

1. [Impact of budget 2017 on healthcare sector: High on ambition, low on vision](#) – **Business Standard**

Much has been written and spoken about India's healthcare system, its creaking facilities, its shortage of doctors, its lack of insurance coverage and the rising burden of non-communicable diseases. In a nutshell, India's healthcare system needs a systematic process of reform and renewal that will take more than a few budget announcements to achieve. However, a budget serves to provide a direction to a sector and lays ground for the government to position most of its initiatives and measures (taken round the year) towards this direction. In many ways the budget 2017 announcements on the healthcare front have displayed a continuity of thought on the part of the government towards achieving greater affordability and accessibility for all. A series of measures spoken of by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his budget speech are aimed at furthering the government's motto of healthcare for all. The healthcare community would also have loved to see a larger long-term vision to reform or revolutionise Indian healthcare system, including greater emphasis on stemming the rise of non-communicable diseases, which is unfortunately missing from the budget.

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2. [Maneka Gandhi calls caesarean section surgeries a racket](#) – **The Times of India**

An alarming rise in caesarean section surgeries in India, mainly in private hospitals, has come under the scanner leading to over 1.3 lakh people signing an online petition, seeking government intervention to bring in accountability and transparency in institutional deliveries. Following the petition, women and child development minister Maneka Gandhi wrote to health minister J P Nadda, suggesting to make it mandatory for hospitals to publicly display the number of c-section surgeries and normal deliveries carried out. "I'd like to share my concern over alarming percentage of c-section surgeries being conducted in hospitals these days. This issue has been deeply worrying me as it has direct linkage with the health of women per se... The situation is much worse in private hospitals, which is a matter of grave concern," Gandhi tweeted on Wednesday, adding she had written to Nadda about the scale of the problem and its repercussions. "We would like naming and shaming of gynaecologists who do Caesarean deliveries for no reason at all except money. I would like all women in India to get together and start protesting because a Caesarean for a woman is

invasive, and turns a natural delivery into something that is an unnecessary operation," Gandhi told reporters.

**3. [NPPA warns stent makers, importers against shortage](#) – Press Trust of India**

Drug pricing regulator NPPA has asked stent makers and importers to ensure that production as well as supply of stents remains at the level that was there before the introduction of price cap. Warning of action in case of shortage, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) said all manufacturers and importers were under "legal obligation to maintain smooth production and supply of coronary stents of all brands which were available in the country before price cap". If any specific complaint is received, along with proof of withdrawal, action will be taken along with prosecution, the notification said. Last week, the government had slashed prices of stents by up to 85 per cent by capping them at Rs 7,260 for bare metal ones and Rs 29,600 for the drug eluting variety. "Companies have already informed the government that they are continuing with the same level of supplies. If there is any non-availability or withdrawal of stents it should inform NPPA immediately," it added.

**4. [Overcharged for stents? FDA got your back](#) – The Times of India**

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) officials will employ measures like surprise checks, bill scrutiny and decoy patients to ensure strict implementation of the price cap on cardiac stents in Maharashtra. "We have already informed divisional joint commissioners to carry out surprise checks at big hospitals and keep an eye on distributors and dealers (of cardiac stents) operating in their areas. Also, they have been directed to look out for any artificial shortage of the stents," state FDA commissioner Harshadeep Kamble told TOI. Kamble said, "Our officials have already started carrying out surprise checks at private hospitals in Mumbai and Thane. However, they didn't find any irregularity there. The officials in state's other districts will also conduct similar checks while scrutinizing of angioplasty bills at various hospitals in Pune and rest of the divisions soon. We are also planning to send decoy patients to those hospitals, which we have received complaints against." Vidyadhar Javadekar, joint commissioner (FDA), Pune division, said, "We are planning to conduct surprise checks and strengthen our surveillance to rule out any aberration from the current price cap imposed on the stents. We appeal to the people to register their complaints on our helpline numbers. Also, they can call our offices in Pune for complaints without disclosing their names."

**5. [More than 10% of drugs in govt supply chain substandard: Health ministry survey](#) – Hindustan Times**

Over 10% of drugs in the government supply chain were found to be 'Not of Standard Quality' (NSQ), according to the largest ever survey by the Health Ministry to determine quality of drugs. In comparison, the estimated percentage of NSQ drugs from samples taken from retail outlets across the country was 3% while 0.023% were found to be spurious. The extent of NSQ and spurious drugs for both retail outlets as well as government sources in the country together was estimated to be 3.16% and 0.0245% respectively, the survey found. The statistical design of the drug survey included as many as 224 drug molecules belonging to 15 different therapeutic categories of the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) 2011. As part of this survey, 47,954 drug samples relating to 23 dosage forms were drawn from 654 districts of 36 states and UTs from the supply chains including retail outlets, government sources and from eight airports and seaports, an official statement said.

