmaceuticals, Ambalal Sarabhai Enterprises and Intas Pharmaceuticals to name a few are keen to rise the biotech bar in the state. And BioGujarat would help the state to build Gujarat's brandequity in the sector and spreading the awareness.