

1. [It's not just about \(pharmaceutical\) patents!](#) – Business Today

For the past 20 odd years my academic focus has been on trying to understand and measure how intellectual property rights (IPRs) affect various forms of economic activity. In many ways my career (as a humble PhD student at the London School of Economics) started mere years after what may be termed for international standards of IP rights as the 'big bang': the signing of the WTO's TRIPS Agreement in 1994. A few weeks ago, the US Chamber released the fifth edition of the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, which benchmarks IP standards in 45 economies around the world. I, and my team, have been working with the Chamber since 2011 in developing the IP Index to provide the international IP community with a tool for not only measuring the level of IP protection in a given economy but also - through statistical analysis - examining the relationship between, on the one hand, the strength of IP protection, and, on the other, rates of economic activity and innovation.

1. [It's not just about \(pharmaceutical\) patents!](#) – Business Today
2. [WHO publishes list of antibiotic-resistant bacteria to speed up drug research](#) – Hindustan Times
3. [NPPA's 'suspicion' of drug overpricing upsets industry](#) – Business Today
4. [WHO frets over 12 drug-resistant bacteria besides TB](#) – The Times of India
5. [NPPA to look into diabetes drug price-fixing allegations](#) – The Economic Times
6. [Less than 30% of kidney patients manage to get dialysis in India: Study](#) – Business Standard
7. [Pharma sector to create 58,000 more jobs by 2025, feel experts](#) – The Hindu Business Line
8. [Health ministry revokes ban on drug letrozole, for induction of ovulation in anovulatory infertility](#) – Pharmabiz.com

Given its obvious size and importance to the global economy India has been included in the Index since day 1. In the first edition of the Index - published in 2012 - India achieved a score of 25 per cent of the maximum available score and was ranked last. And, while the Index has grown to now include 45 economies and 10 more indicators measuring the national IP environment, India is still at the bottom achieving a total score of, lo and behold, 25 per cent of the total available score.

2. [WHO publishes list of antibiotic-resistant bacteria to speed up drug research](#) – Hindustan Times

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has published its first-ever list of antibiotic-resistant “priority pathogens”, a catalogue of 12 bacteria families that pose a great threat to human health. The list was drawn up in a bid to guide and promote research and development (R&D) of new antibiotics, as part of WHO’s efforts to address growing resistance among bacteria to medicines currently in use. It highlights the threat of gram-negative bacteria that have inculcated the ability to resist treatment, and are capable of passing on genetic material that allows other microbes to become drug-resistant as well. Consequently, ailments such as urinary tract infections – which were eminently treatable until a few years ago – have now become life-threatening. “This list is a new tool to ensure that R&D responds to urgent public health needs,” says Dr Marie-Paule Kieny, WHO’s assistant director-general for health systems and innovation. “Antibiotic resistance is growing, and we are fast running out of treatment options. If we leave it to market forces, the new antibiotics we urgently need won’t be developed in time.”

3. [NPPA's 'suspicion' of drug overpricing upsets industry](#) – Business Today

The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has put out a list of 634 drugs for 'suspected overcharging'. The exact term used is "suspected cases of non-compliance." These include drugs from some of the leading pharmaceutical companies like Sun Pharma, Cipla, Dr Reddy's, Alembic, Abbott Healthcare, GlaxoSmithKline among others. They have been suspected of selling drugs at a price higher than the ceiling price fixed for them. However, it does not seem to have gone down well with the industry. Those within the pharma industry are miffed that a list of 'suspected' cases has been issued as against a categorical statement on fixing the blame. Reacting to the development, D. G. Shah, Secretary General of the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance, which has leading Indian pharmaceutical companies as its members, says: "They are already saying it is a suspicion. Alembic has already said it is 100 per cent compliant. We have asked our other members to check and let us know."

4. [WHO frets over 12 drug-resistant bacteria besides TB](#) – The Times of India

Five years after the emergence of totally drug-resistant tuberculosis bacteria in India, the World Health Organisation (WHO) on Monday published its first-ever list of antibiotic-resistant "priority pathogens" - a catalogue of 12 families of bacteria that pose the greatest threat to human health. Antibiotic resistant or antimicrobial resistance has emerged as a major public health problem across the country. Some doctors and health groups estimate that antibiotic resistance could claim around 10 million deaths a year. It is not only TB patients, but even those who undergo routine operations -- be they for hip, knee replacement or Caesarean-section deliveries -- need antibiotics. A WHO press release said, "The list was drawn up in a bid to guide and promote research and development (R&D) of new antibiotics, as part of WHO's efforts to address growing global resistance to antimicrobial medicines." The list highlights in particular the threat of gram-negative bacteria that are resistant to multiple antibiotics. These bacteria have built-in abilities to find new ways to resist treatment and can pass along genetic material that allows other bacteria to become drug-resistant as well.

