

1. [Take concrete steps to fight antibiotic resistance, turn pledges into action: WHO](#) – The Times of India

The World Health Organization (WHO) today sought urgent and concrete measures to arrest the reducing effectiveness of antibiotics, cautioning that if enough was not done now, common bacterial infections such as skin sores or diarrhea would become untreatable and fatal.

"Now is the time to turn pledges into action, stake out a clear roadmap and take action to prevent further erosion of our health security. The effectiveness of existing antibiotics is extremely valuable, and we must do all we can to preserve it," Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh,

Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia said in her opening remarks at the three-day international meeting on 'Combating Antimicrobial Resistance: Public Health Challenge and Priority', here today. Ministers of health from countries in the region and international experts are attending the meeting.

Antimicrobial Resistance is a threat to everyone. Inappropriate use of antibiotics - whether through taking them when they are not required; taking an incomplete course; or taking them too regularly - makes bacterial infections immune to antibiotics. Globally 700 000 people die every year as a result of once-treatable health conditions.

2. [Budget 2016: Impose more taxes on alcohol, tobacco products, says K Srinath Reddy, PHFI President](#) – The Economic Times

The finance ministry should impose heavier taxes on tobacco, sugared beverages and junk foods in Budget 2016 if it wants to arrest India's growing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) problem, says K Srinath Reddy, president of New Delhi-based Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), a public-private initiative focused on education, training, research and policy development in public health.

Reddy tells ET's Prabha Raghavan how 'sin tax' is a potent but inadequately used tool to tackle NCDs, of which India has the highest burden. He also calls for increased public financing in healthcare, which he says has remained static and in real terms even declined as a percentage of the GDP.

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2. [Budget 2016: Impose more taxes on alcohol, tobacco products, says K Srinath Reddy, PHFI President](#) – The Economic Times
3. [Eye patients hit by ban on cheap drug](#) – The Times of India
4. [Opinion: A healthcare prescription for India's growth story](#) – Mint
5. [US-based trade group wants India to relax import duties on medical devices](#) – Business Standard
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9. [Johnson & Johnson to pay \\$72 mn for cancer death linked to talcum powder](#) – Hindustan Times
10. [SA regulator seeks report from Sun Pharma on Ranbaxy's recalled drug](#) – Hindustan Times
11. [Top Drug Firms Join Hands to Set Up Training Academy](#) – The Economic Times

3. [Eye patients hit by ban on cheap drug](#) – The Times of India

The ban on the use of anti-cancer drug Avastin (generic name Bevacizumab) for ophthalmic purposes by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has affected hundreds of patients with retinal problems. Though there are alternatives available in the market, they are way more expensive than Avastin, rue doctors.

For instance, if the price of a single dose of 0.5 ml of Avastin injection is anywhere between Rs 10,000 and Rs 12,000, another version of the drug, Ranibizumab (which comes in multiple brands), costs three times more -- Rs 30,000 to Rs 45,000. Worse, these alternatives are not covered by all corporate insurance companies and do not attract any government subsidy either.

4. [Opinion: A healthcare prescription for India's growth story](#) – Mint

India's economy is posting among the fastest growth rates globally even as the country strives to unleash reforms to get to full potential. However, there is a silent threat that could derail India's journey towards becoming a developed nation.

It's health—or the lack of it. Without Aarogya Bharat, or healthy India, the benefits from faster growth will be seriously compromised.

But health is still not a top government priority. Public health spending is around 1% of GDP while overall, the country spends over 4%. Rwanda and Peru do better. Most Indians accessing the existing healthcare system pay out of pocket—that is nearly 60% of health expenditure, three times the global average.

5. [US-based trade group wants India to relax import duties on medical devices](#) – Business Standard

The Advanced Medical Technology Association (AdvaMed), a medical device trade association based in Washington, has urged Finance Minister Arun Jaitley to provide the necessary fillip to the medical technology sector in the budget, in order to increase access to newer therapies to patients for better health outcomes and improved quality of life.

