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Cancer drugs included in essential medicines list

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In its meeting held on November 22, 2012, the group of ministers (GoM) approved the inclusion of anti-cancer drugs in National Pharmaceutical Pricing Policy, 2012 (NPPP-2012), with certain modifications. Further action to notify NPPP-2012 has been undertaken accordingly.

The Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilizers, Mr Srikant Kumar Jena, recently revealed in the parliament that, as per the orders of the Controller of Patents, Mumbai, compulsory license has been granted to Natco Pharma for manufacture of an anti-cancer drug "NEXAVAR". Natco Pharma is required to sell this drug at a price not exceeding Rs8,880 for a pack of 120 tablets, required for a month's treatment which was earlier being sold by Bayer Corporation at Rs2,80,428 for one month treatment.

Besides formulating NPPP-2012, the Indian patents act, as amended in 2005 contains provisions for issue of compulsory license for patented drugs. The department of industrial policy and promotion (DIPP) had informed that so far one compulsory license has been granted by the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks to a drug manufacturing company, since the amendment of the Patents Act in 2005 for an application filed under Section 84 of the Patents Act.