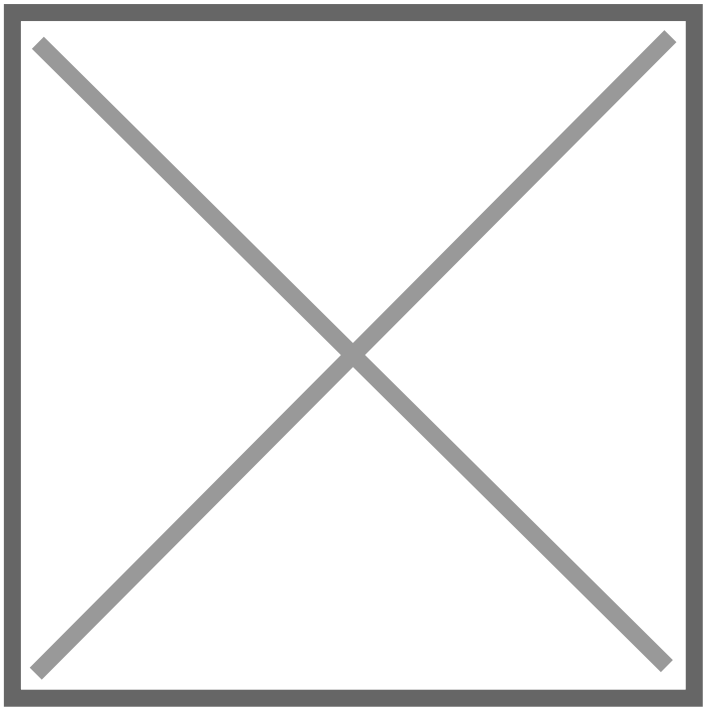
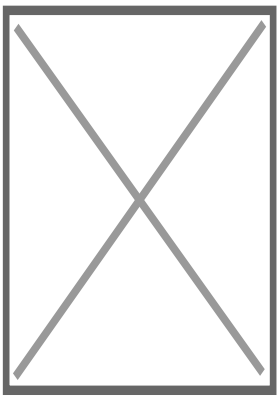
BioSpect
the business of Bi
24 years of leveraging the business of Bio
www.biospectrumindia.co

# Raising The Biotech Bar

11 October 2005 | News



## Raising The Biotech Bar



A year ago, S&T Minister Kapil Sibal, set a difficult target of $5 billion biotech revenues by 2010. And BioSpectrum took the lead to organize a meeting of the industry leaders in Hyderabad on September 23,2005 to discuss the strategies to make this happen. Sibal came personally once again to address the biotech CEOs. This time around, he has raised the bar even more. His reasoning: If most of the 200 plus biotech companies do as well as the Top 20 ones, from a base of $1 billion, $5 billion target shouldn't be a sweat for the doers of the industry.

Of course, it was not bravado. The minister had come prepared with the score sheet on his promises made to the industry exactly a year ago. His mark sheet would have made anyone proud as he had delivered on most of the promises. This time, he asserted the government's readiness to go to any lengths to help the biotech which he sees as a big player in the global arena, if we get all the basics rights. "The government will fund the industry. It is not an obligation. It is the industry's right to get it to take the country forward," was one of Sibal's strong message.

The minister has publicly announced the decision to keep his doors open and wants the industry to meet him once in two months with their demands and also get an update on the actions taken by the government. Rarely does a Cabinet minister make such an offer and it is now for the biotech industry take it up immediately and get things done in their favor. BioSpectrum would certainly like to take the lead and be part of the process to get the biotech sector's grievances redressed.

Taking a cue from Sibal, this issue has a detailed Wish List from the diagnostics sector on specific actions they would like from the government and list of components that require import duty exemption. We hope to highlight various such industry

demands in every issue of our magazine, till they get exhausted and the industry is left with no demand.

September has been another good month for the industry. The much-awaited report of the Task Force on Recombinant Pharma, chaired by Dr R A Mashelkar has been submitted to the Ministry of Environment for action. In one sweep, the report has recommended the removal of the GEAC oversight of LMOs, which are used by nearly 90 percent of the biotech industry for research and product development. GEAC would confine itself to environmental aspects genetically modified organisms and it will not share the turf with the drug controller on clinical trials, market authorization etc. The multi-agency regulatory process followed by GEAC had been a major bugbear of the biotech sector. The task force has also recommended the setting up of a unified National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority to provide a sort of singe-window regulatory mechanism. And in another significant recommendation, Mashelkar has outlined the timelines for regulatory clearances which should provide some certainty to the applicants.

The minister has assured that the government was keen to implement most of the recommendations and only those which require legislative actions may take some more time. Sibal has thrown the gauntlet and also promised all help. Let the industry leaders take up the challenge wholeheartedly and make it the Indian Biotech Century.