The association said it hoped that encouraging measures from the Finance Minister would enhance penetration of essential medical devices - such as stents, orthopaedic implants for knee and hip replacements - and diagnostics. An effective and innovative use of medical technology has the potential of increasing access, significantly reducing the burden of disease and the load on healthcare delivery services through early diagnosis, better clinical outcomes, less invasive procedures and shorter recovery times.

6. [For Wockhardt, regulatory woes](#) – Business Standard

A muted performance in the October-December quarter, coupled with uncertainties on resumption of full-fledged supplies to the US market, has led to further fall in Wockhardt's stock price. The stock is down 34 per cent over the past month.

A key positive would be resolution of regulatory issues. However, the Street was worried about observations of the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) for the company's Shendra plant. Although the unit does not supply to the US market, the issues raised by the USFDA, according to Citi analysts, are similar to the ones involving its other key units at Waluj and Chikalhana. The worry is that this might impact the remediation measures underway.

7. [Non-chemo cancer drug trial in state](#) – The Times of India

Indian American researchers and Calcutta University alumni Ananda Mohan Chakrabarty and Tapas Das Gupta have urged the state government to start clinical trial of their protein-based cancer drug p28. Once patented, it can then be administered to terminally ill patients in India. p28 is currently undergoing clinical trials in the US.

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minister Rabiranjana Chattopadhyay. Indian American researchers and Calcutta University alumni Ananda Mohan Chakrabarty and Tapas Das Gupta have urged the state government to start clinical trial of their protein-based cancer drug p28. Once patented, it can then be administered to terminally ill patients in India. p28 is currently undergoing clinical trials in the US.

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8. [Pharmaceutical industry looks to maintain its growth momentum in coming time](#) – Mint
Indian pharmaceutical industry has been witnessing strong growth since past few years and is likely to become \$55 billion industry in 2020 from \$30 billion in 2015 (in terms of revenues). India is the largest provider of generic drugs globally, accounting for 20 per cent of global exports in terms of volume. India has an organized pharmaceutical market of its own, which is being considered as a potential partner by other countries. India is among the fastest-growing pharmaceutical markets in the world and has established itself as a global manufacturing and research hub. A large raw material base and the availability of a skilled workforce give the industry a definite competitive advantage. India's Pharma Market is ranked number 3 in terms of volume and 10th in terms of market value. Indian pharmaceutical industry companies can broadly be classified as domestic companies and foreign companies (MNCs).

9. [Johnson & Johnson to pay \\$72 mn for cancer death linked to talcum powder](#) – Hindustan Times
A US jury has awarded \$72 million in damages to the family of a woman who died of ovarian cancer, which she said was caused by prolonged use of health giant Johnson & Johnson's baby powder and other talcum-based products.

The woman, Jackie Fox, died in 2015 aged 62.

The award by a jury in Missouri state will get global attention as Johnson & Johnson's baby powder and other talcum-based products, which the company insists are scientifically sound, are widely used the world over, including in India.

10. [SA regulator seeks report from Sun Pharma on Ranbaxy's recalled drug](#) – Hindustan Times
The South African drug regulator has highlighted major concerns over Ranbaxy Laboratories' folic acid tablets 'Rogue', which were recalled last year, and has sought a detailed report from the parent company Sun Pharmaceuticals.

Folic acid tablets are the over-the-counter vitamin drugs that are consumed by pregnant women and babies.

Last December, the discovery of potentially-dangerous Betacin, an anti-inflammatory drug, mixed in the folic acid tablets, had led to the recall of more than 18,000 containers in South Africa.

11. [Top Drug Firms Join Hands to Set Up Training Academy](#) – The Economic Times
India's leading drug makers, who are facing the wrath of the USFDA over quality issues, will be coming together to set up a quality institute to train their employees in best manufacturing practices. "I think we are all growing really fast. The inclination to grow is high. We talked about this and on the idea of Prasad (G V Prasad, CEO Dr Reddy's), some of us agreed to set up a training institute. We said let's create a standard that we need at the very starting point. The idea is getting support from all around," said Nilesh Gupta, MD, Lupin.