

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. †4618
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 20TH MARCH 2026

Exorbitant Price of Life Saving Drugs

†4618. **Shri Narayan Tatu Rane:**

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

- (a) whether life saving and some other drugs are being sold at exorbitant prices in the country due to their shortage;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the percentage increase in the price of each medicine;
- (c) the steps taken to ensure that the price of the said drugs are kept within the range of affordability;
- (d) whether any criteria have been fixed to ensure minimum buffer stock of the said drugs in the country;
- (e) if so, the details thereof alongwith the estimated stock of the said drugs;
- (f) whether the Government has constituted/proposes to constitute any high-level committee to review the drug price control system; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS

(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)

(a) to (e): Presently, prices of drugs are regulated as per the provisions of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order 2013 (DPCO, 2013) based on the National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Policy, 2012. 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 and the retail price of new drugs as defined in para 2(1)(u) of DPCO, 2013. Further, in the case of non-scheduled 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. In addition, NPPA also fixes the prices of drugs under Para 19 of the DPCO, 2013 in case of extra-ordinary circumstances and in public interest. Instances of overcharging are dealt with as per the provisions of DPCO, 2013. Details of prices fixed or revised by NPPA are available on NPPA's website (www.nppa.gov.in).

No criteria have been fixed to ensure minimum buffer stock for the said drugs. NPPA monitors availability of drugs in the country and takes remedial measures whenever an issue of non-availability of any medicine is brought to its notice through various sources including State Drugs Controllers (SDCs), Pharma Jan Samadhan Portal, NPPA helpline and public grievance portals and individuals. In addition, Government has taken other 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 17,000 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.

(f) to (g): Review of DPCO, 2013 is a continuous process which is done periodically by the Department or as and when required to ensure that the provisions of DPCO, 2013 are enforced effectively so that the essential drugs are made accessible and available to the public at affordable price.
