

Govt set to put wheels on Jan Aushadhi scheme

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NEW DELHI: Soon, you may get to buy 549 low-cost drugs supplied by the government right in your neighbourhood: the government is planning to launch its generic drugs outlets, Jan Aushadhi, on vans too.

"Mumbai and Varanasi will see mobile vans selling generic drugs by October or by the end of this year" said Hansraj Gangaram Ahir, minister of state for chemicals and

fertilisers, told *HT*. "By next year, we will roll out this concept into remote areas as well as to areas where buying real estate (for housing outlets) is an issue".

Jan Aushadhi drugs are likely to cost between 50% and as much as 95% less than their private branded counterparts, as per government estimates. Medicines selected for the scheme span six categories including cardiovascular, diabetes, respiratory and antibiotics.

The 'mobile Jan Aushadhi'

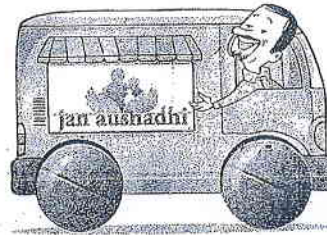


ILLUSTRATION: ABHIMANYU SINHA

scheme is now set to launch by October after missing the previous deadline of June 15. Unhappy with the sluggishness, the Prime Minister's Office is pushing the scheme,

and the ministry has raised its target to 70,000 outlets over a decade, against the conservative estimate of 3,000 outlets earlier.

"PMO wants Jan Aushadhi to become another flagship project like JanDhan and financial inclusion ... we may relaunch the scheme in October," said Ahir.

The Jan Aushadhi scheme was launched by UPA government in 2008, but did not take off due to poor supply chain management.

Jan Aushadhi.