

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

year, the central excise duty on pharmaceutical products including drugs/medicines were reduced from 16% to 8%. Thereafter, the central excise duty on drugs/medicines was further reduced from 8% to 4% with effect from 7th December, 2008.

Vaccine for Swine Flu

161. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has taken initiatives to develop vaccine injection or medicine to prevent/cure Swine Flu;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SRIKANT JENA): (a) to (c) The Directorate General of Health Services has issued the Test License to following firms for the import of strains in respect of Swine Flue for the purpose of examination, test or analysis:

(i) M/s Serum Institute of India Limited, Pune

(ii) M/s Panacea Biotec, New Delhi

(iii) M/s Bharat Biotech International Limited, Hyderabad.

Delay in finalization of National Pharmaceutical policy

162. MS. MABEL REBELLO:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

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

(a) whether Parliamentary Standing Committee has expressed concern over delay in finalizing drug policy;

(b) whether policy aims to bring 354 essential medicines in price control;

(c) whether panel has pointed out that no headway has been made in finalization of national pharmaceutical policy and have pointed out that the policy is pending with GoMs on pharmaceutical policy for almost two years;

(d) whether he has sought Prime Minister's intervention to clear the policy; and

(e) what are the other main recommendations made by the Committee for policy and how many of its recommendations have so far been considered and accepted?

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

(b) The Supreme Court *vide* its interim order dated 10.3.2003 in SLP (C) No.3668/2003 directed the Government, *Inter alia*, to "consider and formulate appropriate criterion for ensuring