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Title: Need to ensure availability of essential and life-saving drugs at affordable prices.

DR. RATNA DE (NAG) (HOOGHLY): For sometime now, one could see manifold increase in prices of essential and life-saving drugs. This has made the life of poor patients who are already living hand to mouth miserable. It has come to the notice that the Government has curbed the powers of National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) with the result it has led to hike in the prices of drugs in the market. This has hit the common man very hard. Poor are facing dreaded diseases like AIDS, T.B, cancer and heart disease and incidentally the prices for these drugs have gone up. For example, the price of drugs of cancer which was sold at Rs. 5,000 earlier has gone up . This is not a case in isolation. If we take the case of cardiac treatment, the treatment amount has reached Rs 1,615 which was just Rs. 92 prior to curbing the power of NPPA. This act cannot be justified. Poor are facing the brunt of it. It is estimated that in our country we have 4 crore diabetic patients, 4.7 crore cardiac patients, 22 lakh T.B. patients and 11 lakh cancer patients. Therefore, there is a need for the Government to ponder over it and ensure that hike in the prices of these medicines to cure these diseases should be withdrawn without any further delay.