

NPPA says it is going after profiteering, not profit

By **Simi Kuriakose** in New Delhi

IN AN evening session at the 5th edition of Mail Today's Health Care Summit, Shubhra Singh (IAS), Chairperson, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), gave us an insight into the government regulatory agency through an interactive AV, and stated, "We are the national regulator, which assures availability of affordable medicines to the common man."

When the moderator asked Singh to shed some light on other drugs whose prices have been reduced, she added, "Drugs are an essential commodity under The Essential Commodities Act. The government is committed to providing these life-saving drugs at reasonable prices."

Discussing cost reduction for essential medicines, stents, knee implants and more recently anti-cancer drugs, she added, "We have given a saving of ₹12,500 cr per annum to the consumers."

Talking about their pricing system, Singh added, "By putting in place a system of market averages and giving retailer margins, we come to a ceiling price, which gives a substantial saving to the consumers."

She also discussed how NPPA bridges the gap between the pharma industry and the government, "We try and maintain between the industry and consumers. Profit is given, something that can be rightly asked for. But it is profiteering that we come down heavily upon. Unless we have a well flourishing pharma, with varied types of drugs, investing in R&D, the consumer will not have an advantage."

Mentioning a pilot programme on anti-cancer medicines in March, she stated, "I am happy to share that the prices came down, upto 90%. So a drug which was available at ₹25,000 came to ₹2,500. Another drug which was available at ₹10,000 came down to ₹900. These were fantastic savings."

Finally, on R&D, Singh said, "We have not done something which is not being practiced anywhere. We are just trying to give the consumer the best of the world at that price."



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We try to maintain a balance between the industry & consumers. Unless we have a well flourishing pharma, the consumer will not have an advantage.



—**SHUBHRA SINGH** (IAS),
CHAIRPERSON, NATIONAL
PHARMACEUTICAL
PRICING AUTHORITY

