

Prices of more life-saving drugs may be cut as NPPA moves new list

Himani Chandna Gurtoo

himani.chandna@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The government is likely to extend its price control move to more drugs.

The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority, India's drug price regulator, is set to propose a new list of drugs to be added to the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM).

If accepted, the proposal would bring down the cost of these drugs by 10% to 80%. "There are about 225 medicines that are essential in nature but are left out of the ambit of NLEM that control prices of drugs," Injeti Srinivas, chairman, NPPA told HT. "The gov-

'SUPREME COURT, IN ITS RULING HAS DIRECTED THAT NO ESSENTIAL, LIFE SAVING DRUG SHOULD GO OUT AMBIT OF PRICE CONTROL'

ernment, through revision of NLEM, will consciously factor the pricing issues."

Last year, the government had raised the number of drugs that are subject to price controls to 348 from the previous 74. "If we consider sale of drug as an indicator of essentiality, there are top 300 brands (as per market value of sales), while only 75 of

those are under price control," Srinivas said.

On Monday, NPPA capped the price of 108 non-scheduled formulation packs of popular anti-diabetic and cardiovascular medicines. This included drugs were not listed in NLEM.

The industry has called this a retrograde move as it would hit the growth of the pharma industry, NPPA disagrees. "Supreme Court, in its ruling has directed that no essential, life saving drug should go out ambit of price control," said Srinivas. "Currently, we are looking at essential but now we need to bring life saving drugs under price control too. The issue of two terminologies should be flagged."

Recd.