

A RM500 Million Boost For Malaysia's Biotech Sector
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JOHOR BAHRU, Sept 11 (Bernama) -- India's biotechnology giant, Biocon Ltd, is to set up a RM500 million plant in Iskandar Malaysia, which will enhance the country's reputation as a world class player in the making in the sector.

The Bangalore-based Biocon, with it's 33-year old history in biopharmaceutical manufacturing, expects the plant with a Research and Development (R&D)centre in Bio-XCell, to be fully operational by 2014 with the capacity to offer 600 jobs.

Biocon's commitment, is seen as the first step towards the government's efforts, to make Malaysia a leading biotechnology manufacturing centre.

In fact, things are looking up for the biotechnology sector, with talks underway with four other companies, from France, the United States and South Korea, which intend to set up Bio-Xcell manufacturing facilities in the country.

A ground breaking ceremony was held here on Saturday evening to mark the commencement of Biocon Ltd's project via its local company, Biocon Sdn Bhd.

The event was attended by Johor Mentri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, the chairman of Bio-Xcell and also the Chief Executive Officer of Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation, Datuk Dr Mohd Nazlee Kamal.

Also present was Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, the chairman and managing director, of Biocon Ltd.

Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation is a body set up by the government to promote the industry.

Mohd Nazlee said that the corporation is looking at an estimated RM10 billion investment target and 300,000 jobs by 2020.

"We are optimistic that things will turn out well. With the incentives provided by the government for the biotechnology sector and given Malaysia's resources such as manpower and water supply, we are confident of meeting our target," he added.

That too is exactly the reason why Biocon Limited chose Iskandar Malaysia and Johor its first foray outside India.

"We had a look at three or four destinations in Asia but in the end, we picked Malaysia. The geographical location, facilities and cost effectiveness, were the compelling reasons for choosing Johor.

"In short, what Malaysia with it's business friendly environment has to offer, was too good to resist," said Kiran.

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