

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS
DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACEUTICALS**

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 192
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10th MARCH, 2026

Policy measures to control the prices of essential medicines

192 # Dr. Sandeep Kumar Pathak:

Will the Minister of **Chemicals and Fertilizers** be pleased to state:

- (a) the regulatory and policy measures taken so far through the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) to control the rising prices of essential and life-saving medicines in the country;
- (b) the number of Janaushadhi Kendras currently operational across the country under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana, along with the number of citizens benefitted therefrom and the estimated cost savings achieved during the last three years; and
- (c) whether Government proposes mandatory linkage of Janaushadhi Kendras with every district hospital, medical college and community health centre, if so, the timeline and action plan prescribed for the same?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS
(SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA)**

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to the Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. *192# (12th Position) for answer on 10.3.2026, raised by Dr. Sandeep Kumar Pathak, regarding “Policy measures to control the prices of essential medicines”

(a): Prices of drugs are regulated as per the provisions of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order 2013 (DPCO, 2013). The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) under the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) regulates the prices of medicines as per extant provisions of DPCO, 2013. NPPA fixes the ceiling prices of formulations specified in Schedule-I to DPCO, 2013 which is based on the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) published by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) from time-to-time. All manufacturers, marketers and importers of scheduled medicines are required to sell their products within such ceiling price (plus applicable local taxes). NLEM, 2022 was published by MoHFW on 13.9.2022 and the same was notified by the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) as revised Schedule-I of DPCO, 2013 on 11.11.2022. As on 6.3.2026, Ceiling prices of 935 formulations are effective. The average price reduction due to re-fixation of prices under NLEM, 2022 is about 17%, leading to annual savings of around ₹3,800 crore to patients. Further, the ceiling prices of scheduled medicines are revised annually on the basis of Wholesale Price Index (WPI) (all commodities) for preceding calendar year on or before 1st April of every year, which is notified by the Government on the 1st day of April every year.

NPPA also fixes retail prices of new drugs as defined in para 2(1)(u) of DPCO, 2013, i.e., formulations launched by existing manufacturers of a medicine listed in NLEM by combining it with another drug, or by changing the strength or dosage or both of such medicine. The retail prices of new drugs are applicable to the applicant manufacturer and marketer and they cannot sell the new drug above the price notified by NPPA. Retail prices of 3,702 new drugs have been fixed by the NPPA till 5.3.2026. Further, in case of non-scheduled formulations, manufacturers are required to not increase their maximum retail price (MRP) of a formulation by more than ten percent of the MRP of that formulation during the preceding 12 months.

In addition, NPPA has fixed the prices of drugs under Para 19 to ensure the availability of drugs at affordable prices in public interest in the following cases:

- (i) MRP of 106 non-scheduled anti-diabetic and cardiovascular drugs were capped in 2014.
- (ii) Ceiling prices of coronary stents were fixed and notified on 13th February, 2017 for the first time.
- (iii) Ceiling price of knee implants, which is one of the components under ‘Orthopaedic Implants’, was notified on 16th August, 2017.
- (iv) A cap on Trade Margin of 42 selected non-scheduled anti-cancer medicines was put under ‘Trade Margin Rationalization’ approach, which brought down prices of 526 brands of anti-cancer medicines.
- (v) During COVID-19, the price of Oxygen Concentrators, Pulse Oximeter, Blood Pressure Monitoring Machine, Nebulizer, Digital Thermometer and Glucometer were regulated under “Trade Margin Rationalisation” approach in June/July 2021.

Details of prices fixed or revised by NPPA are available on NPPA’s website (www.nppa.gov.in). NPPA monitors the prices of both scheduled and non-scheduled

formulations on an ongoing basis and takes action in accordance with the provisions of DPCO, 2013 against companies that are found overcharging consumers.

(b): The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) scheme has been launched with a view to make quality generic medicines available at affordable prices to all. As of 28.02.2026, a total of 18,646 Jan Aushadhi Kendras (JAKs) have been opened across the country under the scheme. JAKs are retail outlets selling medicines directly to the customers. JAKs serve about 15 lakh consumers daily. Further, an estimated amount of ₹ 23,000 Crore has been saved by common citizens of the country due to reduced out of pocket expenses under this Pariyojana in the last three years.

(c): JAKs are opened by inviting applications from individual entrepreneurs, non-governmental organisations, societies, trusts, firms, private companies, etc. Any individual having D. Pharma. or B. Pharma. qualification either herself/himself or any individual or organisation who has employed a person with such qualification as a pharmacist for obtaining drug licence from the State Licensing Authority concerned is eligible to open a Jan Aushadhi Kendra. Online applications stand invited from across the country, through the scheme's website (www.janaushadhi.gov.in) including from those willing to open JAK in District Hospital, Medical College and Community Health Centre.

Further, DoP from time-to-time requests State and Union Territory Governments and district administrations to create awareness about the scheme and to provide rent-free space for opening JAKs in government hospitals, community health centres and primary health centres.
