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Telangana DCA seizes Rs 4.05 Cr worth of spurious anti-cancer drugs

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In a significant operation, the Drug Control Administration (DCA) authorities of Telangana have unearthed an illicit stockpile of counterfeit anti-cancer drugs valued at Rs 4.05 crore.

The crackdown on this criminal enterprise, involving an unlicensed firm named "Astrica Healthcare," led to a series of raids across multiple locations in Hyderabad city.

The Assistant Director of DCA Telangana, P. Ramu, disclosed that the operation was initiated based on credible information received by the Vigilance Cell of the Drugs Control Administration. The special team, comprising Drugs Inspectors G. Srikanth, K. Anvesh, M. Chandrasekhar, V. Ajay, and S. Vinay Sushmi, conducted raids on December 2, 2023.

Upon discovering that the address provided by "Astrica Healthcare" was fictitious, the DCA officials collaborated with postal authorities at Alwal to trace the culprits. Subsequently, raids were conducted at courier offices in IDA Cherlapally, Nacharam, and Medchal, as well as at the premises of 'Astrica Healthcare' in Keesara.

The vigilant DCA team identified the courier boy responsible for delivering the spurious drugs and tracked down their storage location at Macha Bollaram—an unlicensed facility. Monitoring the premises since December 2, 2023, the DCA officials, including Assistant Directors P. Ramu and V. Balanaganjan, raided the location on December 4, 2023, seizing 36 varieties of anti-cancer drugs and other medications valued at Rs. 4.05 crore.

The investigation revealed that certain seized drugs bore labels with details of a non-existent company, 'Astra Generics Pvt. Ltd.,' whose licenses were canceled in July 2021. The manufacturing date on the spurious drugs was noted as March 2023, under the name of the said canceled company.

The spurious drugs were falsely labeled under various legitimate companies, including Astra Generics Pvt. Ltd., Astrica Healthcare Pvt. Ltd., Medion Biotech Pvt. Ltd., Alliance Biotech, Sunvet Healthcare, Salus Pharmaceuticals, DM Pharma Pvt. Ltd., Safe Parenterals Pvt. Ltd., and Bless Pharma India Pvt. Ltd.

Director General of Drugs Control Administration of Telangana, V.B. Kamalasan Reddy, emphasised the grave threat posed by spurious drugs to public health, as they not only fail to treat diseases but can also lead to catastrophic consequences. This seizure, marking the largest in the state, underscores the DCA's commitment to safeguarding public health. Efforts are underway to locate and apprehend the prime accused, K. Sateesh Reddy, Director of Astrica Healthcare, who is currently absconding.