**6. [An even safer jab, says WHO](#) – The Indian Express**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has given the Indian vaccine regulatory structure the highest possible rating of 4 on a majority of parameters. The rating, awarded this month, is higher than the one the organisation gave India in 2012, the last time it assessed the systems and processes of the country's vaccine regulatory mechanism. What does this rating mean, and why is it important? What impact can the improved rating have on the Indian pharmaceutical sector, and on Indian industry in general? For several days last week, a team of experts in multiple disciplines drawn from the WHO's Geneva headquarters, its India Country Office, and national regulators of the US, Italy, Germany, the

Netherlands, Indonesia, Thailand and Egypt, assessed the National Regulatory Authorities (NRA) of India.

7. [International reports linking air pollution and deaths in India are “extrapolations without due scientific validation”](#) – **The Hindu**

Terming recent, international reports linking air pollution and deaths in India “extrapolations without due scientific validation,” the Environment Ministry said that it was working with the Health Ministry to prepare a comprehensive report on the health impact of pollution. Two reports last week, one published in the *Lancet* and the other by the *Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation* (IHME) at the University of Washington, attribute about a million deaths in India in 2015 to breathing noxious air. “We seem to be far more influenced by things out of India,” Environment Minister Anil Dave said at a press conference. “We have several of our own organisations and experts...and I trust them as much as I do our Army.” International studies were important and while the government took note of them, they couldn’t be the final word on the state of pollution in India, he said. However the Minister and several senior officials of his Ministry and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) present at the press meet, refused to put a number on probable pollution deaths in the country.

8. [AYUSH Minister to inaugurate the World Integrated Medicine Forum on Regulation of Homeopathic Medicine MoU to be signed between Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia Convention of the United States and CCRH in the field of Homoeopathic Medicine](#) – **Business Standard**

Minister of State (Independent Charge) for AYUSH, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik will inaugurate the World Integrated Medicine Forum on Regulation of Homeopathic Medicinal Products: National and Global strategies in New Delhi tomorrow. This is the first-of-its-kind forum considering the increased perception of the international world towards India as a key player in the progress of the homoeopathy drug industry,. Drug lawmakers, regulators, manufacturers and pharmacopeial experts from various regulatory authorities, eminent scientific organisations and pharmaceutical industries from 25 countries, are participating in the two days forum to strategize the actionable aspects in the homoeopathic drug industry, which, in turn, will promote global harmonisation in the sector. The event is organised by Ministry of AYUSH and Central Council for Research in Homeopathy (CCRH) and supported by Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIMH) & Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO).

9. [Health Ministry’s kit for adolescents marks a paradigm shift for a relatively conservative govt](#) – **The Indian Express**

Institutional education is lodged at an important place in a child’s upbringing. What children are taught in schools therefore, molds their pliable minds. It sculpts their understanding of themselves and their subsequent interaction with those belonging to the same and opposite sex. In what appears to be a landmark move, the Health Ministry has decided to release and circulate resource material titled “Saathiya Resource Kit” for adolescent peer educators across Indian states, who will in turn inform 26 crore adolescents on concerns pertaining to health. An instruction manual of sorts, among the important issues the text touches upon, it gives one crucial advice: It is okay to be attracted to individuals belonging to the same sex, as long as there is mutual respect and consent between the two. To be clear, there isn’t a legal recognition about same-sex marriages or relationships in India. For the Ministry to publish literature which conveys that feeling of being attracted towards the same sex is normal therefore, holds significant weight. That’s because Health Minister J. P. Nadda, now a BJP member, has strong RSS roots. In his younger days, he was cultivated as a leader by the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) – the RSS student-wing, known for advocating the far-right ideology.

10. [‘Alarming’ superbugs a risk to people, animals and food, EU warns](#) – **Mint**

Superbug bacteria found in people, animals and food across the European Union pose an “alarming” threat to public and animal health having evolved to resist widely used antibiotics, disease and safety experts warned on Wednesday. A report on antimicrobial resistance in bacteria by the

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said some 25,000 people die from such superbugs in the European Union every year. “Antimicrobial resistance is an alarming threat putting human and animal health in danger,” said Vytenis Andriukaitis, the EU’s health and food safety commissioner. “We have put substantial efforts to stop its rise, but this is not enough. We must be quicker, stronger and act on several fronts.” Drug resistance is driven by the misuse and overuse of antibiotics, which encourages bacteria to evolve to survive and develop new ways of beating the medicines. Wednesday’s report highlighted that in Salmonella bacteria — which can cause the common and serious food-borne infection Salmonellosis — multi-drug resistance is high across the EU.