

‘India has potential to be global bio-pharma hub’

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BOSTON, MAY 12: Noting that India has the ability to be a “global hub” in the bio-pharma and healthcare sector, industry leaders here have said New Delhi needs to take steps to realise the huge untapped potential in this field.

Indian Government officials attending a day-long brainstorming session in Boston said they are taking concrete steps in this regard.

“There is a lot of potential in India which is still untapped,” said Ms Maya Said, Vice-President head of Strategy External Innovation and Science Policy, Global Research and Development, Sanofi, a French multinational pharmaceutical company.

According to Ms Said there are areas India needs to work out in order to realise its full potential, including regulatory reforms.

Academics and top executives of the bio-pharma and healthcare sector argued that it is important for the global community that India succeeds in its endeavour.

“I think India has incredible responsibility to help us understand what causes diseases ... what I think India has the need and responsibility to create new medicine for the future, not only for the Indian population but also that of the world ... I think India has a role to help the world in getting drugs.

“If it does not, I think we all are going to fail ... India has to be an important partner with all of us,” said Mr William W. Chin, Executive Dean for Research at Harvard Medical School.

Participating in the day-long US-India BioPharma and Healthcare Summit — 2012 organised by the USA India Chamber of Commerce, Mr Chin said one of the keys to the Indian success would be if it comes out with policies that would encourage academics to be more eager to commercialise their ideas/research.

The Department of Pharmaceuticals Joint Secretary, Dr Raja Sekhar Vendru, said the Government has commissioned a study to come out with recommendations to make India a global hub of research and development in the bio pharma sector.

The report, being prepared by Ernst & Young, is expected shortly, he said.

As part of its effort to make India a global hub in R&D by 2020, the 12th Plan proposal of the Department of Pharmaceuticals is focused on making the National Institutes of Pharmaceuticals Education and Research (NIPERs) focal institutes for such new drug discovery and innovation.

There are six NIPERs at present; the proposal is to add 10 more such national institutes across the country, which would give an impetus to Government objectives in this regard.

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