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## Bio-innovation Centre to Start Functioning Soon

Express News Service

**Bengaluru:** The country's biotechnology sector is currently valued at US \$6 billion and is growing at a rate of 20-22 percent aiming to touch \$100 billion by 2020. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said adding that more than half of the country's total biotech industry's ventures are in the State and it accounts for 26 per cent of the total exports.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the Bangalore India Bio, an annual biotechnology conference, Siddaramaiah said the state would make all necessary efforts to attract investments in the biotechnology sector.

"The State has a new Bio-innovation Centre within the campus of the Institute of Bioinformatics and Applied Biotechnology which will soon be operational," he said.

Earlier, he inaugurated the centre in style, complete with flying drones providing a live



Union Minister Prakash Javadekar, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Blocon CMD Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw at Bangalore India Bio on Monday

### REVIVAL OF POWER SUPPLY FIRMS

Union Minister of State for Power Piyush Goyal said the energy sector can expect some unique models for reviving the power supply companies and for increasing their capabilities. He also discussed the possibility of giving freedom to customers to choose their power supply companies.

feed of the centre to the venue of the conference.

The centre is expected to help scale ideas into commercial successes and also encourage startups in the life sciences and biotechnology fields as an incubation centre that will provide scalability. A bio-venture fund and a biotech policy for the State which will be announced soon, Siddaramaiah said.

He hoped that the Union government would soon give clearance for the setting up of a Centre for Bio-Molecular Engineering in the city.

IT and BT Minister S R Patil said that 12 finishing schools are in the pipeline. The schools would offer a one-year programme to fresh graduates to prepare for the industry.

Union Minister of State for Power Piyush Goyal offered all possible assistance from the Union government for the state's growth plans.

Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar was also present.

### WILL ALLOW GM CROP TESTING SOON, SAYS MINISTER

IT and BT Minister S R Patil said the government would soon begin allowing confined field trials of GM crops in the State. He revealed this at the inauguration of the 15th edition of Bangalore India Bio 2015.

Patil said, "We should encourage research in the development of technology in agriculture. Karnataka should also allow field trials as is being done in states like Maharashtra, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh. The State government has allocated ₹6.53 crore to the University of Agricultural Sciences towards research in agri-biotech."

He also announced the setting up a subgroup of agriculture in the Biotech Vision

group of Karnataka. He wanted agri-biotechnology to play an important role in tackling abiotic stresses like drought, salinity and nitrogen fertiliser reduction.

The Association of Biotechnology Enabled Enterprises - Agriculture Group (ABLE-AG) Director General Ram Kaundinya welcomed the intention of the State government to allow field trials of GM crops soon. "As of now many field trials of GM crops are awaiting approval and we hope that this positive step by the state government will help us to progress science towards its useful commercialisation for the benefit of the farmers," he added.