

News Details

Infectious diseases not specific to any country

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INFECTIOUS diseases are no longer country specific; they are more or less global in nature. The only way to fight them is to come together and wage a battle through vaccination programmes. Towards this end, companies in Asia must avoid duplication of manufacturing facilities and attempt to build a common Asian Drug Administration. These were the observations of biotech industry experts at the BioAsia conference being held in Hyderabad.

"When something goes wrong in Singapore or in Canada, we must be equally concerned. Look at Sars, for instance. It started in Singapore and ended up in Canada. We cannot expect to remain unconcerned, attempts must be made to fight infectious diseases," Dr Krishna Ella, CMD Bharat Biotech, said.

Mr. Vara Prasad Reddy, MD, Shantha Biotechnics, said, "Infectious diseases can be fought if we can come together. Duplication of manufacturing facilities must be avoided at least among the Asian countries and products must be outsourced from each country depending upon the requirements. There is a great potential for vaccines especially on the paediatric front".

According to Mr. K V Balasubramaniam, Executive Director, Indian Immunologicals, the global vaccine industry, currently pegged at \$8 billion, is expected to grow to \$10 billion by 2010. Significant discoveries in major segments like HIV, TB and malaria are on. North America and Europe have 40% and 33% market share, respectively, in the vaccine segment, he said.

Asia has the potential to emerge as a global hub in vaccines, meeting a large part of the region's needs. "With modern cost-effective vaccines, Asia must assume a leadership role. And, India will have a leading role in this development by virtue of its size and its science prowess" Mr Balasubramaniam said. "Government must also play a proactive role by giving excise duty exemption on certain infectious diseases," Mr Reddy said.

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