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In Short

A round-up of today's other stories in brief...

Mars teams up with Buffett to buy Wrigley

Mars has teamed up with billionaire Warren Buffett to buy Wm Wrigley, the world's largest chewing gum maker, for \$23 billion (€14.7 billion), creating the largest confectionary company in the world.

The deal, announced yesterday, will give Mr Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway a minority stake in Wrigley, which will become a separate Mars subsidiary. At \$80 a share, the deal is a 28 per cent premium over Wrigley's closing stock price of \$62.45 on Friday. - (Reuters)

UniPhar's pretax profits rise by 11%

UniPhar, the healthcare distributor owned by more than 500 pharmacists, has made a profit before tax of €21.6 million in the year to December 25th, 2007, an increase of 11 per cent on the previous year. Turnover was up 7 per cent to €720 million.

Tullow financial officer to resign

Tullow Oil chief financial officer Tom Hickey has announced that he will resign from the company to live full time in Ireland.

Tullow said Mr Hickey (39) would remain in situ until a replacement was found, and it expected him to stay until it announced its interim results in August. He will also leave the company's board.

Job creation in small firms 'tight'

Job creation in small firms is set to remain tight this year as high labour costs undermine competitiveness, according to a report published yesterday.

The Small Firms' Association national employment survey forecast that only 8,875 new jobs would be created this year, marginally up on last year but still a long way behind the 50,243 jobs created in 2006.

Microsoft considers hostile takeover

Microsoft chief executive Steve Ballmer is considering the company's first hostile takeover following the passing of a weekend deadline given to the Yahoo board to accept its \$44.6 billion (€28.5 billion) offer. Experts say Microsoft may now try to get supportive voices on to Yahoo's board.

Derry software firm appoints analyst

Derry software company Singularity has appointed Dr Sinclair Stockman, former chief scientist and chief information officer at BT, as chief industry analyst for its telecommunications division.

Fine Grain buys Singapore building

Fine Grain Property Consortium, a group chaired by former KPMG head Ron Bolger, has acquired an eight-storey office block in Singapore for about €27 million. The transaction was financed by German bank Hypo Real Estate.

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