

Additional updates:**1. [More than 500 drugs may face ban](#) – The Times of India**

round 500 more medicines, including popular antibiotics and anti-diabetic drugs, may soon face a ban for being "irrational", unsafe and inefficacious, official sources said. The health ministry, which banned 344 fixed-dose combinations (FDCs) including popular cough syrups like Phensedyl, Corex and Benadryl last week, is evaluating a list of over 6,000 products.

According to a senior official, at least 1,000 such FDCs are currently under "severe scrutiny" and 500 of them are likely to face a ban within six months. "There is primary evidence in around 1,000 cases, which shows these are irrational FDCs. However, in some cases the data is incomplete so we have asked for further studies. In around 500 cases, we are at the last leg and waiting for some documents," an official told TOI.

1. [More than 500 drugs may face ban](#) - The Times of India
2. [Indian court grants Pfizer temporary relief on cough syrup ban](#) - Reuters
3. [Pfizer, Abbott stop sale of cough syrups in India post ban](#) – Business Standard (PTI Story)
4. [\(REOPENS DCM 54\)](#) – India Today
5. [Of science, commerce and combination drugs](#) – The Hindu Business Line
6. [Patients Breathe Easy with New Drug Order](#) – Indian Express
7. [Drug-cocktail ban opens can of worms](#) – Telegraph
8. [#dnaEdit: Ban on over 300 drug combination raises questions about India's pharma regulator](#) – DNA

2. [Indian court grants Pfizer temporary relief on cough syrup ban](#) - Reuters

An Indian court granted U.S. drugmaker Pfizer (PFE.N) (PFIZ.NS) an interim injunction on a ban on its popular cough syrup Corex, days after the government ordered it to be prohibited citing a potential risk to humans.

India's health ministry banned the combination of chlorpheniramine maleate and codeine syrup, which Pfizer sells as the cough syrup Corex, in a notice over the weekend.

OPPI, a lobby group for multinational drugmakers, criticized the move, saying codeine-based combinations under the ban have the approval of India's drug controller, and companies were never made aware that these were being reviewed. Pfizer's India unit also said its Corex had the central government's approval.

3. [Pfizer, Abbott stop sale of cough syrups in India post ban](#) – Business Standard (PTI Story)

Drug majors Pfizer and Abbott have stopped sale of their popular cough syrups Corex and Phensedyl respectively, after the government banned over 300 fixed dose combinations (FDCs) drugs.

The two companies, however, said they are exploring "all options" to counter the impact of ban.

Pfizer today said it has stopped the sale of its Corex cough syrup that garnered sales of Rs 176 crore in the nine-month period ended December 31, and said the government's move will have an adverse impact on it.

Commenting on the ban, OPPI DG Ranjana Smetacek said: "This sudden notification comes without warning and uses a very broad brush to deal with the issue! It is a big concern that, with this sweeping action, patients are to be denied access to some medicines that are approved as safe and efficacious in India and globally."

Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) mainly represents MNC's and research-based pharmaceutical companies in India.

4. [\(REOPENS DCM 54\)](#) – India Today

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Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) mainly represents MNCs and research-based pharmaceutical companies in India. PTI AKT ABI

5. [Of science, commerce and combination drugs](#) – The Hindu Business Line

At an industry event a little more than a year ago, KL Sharma, joint secretary with the Health Ministry, had told local representatives with the pharmaceutical industry that the Government would be "ruthless" in enforcing laws governing fixed dose combination (FDC) drugs.

In fact, over the last weekend, the Government has through a notification outlawed over 300 such combination drugs, including cough syrups Corex (from Pfizer) and Phensedyl (Abbott). And the sweep of the ban has thrown the pharmaceutical industry into a huddle, as they explore their next course of action.

The thinking behind the Government's action also lies in Sharma's observation at the same industry meet last year. He had asked industry representatives why some of them were taking State level approvals on their combination products, when they knew Central approvals were required.

6. [Patients Breathe Easy with New Drug Order](#) – Indian Express

The 344 drug combinations for common ailments like cough and cold banned by the Health Ministry last week -end were likely to cost patients more despite availability of "safer alternatives".

Safer, cheaper and more effective - according to the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), the Health Ministry's ban on 344 fixed drug combinations is based on delivering all three to consumers.

7. [Drug-cocktail ban opens can of worms](#) – Telegraph

Drug companies have challenged in court a Union health ministry directive banning over 300 cocktails of two or more drugs that experts say signals a crackdown on India's massive pharmaceuticals market of scientifically unjustified formulations.

Health and drug industry analysts have long claimed that India has a poorly regulated system for drug approvals, which has allowed hundreds of so-called fixed-dose combinations to be sold in the market for years.

The health ministry move last week followed recommendations by an expert panel that described each of these cocktails as having "no therapeutic justification".

8. [#dnaEdit: Ban on over 300 drug combination raises questions about India's pharma regulator](#)

– DNA

Researchers had discovered that over 73 per cent of the 124 analgesic FDC formulations marketed in India were not approved by the regulating authority.

