

## Online sale of medicines: 6,800 chemists join protest

*New Delhi, 14 October:* Around 6,800 chemists across Delhi and adjoining areas remained shut as druggists today joined the nationwide strike called by the All India Organization of Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD) demanding action from the Central government against "illegal" online sale of medicine.

Opposing the Central government's move to regularise online sale of medicines, the AIOCD, which has eight lakh members today protested. "Over 90 per cent of the chemist shops across the country today shut. However we allowed 10 per cent of them to remain open to avoid any difficulty to patients," said AIOCD president J S Shinde. The association has also warned of an indefinite strike if the government failed to address the issue within a week.

"The move towards regularising the sale of medicines through internet would increase the risk of adverse drug reaction and give an opening for the entry of low-

quality, mis-branded and spurious products. This is estimated to hit eight lakh chemists and about 80 lakh workers and their families," he added. Shinde said the AIOCD had earlier notified the government authorities, including ministries and departments concerned as well as the central drug control office, about e-pharmacies "not following the law in accordance with the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940" but haven't received any response from them yet. We have met Drug Controller of India G N Singh and submitted a memorandum to him, he said. The association's representatives have also been to the Chemicals and Fertilizers Ministry. "We have even submitted a memorandum on this issue to the Prime Minister's Office, (Health Minister) J P Nadda and chief ministers of all states. And a copy has been sent to all the members of Parliament, both in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha but no one has responded," he said.

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