

## **Bharat Biotech, Novavax tie up**

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To develop pandemic flu vaccine

Hyderabad: Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL), a Hyderabad-based biotechnology research company, has entered into a strategic alliance with the U.S.-based Novavax, for rapid development of pandemic influenza vaccine for India and ASEAN countries.

As part of the agreement, BBIL will fund all the preclinical and clinical development work with Novavax on optimal manufacturing processes besides being responsible for the commercialisation of the vaccine.

Novavax, on its part, will receive unrestricted access to all preclinical and clinical data and a royalty on all sales.

Announcing the agreement here on Monday, BBIL Chairman and Managing Director, Krishna M. Ella, said the firm would work on Novavax's "virus like particle" (VLP) technology using recombinant protein to mimic the structure of the virus to provide protection without risk of infection or disease.

Vaccines for influenza

Unlike the previous ones, the VLP had an advantage to counter influenza in terms of its ability to respond rapidly to emerging threats or new strains. The company was hoping to go in for the first clinical trials before the end of the current year.

Novavax CEO, Rahul Singhvi, said there was an urgent need to develop vaccines for influenza as there were several new risks, including the greater population density.