

Should bury data, said Ranbaxy chief when R&D head revealed fudge: Tribunal order



THE RANBAXY RULING - II



Tejendra Khanna

Terrible... put patients at risk: Ranbaxy's own on Ranbaxy



Malvinder Singh

DEEPAK PATEL
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 11

ON OCTOBER 14, 2004, Rajinder Kumar, head of R&D, presented the Self Assessment Report (SAR) to the company's science committee detailing how the pharma giant had "falsified data" for more than 200 drugs to obtain quick regulatory approvals from authorities in over 40 countries.

Present in the room were chairman Tejendra Khanna; Malvinder Singh, then president of pharmaceuticals and Ranbaxy's owner; Brian Tempest, Chief Executive Officer (CEO); and top executives.

Khanna, according to Tempest who recalled that meeting at the Singapore arbitration tribunal, "said something to the effect that 'Ranbaxy should just bury the data.'" As reported Thursday, the order implicates the Ranbaxy top brass in a range of alleged irregularities.

Apparently frustrated at how the top management had responded to his findings, Kumar resigned the next day. Seven months later, in a letter to the management, he put on record some of the responses at the meeting: One board member (said): "Can we bury the data." Falsification of data, said another senior Ranbaxy executive, only happened with few products and everyone did it.

Chairman Khanna quit the board three years later and was appointed by the UPA government as Lieutenant Governor of Delhi.

Significantly, the minutes of this crucial science committee meeting — circulated internally — made no mention of the SAR or of any board member's response to the document.

In his letter on April 20, 2005,
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"TERRIBLE," "BEYOND the pale," "outlaw culture," over 1000 samples stored in fridges with misleading labels, false records — details of alleged malpractices in Ranbaxy were revealed to the Singapore tribunal by the company's own witness, lawyer and executives.

Startling evidence comes from Ranbaxy's own expert witness Richard Cooper, who was earlier the USFDA's chief counsel from 1977 to 1979.

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