1. 634 drugs on NPPA's price ceiling non-compliant list – The Times of India

As many as 634 drugs of various strengths produced by firms, including Cipla, Abbott, Astrazeneca and Dr Reddy's, are "suspected" to be non-compliant with ceiling prices as notified by NPPA. In its latest notification, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) said it issued the list after analysing the market data of various medicines in December last year. The "list of cases of suspected non-compliance of notified ceiling prices" issued by NPPA included medicines manufactured by leading pharmaceutical firms in India. Cipla, Abbott India, Ajanta Pharma, Alkem Labs, Astrazeneca, Dr Reddy's Laboratories and Cadila are some of the firms mentioned in the list. Some of the medicines which feature in the list of suspected non-compliance of ceiling prices issued by NPPA included Abbott's Thyrocab, Alembic's Althrocin and Cipla's Novamox -- an anti-bacterial medicine. As of date, NPPA has notified the ceiling prices of 662 medicines listed under revised Schedule-I of DPCO 2013 (National List of Essential Medicines NLEM -15). The government fixes the prices of essential drugs based on the simple average of all medicines in a particular therapeutic segment, having sales of more than 1 per cent.

2. Drug pricing authority warns stent makers, hospitals of legal action – The New Indian Express

Regulator NPPA today warned hospitals, stent manufacturers and importers of legal action in case they are found spreading "misinformation" about shortage of the medical device in the wake of price cap. On creating an artificial shortage of stents, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) said "probability of an understanding between companies, the distributors and hospitals under such a situation cannot be ruled out" and warned of a legal action for misinformation in this regard. "Any hospital having a situation where stocks of any brand of any company have been exhausted and require to be replenished, is expected to have issued a written demand/communication to the company. "Without having done so, talking of shortage of stents on record is misinformation, which needs to be stopped in public interest," the regulator said. While asking all hospitals to raise the demand for stents, the NPPA said such communications should be made available to its top officials.

3. 3% drugs in India are substandard, shows health ministry survey – The Times of India

Over 3% of all drugs sold across India are of substandard quality, according to the first-ever survey conducted by the union ministry of health and family welfare. In the largest ever scientifically designed drug survey undertaken in the world for determining the quality of drugs, ministry officials said 0.0245% of the 47,012 samples were spurious. The ministry had entrusted the work relating to

carrying out a survey of the extent of problems of "spurious and not of standard quality drugs'' to the National Institute of Biologicals (NIB), Noida. The NIB has since submitted the report to the government. The survey included as many as 224 drug molecules belonging to 15 different therapeutic categories of the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) 2011. "As a part of this survey, 47,954 drug samples relating to 23 dosage forms were drawn from 654 districts of 36 states and union territories from the supply chains including retail outlets, government sources and from eight airports and sea ports,'' said a press release on Wednesday.

4. **China updates key drug list in boost for Big Pharma – Reuters**
China has updated list of medicines covered by basic medical insurance schemes, a long-awaited fillip for drugmakers in the world's second-largest drug market where many new drugs have been kept out of patients' reach because of high costs. The new list of reimbursable medicines, the first update in eight years, includes blockbuster drug compounds to treat major illnesses such as cancer, hepatitis and hemophilia. High drug costs and a lack of access to the most recent treatments is a major flashpoint in China, where patients often are forced to resort to risky gray markets to get cheaper medicines. The list includes 2,535 Western and traditional Chinese medicines, 339 more than the most recent update of the list in 2009, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security said in a statement on Thursday. The number of Western-style medicines included rose by 133 to 1,297. Reuters reported in January that China was set to add more than 300 modern and traditional drugs to the list.

5. **Is Public Health Bill finally ready? – Daily News and Analysis**
A Bill pending for over a decade — that aims to deal with emergency health situations and control, and management of diseases likely to cause major epidemics — may now see light of the day. Now christened as 'The Public Health (Prevention, Control, and Management of Epidemics, Bio-terrorism and Disasters) Bill 2017', the draft has undergone 'minor changes over the years' according to sources, and will soon be submitted to the law ministry for approval. The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) have jointly prepared the Bill. "Though the bill has taken time, we have ensured that it's undergone improvements. It has been through phases, and now finally the Union Health Ministry has released it for opinion from all sectors. The older versions of the Bill didn't clearly spell out the execution powers granted to the States and the local authorities," said Dr S Venkatesh, Director NCDC. "Moreover, outbreaks of diseases such as Ebola have also been included," he added.

6. **'Fast-track approvals for TB, hepatitis, HIV drugs on the anvil' – The Hindu Business Line**
The Government is set to bring in an easier approval process for Tuberculosis, Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS drugs, GN Singh, Drug Controller General of India said on Thursday. If drugs in these categories have received regulatory approvals in other markets, the Government will fast-track their clearance here to speed-up local access, Singh told Business Line. This is part of several measures being implemented by the Government to simplify the processes around medicines, even as the Government continues to keep an eye on medicine quality, Singh told a pharma industry conclave earlier in the day. In fact, by March this year, the plan is to have about 40 product safety and development officers in the districts for surveillance, among other things. The plan is to have 650 officers in one year, he said. Singh was participating in a quality forum organized by the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA) that also saw the participation of multiple foreign drug regulatory authorities from the United States, United Kingdom etc.

7. **AYUSH Minister inaugurates World Integrated Medicine Forum – DD News**
Minister of State (Independent Charge) for AYUSH, Shripad Yesso Naik inaugurated the World Integrated Medicine Forum on Regulation of Homeopathic Medicinal Products: National and Global strategies in New Delhi on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, the AYUSH Minister said that in India, Homoeopathy has been well institutionalized and we have 235 homoeopathic hospitals and more than 8000 clinics in public sector. He said that most of production plants in India are GMP-compliant and adhere to policies related to quality, packaging and distribution. He further said that

all these manufacturing units are bound by Drugs & Cosmetics Law and their renewal of license depends on regular quality check and thorough inspections. In his inaugural address, Shri Shripad Naik remarked that there is clearly a need for a high-level strategic exchange platform, where stakeholders can meet outside their immediate work related context and this forum could address that need. In the other countries Homoeopathy remains largely under-utilized due to lack of availability of homoeopathic medicines or stringent or non-existent regulatory provisions for these medicines, the Minister added.

8. **Top hospitals under regulator's lens for overcharging patients for stents – The Times of India**
Some of the country's most prestigious hospitals are under the scanner of the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) for allegedly overcharging patients for stents. The regulator has initiated a probe against hospitals including PGIMER Chandigarh; Lilavati Hospital in Mumbai; Max Hospital in Saket, Delhi; Metro Hospital in Faridabad and Ballabhgarh (Haryana); and Ram Murti Hospital in Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh). Disclosing the names on its official twitter handle late evening on Thursday, the NPPA said it has received complaints against these hospitals and have alerted concerned state drug regulators. The NPPA received the complaints against the hospitals through its helpline, an official source told TOI. However, it maintained, "NPPA has got no complaints of shortage of stents from any place so far. Supply and availability has been ensured".