1. **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority slashes stent prices by up to 85% - The Times of India**

The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority on Monday fixed the ceiling price of drug eluting stents (DES) and bioresorbable stents at Rs 30,000 and that of bare metal stents at Rs 7,500. The prices will be effective from notification on February 14. This comes as a huge relief to lakhs of patients who have to undergo coronary angioplasty to insert stents to open up clogged arteries. Over six lakh stents were estimated to have been used in angioplasties in India in 2016. The cost of a drug eluting stent currently ranges between Rs 24,000 and Rs 1.5 lakh and that of a bioresorbable stent is Rs 1.7 lakh to Rs 2 lakh. Over 95% of stents used in India are drug eluting. According to data submitted by stent companies to the NPPA, the average manufacturing cost of a DES for a domestic company is about Rs 8,000 and prices of imported DES start at about Rs 5,000. The NPPA also revealed that a stent could cost the patient over ten times by the time it moved from the manufacturer to the patient.

2. **Maintaining a tricky balance on IPR – Mint**

In 2014, then US President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Narendra Modi set the target of boosting Indo-US trade to half-a-trillion dollars. That is an ambitious goal, the upward trajectory of bilateral trade notwithstanding. From $12 billion when Bill Clinton and Atal Bihari Vajpayee reset relations between India and the US at the turn of the millennium, bilateral trade today stands at a little over $100 billion. But quintupling that figure will take some doing. It will involve dealing with several flashpoints. And the fifth edition of the US Chamber of Commerce's annual global intellectual property index, ranking India 43rd out of 45 countries examined, points to one of the most persistent. The weakness of India's intellectual property rights (IPR) regime gives cause for legitimate complaint. There are signs that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government means to address this. Its national intellectual property rights policy, released last year, is a robust statement of intent. It's the reason for India's marginal improvement in the US chamber of commerce IP index from 7.05 out of 35 last year to 8.75 this year. But the issue is more nuanced than the chamber would have it. Filling the admittedly large gaps in India's IPR regime must be balanced with Indian trade and public interest considerations—areas where Washington has, unsurprisingly, tried to impose standards that go above and beyond those mandated by the World Trade Organization (WTO).

3. **PM Narendra Modi's Make-in-India is facing the IPR drag – The Financial Express**

Thanks to the pre-and post-grant oppositions, it is an open secret how difficult and cumbersome it is to get patents in India. Even the most recent 2016 data indicates that as much as 98% of patents granted in India in 2015 were for applications over five years old and in one case, it was granted

after 19 years of the filing of an application. If getting patents are so difficult, protecting them and copyrights in the country is also not that easy. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the IP index of the US Chamber of Commerce's Global Intellectual Property Center, India continues at the bottom for the last five years—in the latest round, it is 43rd, ahead of just Venezuela and Pakistan, among 45 countries led by the US, UK, Germany and Japan in that order, holding 90% of the world GDP, covered on the basis of their IP environment-related to patents, trademarks, copyright, trade secrets, enforcement, and international treaties. The problem is that even the much-awaited National Intellectual Property Rights policy, released in May last year by the government, has failed to change the situation much. While it talks of the need for better enforcement of IP rights and strengthening the administrative capacities to take care of delays, it has dismissed the need for the required legislative reforms in the area, specifically for protecting the patent rights.

4. **Medical varsity for research in AYUSH – The Hindu**

The Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR Medical University has signed an agreement with the Central Council for Research in Siddha for research and clinical trial. Under the agreement, the University would allow postgraduates and doctoral research candidates to use the medical university's laboratories for research activities in Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Homoeopathy and Yoga departments. The University launched a week-long orientation and training programme on siddha for doctors other than those practising under Ayush. The institution would allow PGs and doctoral research scholars to use the clinical facilities for drug development besides sharing its library facilities. The University had recently signed an agreement signed with the National Institute of Siddha to promote collaborative academic and clinical research among doctors and non-medical fraternity, officials said.

5. **Eye on blueprint for robust public health system – The Financial Express**

Policymakers and key opinion leaders in India's public healthcare sector reconvened on the second day of Healthcare Sabha 2017, held at Novotel in Visakhapatnam, to continue the knowledge exchange with an aim to address the dominant challenges in the country's public health system. Sunil Sharma, joint secretary, Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY), ministry of health & family welfare, gave a great start to the second day of Healthcare Sabha 2017 with an insightful keynote address wherein he reiterated that availability, affordability and reliability are the cornerstones of any successful public health system. He also gave an overview on various government measures to facilitate a robust healthcare system which would effectively serve all the citizens of the country. In the next session, Angshuman Sarkar, principal consultant, ThoughtWorks Technologies, spoke on creating an integrated health ecosystem, empowered by technology. He put forth several ideas to demonstrate how technological advances can generate significant positive outcomes in health. Sarkar also drew attention towards the myriad solutions provided by his organisation to strengthen the public health system. The same theme was carried forward by subsequent speakers, Dilip Bhosale, head marketing, India, and Pranav Shah, head business development, IT India, Agfa Healthcare who urged the public healthcare fraternity to join the digital revolution to attain the goal of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Thereafter, in a very interesting session by A Velumani, founder, CEO and MD, Thyrocare, he shared the story of his rise from a PSU scientist to a corporate leader without losing the values of social good.

6. **Commerce ministry to device action plan to reduce dependence on China for API imports – Pharmabiz.com**

The Union commerce ministry is set to device an action plan to reduce dependence on China for import of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) by Indian pharmaceutical firms. As part of this, a preliminary meeting chaired by Sudhansu Pandey, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, sought suggestions and ideas to device a strategic planning from all the stakeholders of pharmaceutical industry, research institutes and bulk drug manufacturing association. "Recent meeting held by Commerce Ministry was attended by Director, Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT), chairman of Bulk Drugs Manufacturers Association (BDMA) and Pharmexcil to discuss on the issue of

overdependence on China for import of APIs. We have submitted our views about the pharma industry. The ministry has sought more information about Key Starting Materials (KSMs) and APIs being imported by the member companies from China and other countries," informed Uday Bhaskar, Director General of Pharmexcil. Earlier in 2015, the government of India had declared Year 2015 as the "Year of Active pharmaceutical Ingredients' and promised to come out with a strategic plan to encourage more domestic players to manufacture APIs in India at affordable rates rather than depending on China for sourcing cheaper APIs. However, after that announcement there was no concrete steps from the government's end to transform the promise into ground level actions.

7. **Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance demands exclusion of India from USTR Priority Watch List – Pharmabiz.com**

In a move aimed at removal of India from the USTR Priority Watch List, Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA) has filed its submission to the USTR for 2017 Special 301 Review citing in support several actions taken by the government for improving the IPR environment and enforcement. Priority Watch List comprises countries which have lenient patent laws affecting interests of the US medicine manufacturers. Last year USTR's Special 301 Review, which is a congressionally-mandated annual report identifying trade barriers to US companies and products due to IPR in other countries, had placed India on Priority Watch List expressing concern over certain provisions in India's patent regime including provisions related to pre-and post-grant challenges, irregularities in the application of Section 3(d), use of compulsory licensing and failure to ensure data exclusivity. IPA general secretary DG Shah said that the increasing commercial collaboration between US and Indian pharmaceutical companies is indicative of the ways in which US companies are increasing their revenues from India and spreading their development costs. It must, however, be noted that the Indian market for expensive medication under patent is small. The Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts Act will undoubtedly reduce litigation time for IPR disputes in the long term.