

No plans for FDA office in India

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Hyderabad: The United States has no plans to set up an office of its Food and Drug Administration in India. However, technical help would be extended to the Indian government in establishing a similar agency.

This was told to reporters by Michael O Leavitt, Secretary of Health and Human Services, US Department of Health and Human Services, and Andrew C. von Eschenbach, Commissioner, USFDA, after visiting Bharat Biotech International Ltd. at Shamirpet near here on Tuesday. Mr. Eschenbach said the FDA wanted to be a bridge and not a barrier to bring the fruits of science and technology to people.

Strategy Mr. Leavitt said the US was exploring the possibility of placing its representatives in various countries as part of a new strategy to build safety into every product and develop standards that were commonly shared. He said the current import protection system in the United States was not adequate. It received goods worth two trillion US dollars from eight lakh manufacturers across the globe every year. He said that he was on a visit to India to initiate discussion with the government to work together and evolve common safety norms. Later, Mr Michael O. Leavitt met Chief Minister Y.S. Rajashekara Reddy who briefed him on Arogya Sri, the health insurance scheme being implemented for the poor. He complimented Dr. Reddy for introducing such a gigantic project to help the disadvantaged sections.

At the two hour long meeting, A. Babu, CEO of Arogya Sri, explained to Mr. Michael that as many 2.97 lakh patients had been screened under the scheme so far.