

AstraZeneca to close down Bangalore R&D centre

■ 168 employees may get the axe

fe Bureau
Bangalore, Jan 29

GLOBAL pharma major AstraZeneca on Wednesday said it will close down its research and development centre in Bangalore later this year. The London-listed company said the decision is part of its broader global business strategy to simplify its R&D footprint.

The Bangalore centre of the \$28-billion pharma company will have an impact on 168 full-time employees who work on pharmaceutical development and drug discovery research into neglected tropical disease, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria. The centre was named Avishkar.

Sudhir Nambiar, site head and vice-president of pharmaceutical development, said: "We realise this is difficult news for our research colleagues and our priority is to support them over the



coming months. We have not taken this decision lightly and acknowledge the excellent work carried out by our people in Bangalore."

The company had focussed its resources on three core therapy areas: oncology, cardiovascular and metabolic diseases apart from respiratory, inflammation and autoimmunity. "These changes reflect the company's strategic focus on investing in our core therapy areas and simplifying our R&D footprint," Nambiar said.

Employees affected by the changes will start to leave the company at the end of April and the site is expected to close

later this year, the company said. AstraZeneca's India commercial organisation and the clinical operations, which are also based at the centre, will move to a new location in Bangalore.

AstraZeneca currently employs more than 1,200 people in sales, marketing and manufacturing in India. The company said it is committed to maintaining its strong presence in the country and its compound library will continue to be made available through open innovation partnerships, it said.

Pharmaceutical development projects currently carried out at the Bangalore centre will either be transferred to its Macclesfield site in the UK, or be carried out by external providers. The company will no longer carry out early stage research into neglected tropical diseases, TB and malaria.

However AstraZeneca will continue to progress AZD5847, its phase II programme for TB, it said. The firm will continue to provide expertise to help advance existing third-party neglected tropical diseases, malaria and TB research programmes for the benefit of patients.

Company.