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Ushering a renewed hope!

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This edition of the magazine captures the leading developments, hits, and misses of 2013 and also hints at the trends that are likely to unfold in 2014. There has been no common flavor in the biosciences sector that dominated across the Asia Pacific region in the year that has passed. Each country had its set of accomplishments and challenges. China and India were marred by scandals in the pharma sector. In 2013, while GSK, Novartis, Sanofi, Baxter, and Eli Lilly in China got embroiled in issues related to concealing facts or fabricating data, India's leading pharma company Ranbaxy faced heat from the US Food and Drug Admin- istration (FDA). These events have dented the credibility index of the pharma and biopharma sector in the region.

The industry now is working harder to not only plug the gaps in the system but also weed out the black sheep. This is a positive development for the industry as a whole and the experts and industry insiders believe the industry will emerge much stron- ger and confident in the next few years. Mr Abhijit Ghose of PwC Singapore writes that many of the companies in the pharma industry will undergo restructuring to increase their market dominance. Additionally they will have to transform the cor- porate culture in order to foster innovation. The new year will also see strengthening of the healthcare information processes and delivery systems. Ms Rhenu Bhuller of Frost & Sullivan predicts that transparency in pharma pricing will get top attention during the year. Governments in Australia, China, and Australia will be reinforcing their commitment to create transparency in the pricing of the drugs.

It may be recalled that the bioscience industry in Asia Pacific had rebound from a single digit growth in 2011 to double digit growth of nearly 11 percent in 2012. The industry in all likelihood would record nearly the same kind of growth in 2013. We would be able share a detailed report on the status of the bioscience industry in June 2014. Nonetheless the trends suggest that there's that momentum.

There were several new products-vaccines, therapeutics and medical devices--that hit the markets during the year. Some of these included launch of Japanese encepha- litis vaccines in India and Australia and the launch of Alzumab, India's first anti-psoriasis biotech drug. One of India's top biotech companies, Biocon released this in India in August 2013. This is a major breakthrough innovation and is believed to be the world's first molecule targeting a novel CD6 pathway that will usher in a transfor- mative change in treatment of autoimmune diseases. The good news is that biologics are now the major contributors for cancer treatments. And biologic and targeted therapies, which are likely to be the mainstay cancer treatments in the next three-five years, will witness an increase in the collection of cancer drugs in the region.

The growth story in medical devices, nanobiosicences, and stem cell therapies will also be on the upswing in the coming years. Studies by Dr Ilia Banakh and Prof Len Harrison of Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, Australia, showed that stem cells from adult pancreas can be used for generating insulin-producing cells and this can be- come a new line of treatment for type 1 diabetes. Further, vaccines like those for dengue, malaria, and rotavirus are on the horizon. From the conversations I had with the industry, there's one clear message-that the industry is gearing up to meet the fully-blown challenges of the under-penetrated markets in the region as well as those challenges in the making. Happy New Year and we look forward to a more meaning- ful relationship with you all through the pages of BioSpectrum.

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