

New vaccine for chikungunya?

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Indo-French tie-up to explore the possibility: Ambassador

Hyderabad: The possibility of an Indo-French tie-up in developing a vaccine for chikungunya is being explored by a high-level French delegation currently on a visit to the country.

The delegation, led by former French Ambassador to India, Bernard de Montferrand, also sought to develop a long-term collaboration between industries, academia and research institutions of the two countries for making innovative products in biosciences, energy and environment.

It interacted with representatives of Bharat Biotech Ltd., on Wednesday and had an initial round of discussions on the prospect of partnering in developing chikungunya vaccine.

The team also visited CARE hospitals and held talks with Chairman B. Soma Raju over holding joint clinical research.

On Thursday, the members visited CCMB, IICT and L.V. Prasad Eye Institute. At IICT, they were briefed about the work being done in biotechnology, pharma and energy. According to G. Sampath Kumar, deputy director of IICT, the delegation was looking for partnership between French industry and Indian R and D Labs for developing technology.

Talking to The Hindu, Mr. Montferrand said the delegation wanted to create a long-term relationship between "clusters of competitiveness" in France and Indian companies, academia and research laboratories.

Lauding the current status of research in India, he said there was a need to increase awareness about it in France. Before coming here, the team met with representatives of Indian Council of Medical Research, AIIMS, National Institute of Immunology and DST among others at Delhi on Tuesday.