

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. †3560
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 13TH MARCH 2026

Cost of Essential Cancer Drugs

†3560. **Dr. Anand Kumar:**

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note that essential cancer drugs like Paclitaxel are procured at a cost/purchase price of approximately Rs. 600 while their Maximum Retail Price is kept up to approximately Rs. 12,000, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether a similar excessive price gap has also been found in other chemotherapy drugs which patients have to take in multiple vials and repeated treatment cycles, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the concrete steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in coordination with the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) to curb such excessive trade margins and to make cancer treatment more accessible and affordable especially for patients of low-income group?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS

(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)

(a) to (c): The prices of drugs are regulated as per the provisions of Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO), 2013. 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 published by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. As per the extant provision of DPCO 2013, the ceiling prices of scheduled drugs are fixed on the basis of the market data and cost of drugs and gap between cost and MRP are not taken into consideration while fixing the ceiling prices. As on 9.3.2026, ceiling prices of 131 anti-cancer drugs are effective resulting in reduction of around 21% in the ceiling prices from the ceiling prices fixed under NLEM, 2015 and annual savings of around ₹294 crore to patients. All manufacturers have to sell their products within the ceiling price (plus applicable Goods and Service Tax) fixed by NPPA. Paclitaxel Injection 30mg/5ml and 100mg/16.7ml are scheduled formulations and accordingly, NPPA has fixed its ceiling price. The present applicable ceiling price is ₹219.19 per ml effective from 01.04.2025. All manufacturers have to sell their products within the ceiling price (plus applicable Goods and Service Tax) fixed by NPPA. Instances of overcharging are dealt with as per the provisions of DPCO, 2013

In addition, NPPA also fixes the retail price of new drugs as defined in para 2 (1)(u)

of DPCO, 2013. The retail price of a new drug is applicable to the applicant manufacturer and marketer, who are required to sell the new drug within the price notified by NPPA. As on 9.03.2026, NPPA has fixed 58 retail prices under the therapeutic category of Anti-Cancer drugs which includes 31 anti-cancer drugs, 26 anti-neoplastic drugs, and 01 immuno-suppressive drug. Further, in the case of non-scheduled anti-cancer formulations, manufacturers are required to not increase the maximum retail price (MRP) of such formulation by more than 10% of the MRP of that formulation during preceding 12 months. Also, in order to ensure the availability of drugs at affordable prices, NPPA in public interest capped the trade margin of 42 select non-scheduled anti-cancer medicines in 2019. This move reduced the prices of above 500 brands of anti-cancer medicines by an average of about 50%.

Access to the cancer treatment medicines are also extended through either free or highly subsidized treatment of Cancer for the poor in Government Hospitals; treatment of Cancers under Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY); making available quality generic medicines including those for cancer at affordable prices to all under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP); and setting up of Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) Pharmacy stores in some hospitals/institutions, that make available cancer drugs at a substantial discount vis-à-vis the MRP. In addition, government has also been regularly rationalizing the duty on anti-cancer drugs to help reduce their prices.
