

## Affordability doesn't make Indian drugs spurious says Azad

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The union health minister for health and family welfare, Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad has stated that India exports medicines to about 210 countries and vaccines to about 150 countries in the world. These medicines while being affordable are as effective as drugs manufactured in the developing countries, he mentioned.

The health minister further said that being affordable should not mean that they are 'cheap and spurious'. "Efficacy of the Indian drugs should not be judged on the basis of their cost as the input cost in India is much less than that in the developing countries due to the less expensive human resources. The developing countries such as India who have a growing pharma industry should be allowed to grow," said Mr Azad who spoke at the agreement signing event between USFDA and health ministry at New Delhi on February 10, 2014.

The minister highlighted that India has taken several measures to strengthen the regulatory mechanisms in terms of capacity building, strengthening laboratories and bringing enhanced transparency through its laws and legislations.

Azad also stated that stringent punishment up to life imprisonment is prescribed for those involved in manufacturing or selling of spurious drugs. Special courts have been set up for speedy trials of those involved in such crimes. "Moreover, 16 out of 28 states in country have special courts for speedy trials. The Indian government has also framed rules for compensation due to death in clinical trials", he said.