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Known worldwide as one of the largest providers of affordable quality vaccines, Pune based Serum Institute of India has continued on its growth trajectory with a whopping growth of 39% over the previous year. This year Serum Institute has retained its numero uno position in the Indian biotech industry. Recording revenues of Rs. 2374 crore, SIIL last year bagged major vaccine orders from not just UN agencies but also expanded their reach in the private markets whil acquiring a Dutch vaccines firm. Industry insiders attribute the success of SIIL in the vaccines space to the vision of its chairman Dr.Cyrus Poonawalla who built facilities with large capacities that in turn brought down the prices of many vaccines. Here, Dr.Poonawalla talks about how SIIL plans to bring down the price of injectible polio vaccines and more.

-What would you attribute this year's growth to? Which vaccines do you think have received maximum orders/ exposure?
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We attribute this year's growth mainly to the global off-take of Pentavalent vaccine by supplying more than 2/3rd of the worlds requirements.Â In addition to this, there has been a catch-up/eradication campaign by the U.N. Agencies for Measles-Rubella [MR] vaccine.Â This has added to our substantial jump in turnover.
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-How do you plan to reduce the cost of IPV and thus align it in the worldwide Polio immunization drive? What role does Bilthoven Biologicals, that SII acquired last year play in this?
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We are going to reduce the cost of IPV vaccine through our wholly owned subsidiary, Bilthoven Biologicals and help them launch world polio eradication drive, first by making the vaccine affordable on humanitarian grounds and later by scaling up the production which has been the signature style of Serum Institute to reduce the cost and divide overheads.
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-Even though two in every three children get a vaccine from SII, National average is about 44 per cent with the highest in Tamil Nadu at about 81 per cent.Why do you think so?
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I think the national average is low because of lack of accountability and serious negligence on the part of the administrators in implementing the Universal Programme of Immunization properly.Â There is nothing short of lack of accountability and

transparency which can be implemented to achieve this goal, especially when this can be achieved in Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Africa, why should India not able to implement this.
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-What is your vision for SIIL in the next few years? With FDI in pharma becoming a norm, would Serum ever look for foreign investors?
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SIIL has already set Â footprints across the world in private market in various countries. Market expansion has been a part of strategic action plan of SIIL since couple of years which is ongoing.
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-What percentage of vaccines produced at SIIL would you say are used in domestic market?
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We cater to all national requirements as per demand as a priority. However as our production capacities are very high and products are of international quality we export more than 80% of our vaccines.

-What are the vaccines that are currently under development at SII?

The vaccines that are currently under development at SII are Vero Rabies vaccine, Rota vaccine and Pneumococcal vaccine.They are under various stages of development in phase I/ II/ III.

-Can you talk about SIIL's plans for other biopharmaceutical products?
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SIIL is already in Biopharmaceutical market with EPO which is marketed at most affordable price. There are couple of other novel products in this segment under various stages ofÂ development.
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