GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS
DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACEUTICALS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. **980**
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE **28TH JULY 2026**

Price regulation of essential medicines

980 Shri Rajeev Shukla:

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

(a) the number of medicines currently covered under the price control mechanism administered by National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority;
(b) whether Government has reviewed the impact of price regulation on the affordability and availability of essential medicines during the last three years;
(c) if so, the details and outcome of such review; and
(d) the measures taken by Government to prevent overpricing and ensure equitable access to life-saving and essential medicines for all citizens?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)

(a): Prices of drugs are regulated as per the provisions of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order 2013 (DPCO, 2013). As per extant provisions of DPCO, 2013, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) fixes the ceiling prices of the drugs included in the Schedule-I of DPCO, 2013 which is based on the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) published by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW). NLEM, 2022 contains 388 medicines, listed under 29 therapeutic categories. NPPA has fixed ceiling prices for 935 scheduled formulations as on 23.07.2026. 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 3,845 new drugs have been fixed by the NPPA till 23.07.2026. 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 may also fixes the prices of any drug under Para 19 of DPCO 2013 in public interest in extra-ordinary circumstances. Details of prices fixed or revised by NPPA are available on NPPA's website (www.nppa.gov.in).

(b) to (d): NPPA continuously reviews the affordability and availability of medicines. As and when required, Government invokes the provisions of DPCO, 2013 and makes required interventions to ensure affordability and availability of essential medicines.

To prevent overpricing, DPCO 2013 requires every manufacturer of a formulation to print the maximum retail price on the label of the container of such formulation. Further, no person is permitted to sell any formulation to any consumer at a price exceeding the price specified on the current price list or price indicated on the label of the container or the pack thereof, whichever is less. Moreover, 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, based on references received regarding overcharging from any source, including Price Monitoring and Resource Units set up in States, State Drugs Controllers, samples purchased from open market, reports from market database and complaints lodged through various grievance redress channels.

Government has taken various measures to improve the access of essential medicines at affordable rates to the common man which include the following:

(i) The Government has launched the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana scheme under which quality generic medicines is provided through more than 20,000 Janaushadhi Kendras at rates that are typically 50% to 80% cheaper than branded medicines.

(ii) Under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) of the Department of Health and Family Welfare, health assurance/insurance cover of ₹5 lakh per family per year is provided for secondary or tertiary care hospitalisation, including for medicines.

(iii) Under the Free Drugs Service Initiative of the National Health Mission, essential medicines list recommended under the Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS) are made available free of any charge at public health facilities ranging from Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to district hospitals across the country.

(iv) Under the Amrit (Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment) initiative of the Department of Health and Family Welfare, affordable medicines are provided for the treatment of cancer, cardiovascular and other diseases, implants, surgical disposables and other consumables etc., at an average discount of up to 50% on market rates through AMRIT Pharmacy stores set up in number of hospitals and healthcare institutions.

(v) Financial assistance is provided to poor patients belonging to families living below the poverty line, who suffer from major life-threatening diseases including cancer, under the umbrella scheme of Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi and the Health Minister's Discretionary Grant.

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