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China and India can strengthen APACâ??s global MedTech role: APACMedâ??s Arjun Sarker

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APACMed CEO Arjun Sarker discusses how clinical evidence, regulatory convergence and cross-border partnerships can translate Asian MedTech innovation into wider patient access.

China and India are contributing different strengths to Asia Pacific's medical technology industry, from manufacturing scale and increasingly sophisticated innovation to engineering expertise and affordable product development. Translating those strengths into wider patient access, however, requires companies to navigate healthcare systems with different clinical priorities, regulatory requirements and purchasing processes.

For Arjun Sarker, CEO of APACMed, regional growth depends on connecting innovation with credible evidence, consistent quality and strong local execution. Cross-border partnerships and more predictable regulatory pathways can help companies move beyond market entry towards sustained clinical adoption.

In this email interview, conducted in connection with MedTech Forum 2026, Sarker discusses the complementary roles of China and India, the challenges of regional expansion and how growing Asian competition is influencing multinational companies.

China and India are both emerging as major MedTech growth engines, but through very different models. How do you see their respective roles shaping the next phase of APAC's MedTech industry?

China and India are shaping the next phase of Asia Pacific MedTech in very different but complementary ways. China combines the scale of one of the world's largest healthcare markets with an increasingly sophisticated innovation and manufacturing base. Its companies are increasingly pursuing overseas growth, including in Southeast Asia and other emerging markets, while investing in international certification, quality systems and local-market capabilities.

India contributes a deep engineering and clinical-innovation base, a growing medical-device manufacturing footprint and experience developing affordable technologies for resource-constrained health systems. Its role will expand as more Indian companies enter regional markets and global value chains.

The opportunity is not to make the two markets look alike, but to connect their respective strengths to the wider region. In both cases, innovation alone will not be enough. Companies will need consistent quality, credible clinical evidence and strong local execution. If they get that combination right, China and India can expand patient access while strengthening Asia Pacific's position in global MedTech.

As more Chinese and Indian MedTech companies look beyond their domestic markets, what will determine whether they can successfully scale across APAC and eventually compete globally?

As Chinese and Indian MedTech companies expand beyond their home markets, one important consideration will be the diversity of healthcare systems across APAC. Although both countries are part of the region, each market has its own clinical priorities, regulatory pathways, procurement processes and commercial dynamics. A solution that succeeds at home may therefore need to be adapted for other markets.

Companies that take a focused approach will be better placed to scale. This means identifying markets where the clinical need, regulatory pathway and commercial model support sustainable growth.

Strong local execution will also play an important role. This includes regulatory and tendering expertise, hospital and distribution relationships, reliable after-sales support, and teams that understand how decisions are made locally. The right partners can provide valuable market knowledge and help companies build a lasting presence.

At the global level, consistent product quality, credible clinical evidence and reliable supply will remain essential. Innovation creates the opportunity, while trust, service and effective execution help translate that opportunity into long-term growth.

Regulatory fragmentation and market access remain significant challenges across Asia Pacific. Where are you seeing meaningful progress towards greater regulatory convergence, and where do the biggest gaps remain?

We are seeing encouraging progress through the greater use of international standards, regulatory reliance, digital submissions and continued dialogue between regulators and industry. Together, these measures can reduce duplication and help regulatory authorities direct resources towards areas where they add the most value.

At the same time, implementation remains uneven across the region. Requirements, evidence expectations and review timelines can still vary, even when markets follow similar regulatory principles. Greater consistency would make it easier for companies to plan and navigate different markets, particularly smaller companies with limited regulatory resources.

More predictable regulatory pathways can also support broader access to new technologies. Regulatory approval is an important step, while reimbursement, procurement and clinical adoption influence how widely a technology can be used. Closer alignment across these areas can help approved technologies reach healthcare providers and patients more efficiently.

How important will cross-border partnerships — between MedTech companies, healthcare providers, governments and investors — become in helping Asian innovators enter and scale in new regional markets?

We believe that cross-border partnerships will become increasingly important as Asian MedTech innovators expand into new regional markets. Entering a market involves more than introducing a product. Companies also need to understand local clinical practices, regulatory requirements, procurement processes and patient needs. Local market partners and stakeholders can provide this knowledge and help innovators adapt their approach across different stages of expansion.

Healthcare providers can assess how a technology fits into clinical practice and support evidence-building. Governments can provide greater clarity on healthcare priorities and regulatory frameworks. Investors can support the funding needed for market development, while commercial partners can provide distribution, training and after-sales services.

Together, these partnerships can help innovators progress from market entry to wider clinical adoption. They also allow companies to build local capabilities while maintaining consistent standards as they expand across the region.

As home-grown Asian MedTech companies become more competitive, how is this changing the dynamics for established multinational players in areas such as innovation, pricing, localisation and investment?

The growing strength of home-grown Asian MedTech companies is bringing new energy to the regional landscape. Many of these companies combine speed and cost awareness with a strong understanding of local needs. Their expanding capabilities in research, manufacturing and commercialisation also give healthcare systems more choice and encourage

further innovation across the industry.

For multinational companies, this creates an opportunity to bring global expertise closer to local markets. Faster local decision-making, locally relevant product design and continued investment in market capabilities can help them respond to different clinical and economic needs. Price remains important, alongside factors such as clinical outcomes, reliability, training, service and lifecycle cost.

These shifts may also create more opportunities for partnerships, co-development, local manufacturing and investment between multinational and regional companies. Those that combine global standards with strong local insight will be well placed to grow.