

## Pharma M&As under scanner

New Delhi, Nov. 25: The department of pharmaceuticals has asked its counterpart in the commerce ministry to conduct a study on recent takeovers in the domestic pharma industry, the Lok Sabha was informed on Thursday.

"Department of pharmaceuticals has written to the department of commerce to conduct a study on the recent takeovers of the domestic pharma industry and to submit its recommendations to the prime minister's Economic Advisory Council/competent authority for its decision," minister of state for chemicals and fertilisers Mr Srikant Kumar Jena said in a written reply. Mr Jena said the pharmaceutical department has received representations from various pharma associations highlighting concerns over some of the mergers and acquisitions of Indian pharma companies.

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The organisations said the acquisition of Indian pharma companies by MNCs was impacting the availability of low-cost medicines.

This year, US pharma major Abbott acquired Piramal Healthcare's domestic formulations business for \$3.72 billion to become the largest drug manufacturer in India.

In another reply, the minister said the department is also examining the possibility of framing a Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices. "After discussing the issues with the pharma associations, this department has been able to persuade most pharma associations to have a code of ethics," Mr Jena said. This was done keeping in mind serious allegations in the media regarding payments paid by certain pharma companies to doctors to promote their products, the minister added. — PTI

Industry