

'Nepal to be self-reliant in pharma products'

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Despite liberal policies and successive reduction of tariff on imports by the government, pharmaceuticals industry has been very successful in competing with foreign products, said Dr Shanker Sharma, vice-chairman of National Planning Commission (NPC) speaking at the 15th anniversary of Deurali-Janta Pharmaceuticals Pvt Ltd (DJPPL). He stressed on the need of penetrating bigger markets like India and China.

"Production, productivity and infrastructure, all have witnessed a progress in the last fifteen years. Pharmaceutical in-

dustry is one of the sectors, which has comparative advantage for Nepal to compete in the international market."

Bhupendra Bahadur Thapa, director at the Department of Drug Administration (DDA), urged for parallel efforts from stakeholders to strengthen the industry and to control the market of low-quality drugs that enter Nepal through the porous Indo-Nepal border. "There is also a need of products diversification."

"Market has become very competitive and it would be worthless to buttress government owned firms if they cannot produce quality and quantity at par with private firms."

Hari Bhakta Sharma, executive director at DJPPL said, "Government has authorised more than 200 foreign companies to sale their products in Nepal and only 40 pharmaceuticals industries are in the field," he said adding that the lifting of VAT on raw materials used by the pharmaceuticals industry is an initiation of the government to promote the domestic units. He also urged the government to discourage the production and sales of low-quality drugs.

Dr Bansidhar Mishra, former state minister for health said that pharmaceuticals industry could be one of the sectors on which Nepal could be self-reliant.