

Glaxo's drive against filariasis

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Drug-maker GlaxoSmithKline is setting up a new manufacturing line at Nashik as part of its global corporate social responsibility, contributing towards world-wide efforts to tackle Lymphatic Filariasis by 2020. The new production line will deliver an additional 300 million treatments of albendazole per year, in what is being seen as among the largest drug donations in the global pharmaceutical industry, a GSK note said. The facility will start production in late 2008 and will double GSK's current global albendazole capacity. The drug-maker will invest about £2,00,000 in the additional line, besides converting existing equipment to produce the tablets for donation. The increased production will save the Indian health system an estimated \$30 million in treatment costs each year, the note said, adding it would help improve the lives of over 550 million people in India who live at risk of developing this condition. Globally, over 1.3 billion people live at risk of disability and disfigurement caused by this illness and about one-third of the people at risk live in India, the note said. The Global Programme to Eliminate began in 2000, and more than 1.9 billion treatments have been given to over 570 million people in 48 of the 83 countries with endemic LF, it added. — **Our Bureau**