

1. ['India can create new, affordable healthcare systems' : Andrew Witty, CEO, GlaxoSmithKline](#) – ET Health

India has a great opportunity to innovate and create new healthcare systems that are also affordable, Andrew Witty, CEO of GlaxoSmithKline said at the Economic Times Global Business Summit.

Witty said innovation is miniaturising healthcare systems and procedures. "A friend of mine recently had a hip replacement with local anesthesia," he said. Eventually miniaturisation will revolutionise how healthcare works. He said we should have the ability to take healthcare to people and not have them come to "temples of healthcare". There is a cloud on the horizon and that is anti-microbial resistance. India's intervention is absolutely critical (in fighting it)".

Witty asked India to think through how the rest of the world can balance innovation and access. He hinted that for that the country will have to get its IPR regime right.

2. [Hard to set policy, get it implemented in India: GSK](#) – Business Standard

Likening India to a "big company" in which it is "pretty hard to set policy" and to get the same implemented, global healthcare major GSK CEO Andrew Witty today called for simplification of the process so that "millions follow it in a straight forward way".

On the issue of IP, he said for many years India has been "for good or bad, correctly or incorrectly associated with comments about India's commitment to intellectual property" protection. The whole world is trying to solve the problem of how do to encourage innovation and at the same time bring the benefits of innovation to billions of population across the globe, he added.

"I would really ask India to think through how we can help the rest of the world strike a balance, not choice, between innovation and access," Witty said.

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3. [EU's trademark law: India fears pharma exports will be hit](#) – The Hindu Business Line
New Delhi has raised concerns about the European Union's (EU) new trademark legislation that stipulates stricter enforcement measures, as it fears that this might lead to confiscation of legitimate Indian medicines being shipped to other destinations via European ports or airports.

A Commerce Ministry team recently met EU officials in Brussels seeking changes to the trademark law so that it doesn't lead to unnecessary hassles for Indian pharmaceutical exporters, a Commerce Ministry official told BusinessLine.

"The EU trade division tried to convince the Indian team that the new laws would not impact India's pharmaceutical exports, while India maintained that the threat of confiscation was real. More meetings are required to sort out the issue," the official said.

4. [India, EU need to trash out remaining issues of FTA: Sweden](#) – The Economic Times
Terming the proposed free trade agreement between India and EU as a "classical win win" for the two sides, Sweden today said negotiators need to sit down and "trash out" remaining issues of the trade pact.

Ambassador of Sweden to India Harald Sandberg said although there are few outstanding issues which needs to be addressed, both India and the European Union (EU) have covered lot of areas of the agreement. Negotiators were expected to meet in August last year, but talks were deferred by India, expressing disappointment and concern over the EU banning sale of around 700 pharma products, clinically tested by GVK Biosciences.

5. [European Union positive on free trade talks with India, says Dambois](#) – The Hindu
Both India and the EU have strong interest in strengthening cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector and are working closely in this direction

Issues related to Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and the pharmaceutical sector have been sensitive in the context of India-European Union (EU) trade and investment ties. Denis Dambois, First Counsellor, Head of Research & Innovation, Delegation of the EU to India, told The Hindu in a recent interview that India and the EU are engaged in sorting out issues such as the EU ban on some pharmaceutical products clinically tested by GVK Biosciences.

The EU ban had led to India deferring the negotiations on the proposed bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

6. ['Enforcing IPR Can Save Piracy'](#) – Business World
Louise Van Greunen, director, World Intellectual Property Organisation, talks about counterfeiting and the need for enforcing IPR. The enforcement of intellectual property rights (IPR) is crucial for building a sound system of IP protection. Ensuring the effectiveness of enforcement of IPR that is sustainable is a challenge in itself. Therefore, a major challenge is to ensure smooth dialogue and cooperation between various stakeholders. In the globalised world, international cooperation between law enforcement agencies, custom authorities, and judicial authorities is a big challenge. Then trademark counterfeiting and copyright piracy is another challenge. The use of 3D-printing in counterfeit goods has brought in additional technical and legal challenges to the fore. Almost all industrial sectors are confronted with counterfeiting or piracy. This phenomenon is no more limited to luxury items anymore. It poses a threat to the health and safety of consumers in a big way. The most striking example is the trademark counterfeit medicine.

