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Indian companies to sign generic licensing deal for \$1000-a-day drug

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MUMBAI

Cipla Ltd, Strides Arcolab Ltd, Mylan Laboratories Ltd and Emcure Pharmaceuticals Ltd are among six generic drug makers that are likely to sign licensing deals with Gilead Sciences Inc. to sell a low-cost version of its \$1000-a-day Hepatitis C drug Sovaldi.

The licensing agreements, expected to be announced on Monday, will allow the generic drug companies to make and sell copies of the expensive pill for low- and middle-income countries at lower prices, according to three people familiar with the development.

By signing the licensing agreements with generic drug makers, Gilead is responding to criticism from governments and advocacy groups about the high pricing of the drug that has put it beyond the reach of most patients, particularly those in developing nations. The once-a-day pill used in combination with other antivirals is, however, the most effective therapy to counter Hepatitis C, which kills about 350,000 people a year globally.

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