

1. [Cancer drug prices highest in U.S., least affordable in India, China: Study](#) – Reuters

Americans pay the highest prices in the world for cancer drugs, but the treatments are least affordable in lower income countries, according to the results of a new study released. The lowest drug prices were found in India and South Africa. But after calculating price as a percentage of wealth adjusted for the cost of living, cancer drugs appeared to be least affordable in India and China. The high prices commanded by modern cancer drugs are generating increased resistance and demands for price discounts from politicians, health care providers, insurers, patients and some doctors. The study researchers used gross domestic product and cost of living statistics from the International Monetary Fund to estimate drug price affordability. Median monthly prices for branded drugs ranged from \$1,515 in India to \$8,694 in the United States. For generics, median prices were highest in the United States, at \$654, and lowest in South Africa, \$120, and India, \$159.

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2. [Drug discovery, vaccines to get a biotech boost soon](#) – Economic Times

India's biotechnology sector is set for a booster dose to expand work in drug discovery, vaccines and anti-microbial resistance. The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) is in the midst of finalising several programs and global partnerships to give a thrust to these areas, according to secretary K VijayRaghavan. DBT is looking to invest close to Rs 1000 crore in a programme to expand the existing centres for drug discovery and vaccine research in the country. The department will take up the possibility of investing "a few thousand crores" over the next few years with the finance ministry and hopes the proposal will be approved, he said. The programme is expected to be announced this financial year around August or early September, according to VijayRaghavan.

3. [Narendra Modi's US visit to see new phase in India-US ties](#) – Mint

Prime Minister Narendra Modi begins a two-day visit to the US this week. The centrepiece of Modi's US visit will be his meeting with US president Barack Obama on Wednesday and an address to the US Congress on Thursday. Modi's 2014 US visit managed to reset ties with the two countries agreeing to form a committee to break the logjam in civil nuclear cooperation as well as set an agenda for future cooperation, spanning climate change, skill development, joint research, collaboration in space, health, counter-terrorism and the South China Sea dispute between China and its smaller neighbours. According to former foreign secretary Lalit Mansingh, three sets of issues expected to be discussed: Bilateral economic relations, India-US

nuclear deal and third related to India and US exchanging notes on the regional and international issues.

4. [Pharma firms to step up R&D](#) – Business Standard

Pharmaceutical companies are increasing their research and development (R&D) spending to launch differential and speciality products as their core US business comes under pressure. Going forward, pricing pressure is expected to increase by five or 10 per cent. Drug makers are gearing up to overcome the challenges by focusing on speciality products. “Over the past few years, pharma companies have increased their R&D budgets significantly, in view of their growing focus on both regulated markets and complex molecules/therapy segments. Aggregate R&D spends of the top few companies in domestic pharma increased from six per cent of sales in FY11 to more than nine per cent in FY16,” ICRA said in a research note. It believes this will continue, as most leading companies are trying to expand their presence in the complex therapy segment such as injectables, inhalers, dermatology, controlled-release substances and biosimilars.

5. [About-turn: How govt went back on plastic ban](#) – Business Standard

After recognising its adverse health effects, the government has now dismissed its own lab reports to conclude that the evidence against plastic is insufficient. The Union government has scripted a U-turn in a year. Until March 2015, several regulatory authorities held the common stand that PET bottles and plastic multi-layered packaging was injurious for human health, besides being a serious environmental hazard. By August 2015, this common line turned fuzzy. By March, the volte-face was complete: the government, almost unanimously, concluded that there was no proof that plastic packaging was dangerous, at least for medicines. The NGT’s March 2015 observations came from the fact that the Director General of Health Services (DGHS), the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) and the Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) had all at one point spoken along similar lines: either recommending restrictions or ban on use of plastic and PET packaging.

6. [WHO official calls for more investment in pharma R&D](#) – Hindu Business Line

Calling for greater research and innovation in the healthcare sector, a senior official of the World Health Organisation (WHO) said investments in research can increase the share of healthcare to India’s GDP from the current one per cent. Speaking at the 19th convocation of IIHMR University on Sunday, Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South East Asia Region said, “Research is essential to ensure the right mix of technologies to serve today’s health needs. The country needs to increase investments in research and also in the healthcare sector. This means that the total dedicated contribution from the GDP should increase, which is currently not more than 1 per cent.”

7. [Prices of 56 drugs to come down; NPPA fixes ceiling rates](#) – Times of India

Prices of 56 important medicines used in treatment of cancer, diabetes, bacterial infections and blood pressure have been capped by the government thereby reducing the cost by an average of around 25 per cent.

Drug price regulator National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), however, has also increased prices of some of the smaller volume packs of commonly used intravenous fluid such as glucose and sodium chloride injections. Products of major pharmaceuticals firms, including Abbott Healthcare, Cipla, Lupin, Alembic, Alkem Laboratories, Novartis, Biocon, Intas Pharmaceuticals, Hetero Healthcare and erstwhile Ranbaxy (now Sun Pharmaceutical Industries) will be affected by the new price cap announced by NPPA.

8. [Success with immunotherapy in handling hard to treat cancer](#) – DNA

Results of several clinical trials released Sunday show the revolutionary potential of immunotherapy in treating advanced cases of hard to treat types of cancer, such as bladder and lung cancer. One has shown that the antibody Tecentriq -- a product of Genentech, a subsidiary of the Swiss pharmaceutical Roche -- reduced advanced bladder tumours in a quarter of 119 patients tested, with a median survival of almost 15 months. These results compare with a nine

to 10-month survival rate typical with chemotherapy, the researchers said. The researchers plan to carry out a more extensive clinical trial with Tecentriq as first treatment for advanced bladder cancer that mainly affects older people, the vast majority of whom are smokers or former smokers.

9. [Pharma packaging sectors finds customers keen on value-addition in packaging to keep counterfeits at bay](#) – Pharmabiz.com

Pharmaceutical packaging sector sees a surge in demand from the drug manufacturers for anti-counterfeit solutions, child resistance packaging and tamper proof products. Leading packaging players including Essel Propak and Essentra are now experiencing the need to exceed customer expectations from the drug manufacturing sector to deliver superior solutions. With counterfeiting accounting for annual losses estimated at \$75 billion, packaging always been at the core of this industry's strategy to protect itself. Micro text, debossing and embossing, customized varnishes, holographic materials, tamper-evident stickers, RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) track-and-trace tagging and customized graphics and fonts are some of the unique efforts to stall counterfeits to enter the market, Roy Joseph – regional vice president – AMESA, Essel Propak told Pharmabiz in an email.

10. [DTAB turns down govt proposal to empower chemists to supply alternative cheaper drugs with same ingredients](#) – Pharmabiz.com

The Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) of the Union health ministry has turned down a proposal by the ministry to amend Rule 65 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 to provide that the chemist may offer for supply a drug formulation containing the same ingredients but in generic or other cheaper brand name. According to sources, the DTAB which held its 71st meeting on May 13, 2016 did not find favour with the health ministry's proposal in this regard as the experts in the Board, after detailed discussion, felt that there is no guarantee that the bioavailability of the generic medicine so offered by the chemist will be the same as prescribed by the physician and the lack of same effectiveness of the generic medicine may lead to harmful effect on the patient.