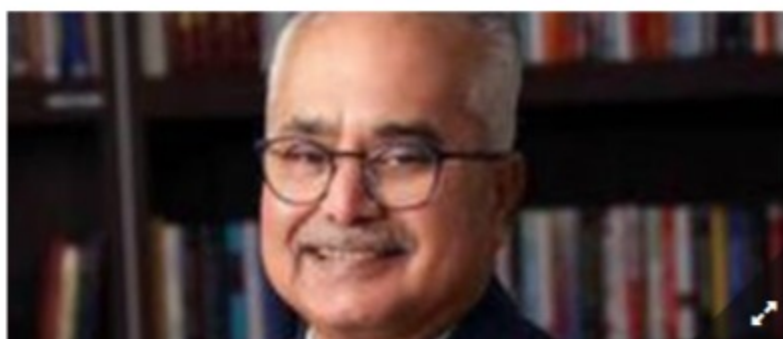


Companies

Dr Reddy's aiming to create its own space in vaccine segment: GV Prasad

G Naga Sridhar | Hyderabad | Updated on September 23, 2021



'Sputnik V supply will increase over the next two to three months'

Pharma major Dr Reddy's Laboratories plans to create its own space in the vaccine segment, according to its Co-Chairman and Managing

Director, GV Prasad.

"As it stands, our biologics/biosimilars business focusses on the development and commercialisation of mAb biosimilars. In the short- to medium-term in this business, we will look to add value to our core business, leverage existing commercialisation and other capabilities," Prasad told *BusinessLine*.



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New partnerships

Hyderabad-based Dr Reddy's, which is now the brand custodian of Russian vaccine Sputnik V in India following an agreement with Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), will also explore licensing and partnership opportunities for biosimilars with the right partners in emerging markets, he added.

In the long run, the aim of the company in the biosimilars business is to establish a presence in regulated markets. In-house development of biologics/biosimilars has a long gestation period.

"Apart from developing biosimilars, using existing capabilities in biologics and our experience/learnings from Sputnik V, we will consider the viral vaccines and viral vector platforms space as a new growth platform. The Wockhardt portfolio that we acquired last year also contained vaccines. We see this as a long-term growth driver," said Prasad.

On the R&D front, the drug maker said: "We will continue to strengthen our pipeline of products, with an additional set of biosimilar introduction to its development pipeline while we make progress in the Phase-3 clinical trial of Rituximab."

In the first quarter ended June this fiscal, the R&D spend was ₹453 crore at 9.2 per cent sales, with an increase of 14 per cent year-on-year, in line with the increase in development pipeline in its biosimilars and generics business, including the development of Covid-related molecules.

Augmenting production

On the quantum of supply of Sputnik V in India, Prasad said supply will increase over the next two to three months as six contract manufacturers, including Hetero and Gland Pharma, with which RIDF had already inked pacts, are in the process of either starting or augmenting production.

"We are very cautious. We are supplying the first dose of the vaccine only if the second dose is also available to avoid any issues for the takers of the first dose of their vaccine," he said.

Sputnik V is being administered in India in two doses with a 21-day gap. Both doses of the vaccine should be taken from the same hospital as the second dose is being made available after the first dose to avoid scarcity later.