

former Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) Plant site at Bhopal, constituted a Task Force *vide* Order dated 30th March, 2005 for implementation of toxic waste removal/destruction. *Vide* order dated 13th May, 2005, the High Court also considered a roadmap submitted by the Government of Madhya Pradesh, prepared in consultation with the Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board, for environmental remediation of the former UCIL plant site. The Task Force has been monitoring the implementation of the roadmap, as per the Orders/directions issued by the High Court and in compliance thereof, 40 MT of Lime Sludge was disposed of at the Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility (TSDF) at Pithampur, near Indore in the last week of June, 2008. The High Court had directed *vide* Orders dated 15th July, 2008 and 16th December, 2008, that 350 MT of other toxic wastes will be transported to Ankleshwar for incineration in the incinerator of M/s. Bharuch Enviro Infrastructure Limited, at Ankleshwar, Gujarat. However, the Government of Gujarat has filed Special Leave Petitions in the Supreme Court against these orders of the High Court of Madhya Pradesh. The matter is *sub-judice*.

Awareness about drug pricing and availability

159. SHRI N.K. SINGH:

SHRI ISHWAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority has recently started a nationwide consumer campaign to create awareness about drug pricing and the availability of low cost off label drugs;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the price differentiate between generic and branded drugs have increased manifold and doctors are mostly prescribing branded drugs in nexus with the manufacturers; and

(d) if so, the steps Government propose to take to ensure that the manufacturers of branded drugs do not sell drugs at higher prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SRIKANT JENA): (a) and (b) No nation-wide consumer campaign to create awareness about drug pricing and the availability of low cost off label drugs have recently been started by NPPA. However, apart from dissemination of information through the NPPA website efforts are being made to create consumer awareness with the help of Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Department of Pharmaceuticals through advertisements in the electronic and print media.

(c) and (d) The prices of branded drugs are generally found to be high as compared to generic drugs. Government is committed to promote the use of generic medicines.

There were some reports in the newspaper in the recent past regarding promotional expenses being made by pharma companies. The reports suggest that there are some unethical

marketing practices being followed by certain pharma companies. Keeping in view the seriousness of the allegations made in the media report, this Department felt the need to take up the matter in the interest of consumers/patients as such promotional expenses as stated to be extended to doctors has direct implications on the pricing of drugs and its affordability. After discussing the issue with the major Pharma Associations/Industry this Department has persuaded them to have code of marketing ethics.

In order to make available unbranded quality generic drugs at affordable prices, this department has launched Generic Drug Campaign by opening Jan Aushadhi Generic Drug Stores with the cooperation of State Governments and Pharma CPSUs. The generic medicines available in these stores will be cheaper as compared to the branded drugs available in the market.

Life saving medicines

160. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:

SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that taxes and tariffs are contributing significantly towards raising the prices of life saving medicines;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken to ensure that economically weaker segments are able to purchase life-saving medicines so that poor patients' lives are saved; and

(c) what are the details of the reduction in taxes, tariffs, etc. to keep the life-saving medicines within the reach of poor patients, during 2006, 2007 and 2008?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SRIKANT JENA): (a) Yes, Madam.

(b) The Drug Policy as amended from time to time envisages that quality medicines at reasonable price are made available to the masses. This Department has started 'Janaushadhi' programme where generic drugs are available at a price cheaper than their branded version.

(c) In 2006 Union Budget, a concessional basic duty @ 5% were provided on 10 specified anti-AIDS; 14 specified anti-cancer and 4 specified life saving drugs including their bulk drugs. These drugs were also exempted from countervailing duty by way of excise duty exemption. In 2007 Union Budget, there was no change in duty structure of drugs. In 2008, Union Budget five specified life saving drugs including their bulk drugs and one specified anti-cancer diagnostic kit, were provided a concessional 5% basic custom duty with nil countervailing duty by way of excise duty exemption. Further one anti-AIDS drug and the bulk drugs for the manufacturer of the said drug were also fully exempted from excise duty. In same