7. [Patent Office refuses Takeda's application for diabetes drug](#) – Business Standard
The Indian [Patent Office](#) has refused a patent application of Japanese drug major [Takeda](#) Pharmaceutical Company Ltd for its dipeptidyl peptidase-IV (DPP-4) inhibitor used to treat type-2 diabetes, which could be used as single weekly dose. While the company claimed that the compound is a succinate salt form, which is novel, the patent office said that it is not patentable under the Section 3(d) and 3(e) of the Patent Act.

8. [High Time India Rescued Healthcare Sector: Experts](#) – NDTV Profit

At a time when the government has launched several promising initiatives to improve healthcare facilities in the country especially in the hinterlands, experts feel that it is high time that policymakers learn from past failures and step up efforts to give every citizen affordable, accessible and quality healthcare.

"Nearly 18 per cent rural population in the country has no access to health care," said Rakesh Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, at the 'International Conference on Delivering on the Promise of Universal Health Coverage in India: Policy Options and Challenges' in New Delhi earlier this month attended by academics, policymakers, doctors, lawyers, public health practitioners and government representatives.

9. [WHO unit to focus on achieving universal health coverage](#) – The Hindu

The World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday announced setting up of a dedicated unit that will focus on achieving universal health coverage (UHC), which is target 3.8 of sustainable development goals (SDGs).

"The goals within SDGs emphasise the need to achieve UHC by ensuring financial risk protection and improving access to essential health care services for those marginalised. So far, the quality of services has been neglected within the UHC dialogue. We at the WHO believe that there has been a lack of centre of gravity for quality. It is with this in mind that a unit is being formed to address UHC & quality," said Shams Syed from the WHO during the opening plenary of the Prince Mahidol Award Conference here.

10. ['Knowledge gap blocking universal health coverage'](#) – The Hindu

Ex-official says priority setting in India is based on consultation, not evidence.

India faces serious challenges in implementing universal health coverage policies because of a "serious knowledge gap" among policy-makers and a "general unwillingness for change", Rakesh Srivastava, former Director-General of Health Service, says.

At a session on "Enabling better decisions for better health: embedding fair & systematic processes into priority setting for universal health coverage" here, Mr. Srivastava said the priority-setting exercise in India was based on consultation with experts and not evidence, adding to the challenges of reaching the target of universal health care.

The government spending on health system currently is 1.04 per cent of the GDP, while the national health policy aims at taking it up to 2.5 per cent by the end of the 12th Five-Year Plan. "Including the private sector, nearly 4.1 per cent of the GDP is spent on health sector. This spending needs to be streamlined in such a manner that we can use the money in the best possible way," Mr. Srivastava said.

11. ['Pharma units resorting to unethical practices'](#) – The Hindu

Pharmaceutical research companies in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are resorting to unethical practices in conducting clinical trials and keeping the volunteers in dark about the side effects, alleged the Mala Sankshema Sangam of Telangana at a press conference here on Friday. M.S. Swamy Chowdary, who claimed to be victim of clinical trials, alleged that the mandatory Ethics Committees as per the rules framed under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, have remained spectators of violations by the labs. For the nine labs in both States, there are 104 Ethics Committees, he said. "Ethics committees require only documentation.

12. [Payers see price leverage with entry of Merck hepatitis C drug](#) – Reuters

US pharmacy benefit managers expect the launch of Merck & Co Inc's new hepatitis C pill to improve their leverage in price negotiations with drugmakers.

The Food and Drug Administration on Thursday approved Merck's Zepatier for treatment of patients infected with the most common form of the liver-destroying virus, genotype 1, as well as the less common genotype 4.

The list price for the new drug is \$54,600 for a 12-week regimen - compared with \$94,500 for Gilead Sciences Inc's Harvoni. A multi-pill regimen, Viekira Pak, from AbbVie Inc has a list price near \$83,000.

13. [Brexit threat hangs over London-based EU medicines agency](#) – The Economic Times
Fears of a British exit from the European Union are growing in a corner of London's Canary Wharf financial district - but this time it is pharmaceutical executives rather than bankers who are worried.

A so-called Brexit would threaten the future of the London-based European Medicines Agency (EMA), which approves medicines for all EU countries, potentially disrupting healthcare regulation in the world's biggest trading bloc.

14. [Health policy: More disclosures, flexibility](#) – Business Standard
You might soon be able to get a discount on your health insurance policy if you are a member of a gymnasium or if you have purchased the policy at a young age. Similarly, if you have more than one fixed benefit policy, you will be entitled to the entire amount of both. And, if you have a pre-existing disease such as diabetes or hypertension but have managed to keep it under control, your premium could be lower at the time of renewal.

These are some proposals in the exposure draft on health insurance regulations issued by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) recently.