

Pharmacists threaten strike against govt order

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NEW DELHI, DHNS: Chemists and pharmacists on Thursday threatened to launch a nationwide strike against a new government order, which makes it mandatory to maintain a separate sale-register for several hundred medicines, ranging from sleeping pills to antibiotic and anti-tuberculosis drugs.

While pharmacists claimed it was impractical to maintain such a register, industry insiders said the order was not only difficult to implement with over 6,00,000 retail shops across the country, but would also fail to meet its objective of eliminating rampant drug abuse.

As per the order that came into effect on March 1, 2014,

retail shop owners have to maintain a register while selling drugs containing one of the 46 molecules identified by the government. These drugs were categorised under a new schedule called H-1.

The register must record the name and address of the doctors, name of the patient, besides the name of the drug and quantity supplied.

"This is impractical because of the patient pressure at the shops. We receive 300-400 prescriptions every day and maintaining a manual register would be cumbersome and time consuming," said Kailash Gupta, president of the All India Chemists and Distributors Federation.

Maintaining such a record



will prove to be particularly difficult for government hospitals or CGHS clinics, where prescriptions make no mention of the names of prescribing doctors.

The register, however, need not have a copy of the prescription. Further, prescriptions do not have to be stamped once the drug is sold by a chemist.

would be duplication of efforts, as a large number of shops use software to tender bills, making prescription drugs a new tool for harassment in the hands of inspectors.

"But there is no law to make the use of computers mandatory in medical shops," pointed out Gulhati.

The government came out with the notification on August 30 in an attempt to tackle the issue of drug resistance and stop the misuse of certain medicines as intoxicants.

Chemists and distributors have planned a sit-in in the capital on March 24, which will see the participation of pharmacists from other states. As of now, however, medical shops will not go on strike.

Regulatory / Govt.