

... company news in brief

■ Barr to relocate executive offices to New Jersey:

This summer, Barr Laboratories plans to move its executive offices from Blauvelt, New York, to Bergen County, New Jersey. The move will involve about 145 employees. The company's corporate headquarters and the headquarters for Barr's generic R&D organisation will continue to be located in Pomona, New York; this facility is undergoing an \$8 million, two-year expansion. Separately, Barr has announced that Bruce Downey, chairman and CEO, has returned home from hospital and will resume full-time business activities while continuing outpatient rehabilitation therapy. He was recently diagnosed with transverse myelitis.

■ 190 accept early retirement at Fujisawa:

190 employees of Fujisawa have accepted a voluntary early retirement programme offered by the company in January and effective March 31st. The affected staff are all over the age of 40 and have been with the company at least 15 years. Payments under the scheme will have no material financial impact as ¥15 billion (\$125 million) in extraordinary losses related to wider general restructuring are already included in the forecast for the current fiscal year ending March 31st.

■ Charkit to offer Angelini's services in the US:

The US company, Charkit Chemical, has entered into an exclusive agreement with Angelini Fine Chemicals of Rome to offer the latter's custom synthesis, contract manufacturing and pharmaceutical intermediates to pharmaceutical companies in the US. Charkit was founded in 1982 by its president, Charles Hinnant, to provide product development and manufacturing services to a number of industries, including pharmaceuticals.

■ Synaptic shareholders approve its acquisition:

Shareholders of the US company, Synaptic Pharmaceutical, have voted in favour of the firm's acquisition by Lundbeck for around \$121 million. Under the deal, which gives holders of Synaptic common stock the right to receive \$6.50 per share, Synaptic will become a wholly owned subsidiary of Lundbeck. The acquisition was announced in November, and will become effective after a clearance, due in March.

■ Penn Pharmaceutical expands UK facilities

Penn Pharmaceutical Services, a UK pharmaceutical services firm which undertakes contract manufacturing, has begun to expand its South Wales facility with an investment of £800,000. Phase one will provide reception facilities and Phase two will modernise its pharmaceutical storage capacity.

■ Themis to launch injectable rofecoxib in India:

Themis Medicare, a joint venture company of Gedeon Richter, Hungary, and the Patel family of India, has developed an injectable formulation of the COX-2 inhibitor, rofecoxib. The product, which was recently approved in India, is expected to be launched by the end of March and will be co-marketed by the Indian companies, Ranbaxy Laboratories and Cadila Healthcare. In comparison with oral rofecoxib formulations, Rofijet offers onset of action within a few minutes with better and longer blood levels, which ensure that the analgesic effect lasts for more than 22 hours. This also facilitates once-a-day dosage. The Indian market for oral rofecoxib is valued at about Rs1.1 billion (\$23.1 million).

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