

Glaxo chief Witty says ready to ramp up play

Will seek more alliances and even buyouts

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Global pharma giant Glaxo-SmithKline (GSK) is open to making acquisitions in India, Andrew Witty, chief executive officer said on Monday.

"We are strong financially, both globally and in India, and will be looking at making deals if we see something strong and like it," Witty said during the dedication of the company's albendazole facility in Nashik to the WHO's global programme to eliminate lymphatic filariasis.

The CEO did not name potential buys. When probed on GSK looking to pick up stake



■ Andrew Witty

in Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL), as has been speculated over the last few months, he said the company did not comment on speculation.

He did say, however, that GSK is keen to forge alliances on the lines of those it has with DRL and Strides Arco-lab for supply of generics.

"We are interested in such

alliances, which aim at creating shareholder value without using much cash. There are lots of opportunities for such alliances both with Indian companies and those globally," said Witty.

The company had announced an agreement with DRL in June last year to develop and market select products across a number of emerging markets, excluding India.

The aim was to bring together Dr Reddy's portfolio of branded generics and GSK's extensive sales and marketing capabilities to deliver more medicines to more patients outside of India.

GSK is also looking at increased R&D work, more manufacturing sites and greater activity in vaccines, said Witty. **Turn to Page 20**

Glaxo to ramp up play



He said India will be the focus for the company and it already manufactures a huge chunk of its drugs in the country.

A pharma industry veteran said the company's India

focus was evident from the fact that it sold its drugs here at around 25% less than elsewhere in the world.

Experts feel depleting new-molecule pipelines and impending patent expiries are increasing the desperation of pharma biggies such as Pfizer and GSK to rapidly expand their presence in India.

"Hence, emerging countries like India and China would form the basis of future pharma activity for MNCs like GSK," an industry source, associate director at a professional services firm, said.

According to the source, Pfizer has inked pacts with Aurobindo and Claris to strengthen its position in India and is looking at being one of the top five drugmakers in the country. GSK was once the No.1 company in India, but is now No.3, and would definitely be looking at regaining its position in the Indian pharma market, forecast to be worth \$20 billion by 2015.

MNCs are estimated to have a 25% share of the drug market in India. "But this will change soon and in five years or so the share of local pharma companies and MNCs will be equal," the source said.