

'Indian drug cos have key role in bringing down healthcare costs'

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With both sides of the political divide in the US promising in their pre-poll campaigns to take measures to lower healthcare costs, Lupin CEO Vinita Gupta is hopeful that critical products such as biosimilars will get more support from the next government.

There will be an even stronger focus on generics and biosimilars, said Gupta, adding that these products help bring "material savings" to the overall healthcare cost.

As the US elections are poised for a final verdict, Indian drugmakers also expect the accent on localisation to continue, besides the focus on reducing healthcare costs. "A majority of our busi-

ness and our industry is focussed on the generics business, which brings savings to the healthcare systems; it should do better," Gupta told *BusinessLine*, speaking from the US.

Even for drugmakers who may have operations in the US, efforts to localise manufactur-

ing works contrary to the idea of bringing down costs, observed a US-based industry-watcher.

"Localising manufacturing will have an impact on cost, it would be hard to get the cost benefit that we get in India," Gupta agreed, adding that companies would

be open to localise if they got some relief on the pricing front. Conversations from a company and industry standpoint seek

support for localisation efforts with some sort of commitment on volumes, besides pricing relief, she said.

The buzz is that an opportunity may also open up for companies to participate in the US health insurance scheme, she said. Since Lupin is into niche products, it will look at products best suited to participate in this, she added.

Covid opportunities

With the Indian pharma industry featuring prominently in the Covid landscape for the manufacture of vaccines and other therapies, Gupta said they were looking at marketing opportunities for other therapeutics and would be open to help with the distribution of vaccines, when one is available in India. The company is presently looking at taking its version of favipiravir to other markets.



Vinita Gupta, CEO, Lupin