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Title: Need to take stringent action against pharma companies selling medicines at rates higher than the ceiling fixed by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority.

SHRI M.I. SHANAVAS (WAYANAD): The Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) through its legislative order has made it clear that drug companies will not be allowed to sell old stocks of essential medicines, which are under price control, at prices higher than the ceiling set by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA). According to the new drug price control order (DPCO) around 151 drugs including the commonly used painkiller paracetamol, antibiotic azithromycin and antidiabetic insulins should have been available at the rates fixed by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) since July 29 this year, when the 45-day period from the day of notification of the ceiling price expired. However, there has been a complete disregard of this order and many instances of drugs being made artificially and sold at the old rate by pharmaceutical retailers across the country had come to the notice. This move by many retailers is affecting patients who found relief in the government's new order reducing the prices of drugs. Many companies have also maintained a position that only 15-20% of the 151 medicines with relabelled packs have reached the markets. I would request the Government to take strict legal action against the retailers who are creating artificial scarcity and attempting to neglect the Government's order and would further request the Government to ensure that a dedicated vigilance wing be formed to conduct random checks at retailers as well as stockists who indulge in such practices, denying the rights of patients for availing medicines at reduced rates. I would further request the Government to speed up the process by NPPA to recover over Rs. 2500 crore from pharma companies as fine for selling drugs at rates higher than the ceiling fixed by the regulator.