

1. [Concerns over IPR](#) – Business Standard

The US Chamber of Commerce's Global Intellectual Property Centre (GIPC) has ranked India second to last among the 38 countries included in its fourth annual intellectual property rights (IPR) index. In other words, it holds the patent protection regime in India as not being in line with the international best practices. Among the limitations mentioned in India's IPR environment are the absence of specific IP rights for the life sciences sector; weak enforcement environment; lack of mechanisms to effectively combat online piracy; flawed data protection norms; and non-participation in the international IPR-related treaties referenced in the index. Besides, it has cited the usual objections raised by US industry and the office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) concerning the patent requirements and the provision for compulsory licensing in the Indian patent law.

2. [Puzzle in Wednesday order on duty exemption](#) – Business Standard

To boost imports and avoid further public pressure, the government on Wednesday restored customs duty exemptions on three life-saving drugs. However, it is not clear why the government selected Octreotide as one of the three, where India's leading drug maker, Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, has a leading market share.

"It is difficult to know why the government has restored the customs duty exemption on this drug. It is possible that someone has made a presentation with the government that multinational companies which are importing these drugs should be given exemptions, as they have a better distribution system and, therefore, can make this life-saving drug available all over India," said M S Mani, senior director, Deloitte in India.

3. [Pfizer to get patent for cholesterol lowering formulation](#) –Business Standard

Global pharma giant Pfizer Inc has received a patent for a drug that addresses issues related to cholesterol and related disorders, including cardiovascular disease.

The Indian Patent Office has said that the company amended its set of claims for the invention titled PCSK9 Antagonists and there were no technical and formal objections pending, and that the application will now proceed to an approval stage.

Monika Yadav, assistant controller of Patents and Designs with the Delhi Patent Office, in her order said that based on the written submission and the report given by the examiner on the

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amended set of claims, the patent application shall proceed to grant of Patent on amendment set of claims filed on February 3, 2016, as there are no technical and formal objections.

4. [Pvt hospitals ask for reduction in import duty on med devices](#) – The Times of India
Leading private hospitals in the city want the customs duty on imported medical devices to be reduced in the forthcoming budget. They have made a representation to the finance ministry claiming that it will reduce the cost of healthcare in the city.

Their umbrella body Association of Hospitals (AOH), which comprises 52 leading trust-run hospitals in the city such as Lilavati, Nanavati, Jaslok, Breach Candy, PD Hinduja, has also written to the ministry asking for clarity on service taxes. "The import duty rates on medical equipment could go up to as much as 25%. While our country has excellent soft skills in the form of doctors and nurses, we are forced to import devices for want of indigenous production," said Dr PM Bhujang, president of AOH.

While the import duty on implants or prostheses is around 15%, the cost of surgical equipment, dental devices and apparatus used for radiations could be in the range of 24-26%. "There is an urgent need to bring down these fiscal rates to a single digit, if not total exempting them," Bhujang added. "It will help the hospitals bring down the treatment or diagnosis costs as the benefits of exemption will be passed on to the patients," he said.

5. [Pharma companies increase investments in biotech segment](#) – Business Standard
Some of India's bigger pharmaceutical companies are ramping up investment to grow their biotechnology business.

Biocon has invested \$200 million in an insulin manufacturing unit in Malaysia. Lupin and Wockhardt are increasing their investments to produce new insulins and biosimilars (officially approved versions of original 'innovator' products, which can be manufactured when the original product's patent expires.

6. [Cipla completes \\$550 million acquisition of two US-based firms](#) – The Times of India
Drug major Cipla announced the completion of its \$550-million acquisition of US generic drug makers InvaGen Pharma and Exelan Pharma. The acquisition carried out by the company's wholly-owned special purpose vehicle Cipla (EU) Limited will boost its US business, which currently accounts for 8% of its revenue and give the company access to InvaGen's manufacturing facilities and research and development capabilities. The combined revenue of InvaGen and Exelan was \$230 million in 2015.

Also appeared in [The Hindu](#) and [Business Standard](#)

7. [Drug Controller begins review of alarming findings on substandard drugs from a new pilot study](#) – Business Today

A new pilot study conducted across two drug categories by academicians from the Department of Pharmacy, Jaypee University of Information Technology, Solan (Himachal Pradesh) has found high incidence of substandard drugs. So, what is the Indian drug regulator doing about this, since the pilot study talks of as much as around 15 per cent substandard drugs in one case?

Official estimates put the figure at not more than 4.5 per cent. "This came as a news to us. It is a matter of investigation and we are looking into this. I have now put a very high level officer on the job to look into the matter," says G.N. Singh, the Drug Controller General of India. "We want to investigate the methodology adopted for this study and the test protocols deployed."

8. [Health dept to procure meds worth Rs 15 cr](#) – The Times of India
The health department has floated a tender worth Rs 15.75 crore for procuring essential generic medicines and nearly 40 surgical items and medical consumables for government hospitals in the state.

The move comes after health minister SS Negi directed CMOs of all districts to procure medicines at the earliest.

Under national health mission, the health department has received funds to purchase approximately 600 essential drugs and nearly 200 surgical and consumable items.

9. [Providing affordable diagnosis to solve India's TB epidemic](#) – IBN Live

In 2014, for the first time ever, tuberculosis (TB) caused more deaths worldwide than HIV/AIDS making TB the world's biggest infectious disease killer. TB killed 1.5 million people in 2014, ahead of HIV/AIDS, which was responsible for 1.2 million deaths in the same year. The WHO Global TB Report also revealed that India continues to be the country with the highest TB burden with nearly one-fourth of the global burden.

Through the adoption of the End TB Strategy, India has committed to reducing the number of TB deaths compared with 2015 by 95%. The challenges India faces are daunting but certainly not unachievable. An exemplary comparative case-study to learn from would be that of our response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

10. [PPP in public health suffers setback](#) – The Hindu

Not all is well with public-private partnership in the health sector, if a recent decision of the department is a prognosis.

The Health Department has decided to do away with the Arogya Bandhu scheme under which it had partnered with non-governmental organisations, charitable trusts and private medical colleges to run 52 of its primary health centres (PHCs) with financial assistance from the government. It has decided to take the PHCs back into its fold.

The decision follows a series of complaints of non-compliance of rules, misuse of funds, lack of accountability, and failure to provide quality service to patients by the organisations running these PHCs.