

20 percent drugs sold in Uttar Pradesh are fake: study

At least 20 percent of the medicines sold in Uttar Pradesh are fake, a study says.

The revelation was made here Friday in a report prepared by the Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) on 'Counterfeit, Spurious and Contraband Goods - Preventive and Remedial Issues', a day after an illegal drug manufacturing unit was unearthed in the state capital.

While the factory owner Deepak Verma and his son Mridul Verma were arrested along with three employees Thursday evening, it is believed that the unit was being run in connivance with some municipal and health department officials. It is suspected that they were also enjoying police protection.

Bottling and packaging material including labels bearing names of well established drug manufacturers were recovered from the factory. A large number of life-saving drugs, common antibiotics as well as health supplements were recovered during the raid.

The raid was part of a crackdown recently launched by the Mayawati government against what was considered rampant sale of spurious drugs in the state.

According to Lucknow district magistrate Chandra Bhanu who reached the illicit drug factory shortly after the raid, 'the owner had obtained a licence for manufacturing food and nutritional products in the name of Lifeline Pharmaceuticals, but he was actually producing fake medicines.

'The owner had confessed that he was sending his consignments not only in Uttar Pradesh but also in other states like Delhi, Gujarat and Maharashtra,' Bhanu said.

While investigations were still in progress, sources said that the manufacturer had close nexus with some senior officials of the state health machinery under whose patronage he had managed to supply fake medicines even to several government hospitals in the state.

Earlier, Assocham had urged the government to bring about a stringent law to bring an end to this malpractice.

'We are going to deal firmly with both manufacturers as well as traders of spurious drugs,' Health Secretary Arun Kumar Misra said. 'This is not an ordinary matter and involves the question of life and death of people, so we are not prepared to take it lightly at all.'

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