

# Major reshuffle at drug controller's office

Nine officials transferred recently; DCGI says move to bring transparency, accountability into the system

SUSHMI DEY

New Delhi, 31 January

At a time when the Indian drug regulator is under a spotlight following international scrutiny of domestic pharmaceutical companies, the government has ordered transfers in the Central Drug Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), the office of the drugs controller general of India (DCGI).

As many as nine transfer orders were issued earlier this week, of which five are related to top officials in the CDSCO. While four deputy drug controllers (DDC) are transferred from this headquarter to different zonal offices, one DDC with additional charge of west zone is being brought back to the New Delhi headquarters. The transfer order, issued on

January 27, has been reviewed by *Business Standard*.

Sources suggest the move comes in the wake of a recent corruption case in Hyderabad where a DDC was allegedly found accepting a bribe from a blood bank. However, DCGI G N Singh said the transfers are "isolated from any such case". "We want to bring transparency and accountability into the system. We realised that the position of deputy drug controller is very sensitive and they need rotation, which will also give them more exposure," Singh said.

The move assumes significance because of the events presently surrounding the drug manufacturing industry. As CDSCO has been in the spotlight for its lack of resources, inadequate moni-

toring of clinical trials and approval of new drugs, of late it has also been criticised for its failure to monitor drug manufacturing practices effectively.

The latest to come under the scanner is Ranbaxy Laboratories, whose India manufactured drugs are barred from the US. While DCGI has ordered inspection of the company's Toansa facility, files related to various show-cause notices served to Ranbaxy and others were being handled by DDCs so far.

The four DDCs to be moved from the CDSCO headquarter are K. Bangarurajan, A K Pradhan, S P Shani and S E Reddy.

Singh said such rotations would now be conducted every three years on an average.

Short.