1. **Alert issued against Avastin drug** – Mint

Indian drug controller DCGI issued an alert on Thursday, asking states to ensure Swiss drugmaker Roche's cancer treatment Avastin was not administered to treat eyes, after its usage hampered vision in 15 patients.

Despite being a cancer drug, Avastin is often used by doctors globally for eye ailments.

This article has also appeared in: The Economic Times

2. **Patent Office refuses Lee Pharma's application for Astrazeneca's diabetes drug** – Business Standard

The Indian Patent Office has rejected an application submitted by Hyderabad-based Lee Pharma seeking Compulsory License of international drug major AstraZeneca's patented diabetes medicine Saxagliptin, which is sold under the brand name Onglyza.

Lee Pharma's counsel has said that the company has decided to appeal against the order in the appellate authority, soon.

In an order issued on Tuesday, O P Gupta, controller of Patents said, "As the Applicant (Lee Pharma) has failed to provide evidence along with application or during hearing or by supplementary submission and failed to satisfy the Controller regarding any of the grounds as specified in Section 84(1) of the ACt, I am therefore of the view that a prima facie case has not been made out for making of an order under Section 84 of the Act."

3. **Natco signs pact to make and sell hepatitis-C drug in 112 countries**– Mint

Drug maker Natco Pharma Ltd has signed a pact with Medicines Patent Pool and US-based pharma company Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. to make and sell identical or bioequivalent version of Daclatasvir Dihydrochloride (Daclatasvir), a drug used to treat chronic hepatitis C.

MPP is a United Nations (UN)-backed public health organisation that works towards increasing access for drugs that treat HIV, hepatitis C and tuberculosis by negotiating for public-health driven licences with patent holders.

"This agreement allows Natco to expand access to these chronic hepatitis C medicines in 112 developing countries," Natco said in a statement on Thursday. Natco will set its own price for the generic product it produces.

This article has also appeared in: The Hindu

4. **Trust needed to bring back clinical trials to India, says ISCR president** – Outsourcing Pharma

India has 16% of the world's population, 20% of the disease burden, and has contributed to less than 1.4% of global clinical trials, but the country is looking to fix this imbalance.

India has a "Natural Potential to grow" according to Syngene CEO – Peter Bains. However, this growth will not be without challenges.

5. **IDMA urges govt to reconsider its decision to hike fees for product registrations, manufacturing & product licences** – Pharmabiz
   Expressing its disappointment and disapproval over the proposal of the Union health ministry for hiking licence fees for manufacturing companies, fees for registration of domestically manufactured new products, registration/licence for importing medicines, registration of imported products in the country and for conducting clinical trials, the Indian Drugs Manufacturers Association (IDMA) has appealed to the government to reconsider its plan to increase the fees.

   However, the association gave its green signal to the government, in one case, to go ahead with the hike in the registration fee for import of pharmaceutical products. IDMA has sent a representation to the government of India with respect to this issue.

6. **CAPPING MARGINS ON MEDICINES** – Pharmabiz
   Last November, the Prime Minister's office had asked the Department of Pharmaceuticals to probe the issue of high prices charged on essential drugs by the pharmaceutical companies despite the existence of the Drug Price Control Order, 2013. PMO noticed that many of life saving drugs and medical devices are sold at huge margins running up to 4000 per cent in clear violation of the provisions of the DPCO.

   In a bid to check this unethical practice of pharmaceutical companies, a committee was then formed with Sudhansh Pant, joint secretary in the DoP as the chief and representatives from the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority, Competition Commission of India and other industry bodies as members.

   To ascertain the status of market prices, the NPPA then asked companies to submit their wholesale price lists to the panel so that it can assess the trade margins on all drugs. The NPPA felt a calibrated margin regulation for all drugs may help to bring some price discipline at the retail level. After detailed discussions with all stakeholders, the panel submitted the final report last week which prescribed a gradation system for capping the margins.