

# Lupin investing in products, talent to face future: CEO Vinita Gupta

Appoints a corporate development officer to pursue merger and acquisition opportunities

PT JYOTHI DATTA

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Eight months since taking charge as Lupin's Chief Executive Officer, Vinita Gupta has seen the pharmaceutical landscape change dramatically through mega deals between companies in India and overseas.

"My lens has changed to a global lens for the company," says Gupta, referring to Lupin's own recent acquisitions of Dutch company Nanomi (providing an entry into complex injectables) and Mexico's specialty pharmaceutical company Laboratorios Grin.

Lupin has brought in capabilities for the future in terms of complex injectables and inhalation products, she says, outlining the company's aspiration to grow in the specialty space.

## Deal street

"We have invested for the future in a pipeline (of products) and talent," says Gupta, adding they would continue to look at oppor-

tunities in respiratory and dermatology segments, for instance.

The last few months have seen hectic activity on deal-street in the pharmaceutical world. Locally, Sun proposed a \$4-billion merger with Ranbaxy, a deal that would catapult it into the numero uno position.

And globally, even as Pfizer eyes Astra Zeneca for over \$100 billion, Novartis and GlaxoSmithKline swapped businesses in a \$23-billion deal and Bayer picked up Merck's consumer unit for \$14 billion.

The merger and acquisition (M&A) activity has been driven by the need for growth and to gain scale, says Gupta, and Lupin, too, rather conspicuously appointed a corporate development officer to look at M&A opportunities.

Lupin has regional strategies for acquisitions, Gupta said, adding they would look for opportunities in Eastern Europe and China, as well. India, too, is open for acquisitions, but the "focus is on



building our share of voice in therapeutic areas," she said, adding the company would not enter a deal merely for scale.

## Research

Lupin has also initiated a layered research plan crystallising around its acquisitions, but anchored in India.

So research on injectables would be out of the Netherlands and India, while inhalation products would be from the US and India, Gupta said. Lupin has a list of about 20 difficult-to-make injectables, she added.

On the company's financial

performance for the year under review, she said: "It's been a year of challenges, like any other."

In India, the company had to deal with drug price control and trade disruption, while in the US, it faced rough weather in the branded drugs business.

Japan saw its injectables business hit because third party contractors were not placing orders, as business was slow.

Lupin had reworked strategies to tackle challenges in its key markets, by coming out with line-extensions of brands in the US and value-added injectables in Japan, she added.

Company