

CRACKING THE WHIP - Soon, a portal for med grievances

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A dedicated web-based redress mechanism has been set up for consumers facing shortage of medicines or being overcharged by pharmacists. `Pharma Jan Samadhan' promises response within 48 hours of a complaint. A consumer can lodge a complaint along with the medical bill if they are overcharged for medicines or can inform the government directly in case of shortage of medicines.

Beginning with a web facility, the government plans to launch a mobile application for the same once it is equipped with a database.

The move, initiated by the department of pharma under the ministry of chemicals & fertilizers, is in line with the government's e-governance initiatives. "The National Pharma Pricing Authority (NPPA) has been searching for a weapon against black marketing and spurious medicines, and this portal will help them in that endeavour," Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers Ananth Kumar said. He emphasized the need for pharma literacy in the country, especially at the end-user level. NPPA, which regulates prices as well as availability of medicines, has been struggling to monitor markets, especially in rural and distant villages. Also, since the pharma industry is extremely fragmented, absence of a proper data base makes it difficult for the regulator to keep a tab on price movements in the market.