

the “What’s New” link of website of NPPA (www.nppaindia.nic.in). The violation of ceiling prices was detected in very few cases and appropriate action has been taken as per provisions laid down in DPCO, 2013.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The bulk procurement prices through tenders by a Government agency or by a private organization will always be lower than the retail market prices. Pharmaceutical companies involved in the supply of medicines under bulk procurement always quote lower prices in the tenders on account of factors such as less risk or uncertainty in the market; difference in pack size; nil expenses incurred on supply chain, marketing, promotion and minimized transportation and logistics costs as compared with supply of medicines through the retail channel.

Demand and supply of urea

1650. SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that there is a shortfall of urea in the country;
- (b) if so, the details of gap between demand and supply of urea in the country;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that huge quantity of natural gas is available in Assam at cheap rate; and
- (d) if so, whether Government proposes to set up a new fertilizer plant at Namrup under Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Ltd. to narrow the gap between demand and supply of urea in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The availability of urea in the country during the last three years and current year (upto 06.03.2018) against the sales is indicated in the table below:—

Year	Availability	Sales
2014-15	31042.07	30873.89
2015-16	32899.57	31968.05
2016-17	30907.62	29607.20
2017-18 (as on 06.03.2018)	29315.37	28479.36

(Figures in 000MT)

It can be seen from the table above that there is no shortfall of urea in the country.

(c) Government of India has notified 'New Domestic Natural Gas Pricing Guidelines 2014' in October, 2014. This pricing mechanism is formula based and has been worked out considering the volumes and prices prevailing at major international markets such as Henry Hub (USA), National Balancing Point (UK), Alberta (Canada) and Russia. The formula has been finalized considering the requirements of producing and consuming sectors, and has tried to make a fine balance between their interests. The prices are notified after every six months in accordance with said guidelines. The current price of natural gas in line with these guidelines is USD 2.89/mmbtu (on gross calorific value) effective 01.10.2017. However, as per policy, in the North Eastern Region (NER), Natural Gas is sold to the Power and Fertilizers customers at a subsidised price which is 60% of the prevailing price of the natural gas supplied by ONGC/OIL and balance 40% of the price is reimbursed by the Government as subsidy.

(d) The Union Cabinet in its meeting held on 21.5.2015 had approved setting up of a brown field ammonia urea complex of 8.645 LMPTA capacity at the existing location of Brahamaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Limited (BVFCL) Namrup through open bidding of 52% equity of the project on PPP mode, which did not materialize due to non-receipt of any proposal from the investors. Department of Fertilizers has now decided to set up the project through PSU route with equity participation of 52% by M/s. Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Limited, 26% by M/s Oil India Limited and 11% each by Brahamaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Limited and Government of Assam.

Medicines for patients at inflated prices

1651. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that a number of reputed pharmaceutical companies have been selling life-saving medicines to hospitals and stockist way below MRP while the patients have to pay as high as nine times of the price;

(b) whether it is also a fact that as per statements of All India Drug Action Network which appeared in a leading newspaper dated 14 July, 2017, 25 per cent increase in the price of medicines is earmarked for doctors, bureaucrats and politicians; and

(c) if so, the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI MANSUKH L. MANDAVIYA): (a) Yes Sir, Government is aware that some pharmaceutical companies have been selling medicines to hospitals and stockists way below Maximum Retail Price (MRP) and billed to patients at MRP.