

# Biocon launches generic version of Hepatitis C drug

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bengaluru:** Biopharmaceutical company Biocon on Thursday said it launched a generic version of Gilead Sciences' Hepatitis C drug, Harvoni, in India.

Shares of India's largest biotechnology company rose 6.5% to Rs 513.20 on the news, to touch a 52-week high. It closed at Rs 507.55 on Thursday on the BSE. The medication, CIMIVIR-L, is a fixed dose combination of Ledipasvir 90mg and Sofosbuvir 400mg, and an improved version of Gilead's drug Sovaldi.

Around 25% of the 18 million Hepatitis C virus patients in the country are indicated for Hepatitis C genotype 1. About 150 million people in the world live with chronic Hepatitis C infection, most of them in low and middle-income countries.

"The introduction of CIMIVIR-L will strengthen Biocon's current portfolio of virology products. It furthers our commitment to offer affordable therapy for unmet patient needs in debilitating and life-threatening conditions," Bio-



Biocon CMD Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw

con marketing president Ravi Limaye said in a statement.

CIMI-VIR-L, which is a once-a-day oral therapy,

will be made available to patients in India at a fraction of the global cost, Biocon said, though it did not specify the pricing.

Natco Pharma, which has received a license from Gilead to sell a generic version of the drug in India, sells a bottle of 28 tablets at about Rs 20,000. Gilead's Sovaldi is a far more effective and better-tolerated treatment than older injection products, but the cost is huge. A 12-week therapy costs \$94.50 in the US, which makes it unaffordable to many.

The Drugs Controller General of India recently approved the sale of Sofosbuvir-Ledipasvir combination, which is being manufactured in India under a license from Gilead, Biocon said.