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17 June 2015 | News

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Philadelphia, 17 June 2015: As nations and various states in the US competed for biotech industry attention at the annual BIO International Convention here, India too was all over the place with four back-to-back sessions showcasing the research and innovation capabilities, Make in India initiatives to ensure ease of business, regulatory changes to make things easy for biotech companies and above all the talent powerhouse that the country is.

" There is a global capacity shortage in biological manufacturing building up as demand goes up due to increased access. India has shown world class biological manufacturing can be done in vaccines and other therapeutic products. Now India is a compelling place to invest and fill the rising demand gap," said Dr Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairman, Biocon and head of CII's India biotech delegation.

In fact, she showcased India's biotech capabilities at four different sessions during the day and answered a wide range of questions from potential investors, flanked by senior government officials and industry leaders. In the absence of S&T minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan's at the convention, Dr Kiran filled in admirably.

Two senior officials, Mr Sreeshan Raghavan from Department of Biotechnology and Dr M Ariz Ahammed from the Department of Pharmaceuticals, rolled out the highlights of the Make in India program and traced the recent regulatory changes that are removing some of the hurdles in the path of clinical trials in India in the last three years.

" A time bound approval process has been put in for clinical trials," said Dr Ahammed. Similarly, the governments has also streamlined the drug approval process by roping in more than 150 subject matter experts instead of a single Drug Advisory Committee to clear proposals quicker.

The slowdown in clinical trial approval process has been a sore point for foreign companies. This came up in all the India sessions.

GSK's vice president for South Asia, Mr Hasit Joshipura pointed out his company's successful manufacturing and research facilities that existed in India for more than 50 years and how India has been a major strategic part of the company's global operations.

"In fact, drug approvals used to be very fast 12-18 months in India few decades back. Then the pendulam swung the other way slowing down the process over many compelling reasons. Now things are swinging back but not to the original time lines, " Mr Joshipura said.

Industry minister of Telangana, Mr Jupally Krishna Rao and special secretary, K Pradeep Chandra and Mr C V Shankar, additional chief secretary of Tamil Nadu, also participated actively in all the panels and highlighted the recent government initiatives.

Minister Mr Rao inaugurated the India Pavillion at the Exhibition which had the Make in India theme this time. He also released the India Biotechnology Handbook brought out by BioSpectrum along with industry associations CII and ABLE and the Department of Biotechnology(DBT).

Industry leaders from India and US also participated in a closed door meeting under the aegis of India-USA bilateral discussions which is an annual feature. The US India Business Council and Pfizer facilitated the discussion with the Indian delegation. The meeting decided to follow up some of the key issues that came up for discussion and ensure swift action takes place.