

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1014
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25th JULY, 2025

Prices of Life Saving Drugs

1014. Shri Murasoli S:

Will the Minister of **CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has considered reducing the prices of life-saving drugs in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the list of the medicines under consideration and the steps being taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS

(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)

(a) to (c): There is no categorisation of drugs as life-saving drugs. However, the Standing National Committee on Medicines, consisting of all stakeholders and experts, carefully evaluates the relative safety, efficacy, availability and affordability of medicines from each therapeutic class, consults all stakeholders and considers WHO's Essential Medicines List, drugs used in national health programmes, Indian Pharmacopoeia, National Formulary, etc., to recommend drugs for inclusion in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM). Based on the said recommendations, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare publishes NLEM, which is notified as Schedule-I to the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013 ("DPCO, 2013").

Currently, ceiling prices stand fixed for 930 scheduled formulations by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA). All manufacturers, importers and marketers of scheduled medicines are required to sell their products within the ceiling price (plus applicable local taxes). The average price reduction due to fixation or refixation of prices under NLEM, 2022 was about 17%, resulting in estimated annual savings of approximately ₹3,788 crore to patients. Earlier, in February 2017, ceiling prices of coronary stents were also fixed, resulting in estimated annual savings of about ₹11,600 crore to patients.

In addition, retail prices of "new drugs", *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, are also fixed by NPPA under DPCO, 2013. Retail prices of 3,482 such new drugs also stand fixed, and applicant manufacturers and marketing companies are required to sell these drugs within the said price.

Apart from the above, in respect of non-scheduled medicines, the following measures are in place under DPCO, 2013 to reduce prices:

- (i) Manufacturers are required to not increase the maximum retail price (MRP) of drugs launched by them by more than 10% during the preceding 12 months.

- (ii) In addition, NPPA has fixed the prices of a number of non-scheduled medicines, in public interest, as follows:
- (I) MRP of 22 diabetic and 84 cardiovascular non-scheduled medicines has been capped, resulting in estimated annual savings of about ₹350 crore to patients.
 - (II) Trade margin of 42 non-scheduled anti-cancer medicines have been capped, resulting in reduction in prices of about 526 brands of medicines by an average of about 50%, resulting in estimated annual savings of about ₹ 984 crore to patients.
 - (III) Ceiling prices of orthopaedic knee implants have been fixed, resulting in estimated annual savings of about ₹1,500 crore to patients.
 - (IV) The trade margins of oxygen concentrators, pulse oximeter, blood pressure monitoring machine, nebuliser, digital thermometer and glucometer were also capped in June/July 2021, resulting in estimated annual savings of about ₹1,000 crore to consumers.

The details of prices fixed by NPPA is available on its website (nppaindia.nic.in).

In addition, the following steps have been taken to make medicines available at affordable prices:

- (i) The Government has launched the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana scheme with the objective of making quality generic medicines available at affordable prices to all. Under the scheme, dedicated outlets known as Jan Aushadhi Kendras (JAKs) have been opened to provide quality generic medicines at prices that are typically 50% to 80% cheaper than leading branded medicines in the market. 16,912 JAKs have been opened across the country till 30.6.2025. 2,110 types of medicines and 315 surgicals, medical consumables and devices are covered under the product basket of the scheme, covering all major therapeutic groups, such as cardiovascular, anti-cancers, anti-diabetics, anti-infectives, anti-allergic and gastro-intestinal medicines and nutraceuticals. Janaushadhi medicines with MRP worth ₹7,700 crore have been sold till date, resulting in savings of about ₹38,000 crore to citizens in comparison to the maximum retail prices of corresponding branded medicines.
- (ii) Under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana 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. Over 41 crore persons have been issued PMJAY cards and coverage under the scheme includes medicines.
- (iii) The Free Drugs Service Initiative of the National Health Mission (NHM) under the Department of Health and Family Welfare, essential drugs are provided free of cost in public health facilities.
- (iv) Under the initiative Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) 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 a significant discount of up to 50% on market rates through AMRIT Pharmacy stores set up in a 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.
