



## TAX RELIEF

WITH A number of cases of Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) patients seeking financial assistance to get the expensive Zolgensma drug, lawmakers are approaching the Union government for help. They point out that the SMA medicine, which is not available in India, costs Rs 18 crore, of which 23% is import duty and 12% is GST, which amounts to around Rs 6.5 crore. When Ernakulam MP Hibi Eden (*in picture*) approached Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya for tax exemption for the drug, the ministers promised that the Centre can give exemption to particular cases. Although a complete duty and tax exemption to the drug import is not possible without a policy decision — which has to be taken at the GST Council — SMA patients can get the duty waived if MPs bring the cases to the Centre's notice.

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