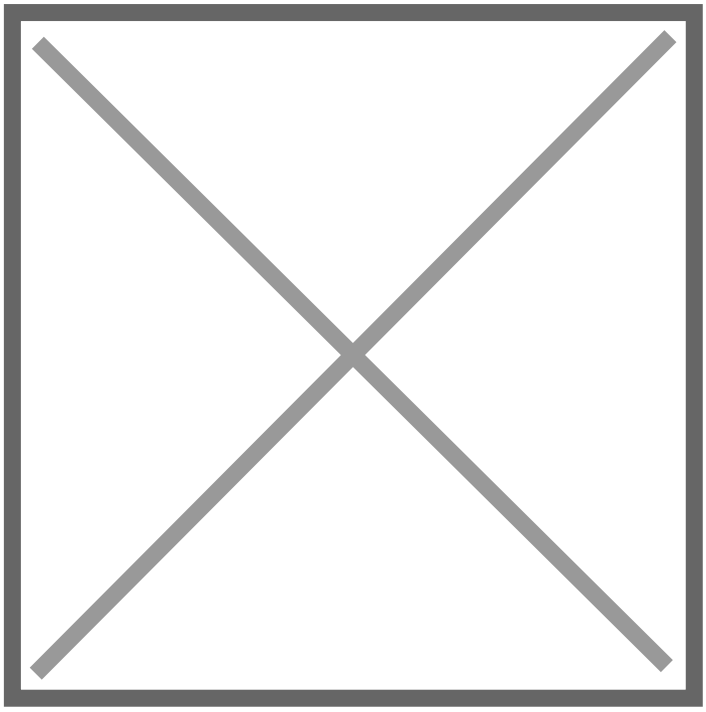
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India to set up Regional Biotechnology Center

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India to set up Regional Biotechnology Center



The Indian government recently passed a bill approving the establishment of regional centers for biotechnology in the National Capital Region. Under the auspices of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) , the center will be an institution of national importance which imparts scientific or technical education, and is empowered to grant degrees.

The Regional Center for Biotechnology will take up research and innovation and impart education and training in the new areas of Biotechnology at the interface of multiple disciplines of science creating a hub of technology expertise.

The country's Union Minister of Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr Harsh Vardhan, said that Bio-technology is a new and growing field having immense potentialities for the societal benefit and economic transformation. It has been considered as a powerful enabling technology that can revolutionize agriculture, healthcare, industrial processing and environmental sustainability.

"There is an enhanced need for highly specialised to translate research in labs to clinical practice, he said, "It is for the whole country and also for SAARC region. This institution will help us train professionals from whole country It will be mentor institution helping all bio-technology institutions in the country," he added.

He highlighted that Indian biotech sector has grown threefold in a short span of time and that the country had immense potential in terms of research and development (R&D) facilities, knowledge, skills, and cost effectiveness to emerge as a global player.

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Citing Indian achievements in biotechnology, like the affordable indigenous rotavirus vaccine that will help save lives of millions of affected poor children; inexpensive diagnostic technologies and affordable generic drugs to treat deadly diseases like Celiac, HIV, Dengue, Hepatitis C; drought and disease resistant crops that help in enhancing agricultural productivity; enrichment of dietary content, the Minister said that Indian biotech landscape was evolving and can help transform the nation's healthcare.

He added that India is now a leading manufacturer of vaccines at an affordable cost, for example, making a recombinant DNA Hepatitis-B vaccine available at a price that is 40 times lower with such a high quality that it has captured major share of this market. Thanks to the huge human resource with excellent training in synthetic chemistry, India has also made major in-roads in generic drug production becoming the leader in the sector.

The Bill says that the objectives of the Regional Centre will include disseminating knowledge by providing teaching and research facilities in biotechnology and related fields, facilitating transfer of technology and knowledge in the SAARC region and Asia, creating a hub of biotechnology expertise, and promoting cooperation at the international level.