



essential medicines

Prices of essential medicines cut by 30-50%

Drug price regulator National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) slashed the prices of around 33 essential medicines, bringing down their retail prices by 30-50%. These include anti-allergics used for common cold and cough, antibiotics and drugs used to treat ulcerative colitis, arthritis, psoriasis, gastroesophageal reflux disease (Gerd) and tuberculosis.

The move aims at reducing the prices of commonly used drugs for critical diseases by expanding the span of price regulation to cover 33 new drugs. While the regulator has brought 11 new drugs under price control, prices of 22 new drugs whose prices were already capped have been further reduced. The NPPA has so far capped prices of 627 drugs since April last year. The idea is to make treatment of critical diseases more affordable by bringing down the cost of medicines, which constitute a major part of the total health expenditure.

In rural India, almost 80% of the out-of-pocket expenditure is on medicines, whereas in urban areas it is around 75%. The new drugs brought under price control include cetirizine, omeprazole and cefixime. According to the regulator, prices of these medicines have been fixed on priority because these are commonly used and are new to the list.

Saving the Farmers From Mafia

The Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers, led by Shri Ananth Kumar, created a history last year by introducing Neem coated urea, which dramatically pushed down the price of fertilizers to a record low, besides preventing black marketers from selling the subsidised fertilizer to non-farmers or chemical factories.

The Neem-coating brought about such a transformation that it ended the scarcity of fertilizer in the Indian market once and for all.

The ministry has continued to work towards the objective of making available high quality medicines and medical devices to all people at an affordable price. The Ministry's every program aligns with the vision for the prime minister:

- Skill Building
- Make-in-India
- Digital India
- Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas



In the second week of February, the ministry pushed down the prices of coronary stents by 85 percent, placing a cap on the price rise. This is a big win for the common man who cannot afford procedures that use these stents. Not only did he halve the prices for stents, he also worked with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to ensure that hospitals do not over-charge on other services.

This price reduction will force suppliers to source stents within the country, bolstering local industries manufacturing stents. In other words, it is promoting Make-in-India concept

In the second week of February, Bangalore hosted a 3-day annual Pharma Kumbh -- India Pharma 2017 & India Medical Device 2017, with the theme the event being shaping the future of Indian pharma.

This expo saw the industry discuss and debate on the future development of Indian Pharmaceutical industry, its demands and challenges. Leaders from all major organisations participated enthusiastically. The Pharma CEO round-table saw active debate on the opportunities and issues facing the industry.

Shri Ananth Kumar inaugurated the conference and urged the industry to work towards providing responsible, affordable and quality healthcare to all-citizens.

At the round-table, he discussed with industry leaders as to how they can address the issues facing

the sector and what kind of assistance they expect from the government.

The expo drew manufacturers, marketers and regulators from around the world. For the 2nd year in succession, Karnataka has been the host state, with Chattisgarh the partner state.

While India is at the forefront of pharmaceutical research, there is a huge potential for improving the country's ability in producing bulk drugs (active pharmaceutical ingredients) and medical devices. Prime Minister Modi's make-in-India program aides the sector's effort to realize its goal.

A PharmaPark will be set up with an improved scheme for Pharma and Medical Device Industrial Parks.

Earlier, at the curtain raiser for these expos in late January, the Hon'ble Minister remarked that the Pharma industry is a sunrise industry in India because it is worth about \$30 billion and is expected to touch \$55 billion by 2020. The pharma market in India is the 3rd largest in the world by volume, producing one in every five medicines consumed across the world. The vision of the Department of Pharma is to create a sense of 'security' in terms of health among all citizens by making healthcare affordable and accessible to everyone regardless of their social and economic wellbeing. Authenticity, Affordability and Accessibility are its three main formulas.

In the fourth week of January, foundation stones were laid for the construction of National Institute of Pharmaceuticals Education and Research (NIPER) in Jhalawar, Rajasthan, with the state government allotting 100 acres of land for setting up of the campus.

Speaking at the occasion, Ananth Kumar disclosed his department's plan to build a single super phosphate (SSP) fertilizer plant in the district of Chittorgarh, saying that the plant will help supply generic medicines through Annapurna bhandars at affordable price.

At the event, he also appreciated Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje for the good governance and the ongoing developmental activities. The Rajshree Yojna initiated by the state government is helping the girl students tremendously.

The minister also inaugurated an "Annapurna Rasoi" where the people will get food for just Rs 5.

Union Minister Ananth Kumar, Prof TV Ramachandra, Tejaswini Ananth Kumar, at the launch of Sujalaam- Water for Bengaluru programme launched by Adamyta Chetana at Gavipuram in Bengaluru on recently.