5. [NPPA to look into diabetes drug price-fixing allegations](#) – The Economic Times

India's drug regulator will look into allegations that four leading pharmaceutical companies are colluding to set the price of anti-diabetic drug Vildagliptin, a move that may rattle the almost Rs 10,000-crore market in the country. A whistleblower has written to the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) alleging that Swiss drugmaker Novartis, US-headquartered Abbott and domestic companies Emcure and USV Pharma have together kept prices of various brands of Vildagliptin at artificial levels, going against fair trade practices. ET has a copy of the letter, written on February 27. "We will look into this issue," NPPA chairman Bhupendra Singh told ET. While Novartis denied the allegations, an Abbott spokesperson said, "These allegations are false. We have not received any complaint from NPPA on this matter. Abbott has a non-exclusive licence with Novartis for Zomelis. Abbott determines the price of Zomelis in trade channels and institutions. Abbott does not discuss prices of its products with any other companies." Comments from the other companies could not be immediately obtained.

6. [Less than 30% of kidney patients manage to get dialysis in India: Study](#) – Business Standard

It is estimated that only less than 30 percent of patients suffering from end-stage kidney disease manage to receive dialysis in India, where almost 200,000 new patients need dialysis every year, according to new paper published in the Lancet. The paper, titled 'Ethical issues in dialysis therapy', stated that efforts to provide affordable dialysis to those with end-stage kidney disease should be done in conjunction with more cost-effective efforts to prevent its development and reducing its progression using proven methodologies. Dr Vivekanand Jha, the lead author of the paper and executive director of the George Institute for Global Health, India, said, "The aim of equitable access to renal replacement therapy and best practice care for all patients with end-stage kidney disease presents major ethical, practical and economic challenges for health-care systems. These challenges

include increasing access to dialysis, helping patients and families to make the best decisions about management of advanced kidney failure and ensure that patients receive affordable high quality chronic dialysis that is based on standards accepted worldwide.” The paper argues that health systems should establish programs of kidney disease prevention and health promotion in conjunction with dialysis and transplantation programs. It also argues that health professionals and policy makers should strive reduce the costs of dialysis, using simple, safe and affordable modalities without compromising the quality of therapy provided to the patients.

7. [Pharma sector to create 58,000 more jobs by 2025, feel experts – The Hindu Business Line](#)

In spite of prevailing challenges in the Indian pharma sector, 58,000 additional job opportunities are likely to be created as the industry is expected to grow up to 45 per cent by 2025, experts at the IIHMR University, Jaipur stated. “Despite capping of prices, demonetisation and GST implementation – all of which are perceived to impact the pharma sector adversely, this industry will continue to grow and the major growth engines will be domestic sales, exports, an ageing population, health insurance coverage, increase in per capita spending, medical tourism etc.,” said Dr SD Gupta, Chairman of IIHMR University, during the Pharma Summit 2017 held recently. The pharmaceutical segment is seen as an integral part of the Indian healthcare market, which is estimated to be worth ₹10,000 crore and growing at a CAGR of 22.9 per cent. Globally, the Indian pharma market is the third largest in terms of volume and 13th in terms of value.

8. [Health ministry revokes ban on drug letrozole, for induction of ovulation in anovulatory infertility – Pharmabiz.com](#)

After more than five years since it was banned in the country for risk to human beings and safer alternatives were available in the market, the Union health ministry has now revoked the suspension on manufacture, sale and distribution of the controversial drug, letrozole, for induction of ovulation in anovulatory infertility. “Now, therefore, the Central Government in exercise of the powers conferred by section 26A of the said Act, hereby rescinds the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Health and Family Welfare, published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (i), vide G.S.R. 752(E), dated the 12th October, 2011 with immediate effect, except as respect to things done or omitted to be done before such rescission”, the ministry said in its gazette notification.