Kerala Sets Up Drug Price Monitor

Kerala has become the **first State** to set up a **Price Monitoring and Research Unit (PMRU)** to track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the **Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO).**

Composition

- PMRU will be registered as a society with following composition:
    - **State Health Secretary (Chairman)**
    - **Drugs Controller (Member secretary)**
    - State government representative (Member)
    - Representatives of private pharmaceutical companies (Members)
    - Representative from consumer rights protection fora (Member)
- The society would also have an executive committee headed by the Drugs Controller.

Background

- This comes more than five years after the **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) proposed** such a system for the States and the Union Territories.
- The suggestion to set up PMRUs was made against the backdrop of the lack of a field-level link between the NPPA and the State Drugs Controllers and State Drug Inspectors to monitor drug prices.

Objective

- The PMRU will work to develop synergy between the **central and state authorities.**
- It will provide **technical help to the State Drug Controllers** and the NPPA to monitor notified prices of medicines.
- Detect **violation** of the provisions of the **DPCO.**
- Look at **price compliance.**
- To collect test samples of medicines, and collect and compile market-based data of scheduled as well as non-scheduled formulations.

National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority

- NPPA is an organization under **Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers** which was **set up in 1997** to revise the prices of controlled bulk drugs and formulations and to enforce prices and availability of the medicines in the country, under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO), 1995.
- The prices are **now fixed/revised** under **Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO), 2013.**
- It also monitors the prices of decontrolled drugs in order to keep them at reasonable levels.