The ban on 335 fixed drug combinations (FDCs), which include some popular cough syrup, analgesic and antibiotic brands, comes after years of public health experts raising questions about the efficacy and appropriateness of these non-steroidal drugs to treat ailments like common cold, cough, fever and other infections. The health ministry, in a gazette notification on March 10, said that these FDCs were "likely to involve risk to human beings whereas safer alternatives to the said drug" were available. How were these drugs cleared for sale, and if never cleared, how were they available over the counter for use and misuse? This important question remains unanswered despite the government ban. FDCs are two or more drugs combined in a fixed ratio and available in a single dosage form. They were conceived as an effective way to manage serious diseases like tuberculosis and AIDS through the particular combination of active ingredients in each individual drug. However, pharma companies realised the huge market for cough syrups, analgesics, and antibiotics to treat colds, fevers, inflammations, and infections, and took advantage of the lax regulatory structures to flood the market with thousands of unapproved FDCs.

1. [Delhi HC stays ban on Pfizer's cough syrup](#) –

Business Standard

The high court (HC) in Delhi granted an interim order on the government ban on Pfizer's cough syrup, Corex, which has an average monthly sale of Rs 20 crore. The company decided to move the HC after the government on Thursday notified a ban on about 300 fixed dose combination drugs. This includes the combination of codeine and chlorpheniramine maleate, sold by Pfizer and Abbott under the respective brand names of Corex and Phensedyl. Abbott, too, has challenged the government order and its petition is to be heard on Tuesday.

"It is a big concern that, with this sweeping action, patients are to be denied access to some medicines that are approved as safe and efficacious in India and globally," said Ranjana Smetacek, director general, Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India, a consortium of multinational drug makers.

1. [Delhi HC stays ban on Pfizer's cough syrup](#) – Business Standard
 2. [About 200 more drugs under price control](#) – Business Standard
 3. [Delhi High Court grants Pfizer temporary relief on cough syrup ban](#) - Deccan Chronicle
 4. [Pfizer granted stay on Corex cough syrup ban by Delhi HC](#) – Hindustan Times
 5. [HC stays ban on Pfizer's Corex, Abbott moves court on Phensedyl](#) – Hindustan Times
 6. [Antibiotic combination marketed by Abbott in India on list of banned drugs](#) – The Times of India
 7. [High Court stays ban on Pfizer's Corex syrup sale](#) – Mint
- Also appeared in [Business Today](#)**
8. [Pfizer India will choke on Corex ban'](#) – The Hindu
- Another article in [The Hindu](#)**
9. [Ban on 343 drugs; Pfizer gets interim stay on Corex](#) - The Hindu Business Line
 10. [Court stays ban on Pfizer's Corex cough syrup](#) – The Financial Express
 11. [Drug formulations under price control rise to over 800](#) – Express Pharma
 12. [Ban to Curb Cough Syrup Addiction](#) – Indian Express
 13. **Editorial by Pranab Mukherjee: [A strong ecosystem for egging on innovation in India will require participation of all stakeholders](#)** – The Economic Times
 14. [Drug regulator orders probe of all products of Johnson & Johnson](#) – Hindustan Times
 15. [Compulsory patent licensing: Govt must come clean on the issue or face another Rahul jibe, phirangiyonki sarkar](#) – Firstpost
 16. [DCGI withdraws alert on eye injection](#) – ET Health
 17. [Suven Life gets patent for neuro-degenerative drug](#) – The Economic Times
 18. [Cannabis drug success in epilepsy trial lifts GW Pharma shares up](#) – Mint
 19. [Financial burden of cancer can harm quality of life](#) – Reuters

2. [About 200 more drugs under price control](#) – Business Standard

The government has issued a new drug pricing control order which effectively brings close to 200 more drug formulations under regulation. In December 2015, while issuing a new National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM), the government had added 106 and removed 70 medicines from the earlier one of 2011, expanding the list to 376, from 348.

Based on the new NLEM, the government on Thursday notified the Drug (Price Control) Amendment Order, 2016. It has about 820 formulations. There were 628 formulations under the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) of 2013, notified in the wake of the NLEM of 2011.

3. [Delhi High Court grants Pfizer temporary relief on cough syrup ban](#) - Deccan Chronicle
Delhi High Court granted US drug maker Pfizer an interim injunction on a ban on its popular cough syrup Corex, days after the government ordered it to be prohibited citing a potential risk to humans.

India's health ministry banned the combination of chlorpheniramine maleate and codeine syrup, which Pfizer sells as the cough syrup Corex, in a notice over the weekend.

OPPI, a lobby group for multinational drugmakers, criticised the move, saying codeine-based combinations under the ban have the approval of India's drug controller, and companies were never made aware that these were being reviewed. Pfizer's India unit also said its Corex had the central government's approval.

4. [Pfizer granted stay on Corex cough syrup ban by Delhi HC](#) – Hindustan Times
The Delhi high court granted US pharmaceuticals firm Pfizer Inc's Indian unit a stay order on Monday, pending a further hearing, on a government ban on its popular cough syrup Corex, two lawyers representing the drugmaker told Reuters.

The health ministry banned the combination of chlorpheniramine maleate and codeine syrup, which Pfizer sells as the cough syrup Corex, in a notice over the weekend saying it could pose a risk to humans.

OPPI, a lobby group for multinational drugmakers, criticised the move, saying codeine-based combinations under the ban have the approval of India's drug controller, and companies were never made aware that these were being reviewed.

5. [HC stays ban on Pfizers Corex, Abbott moves court on Phensedyl](#) – Hindustan Times
The government's ban on 350-odd drugs to curb the misuse of medicines in India has landed American pharma giants Pfizer and Abbott in a fix. Abbott, the maker of popular cough syrup Phensedyl, has approached the Delhi High Court against the ministry of health and family welfare's order banning its popular over the counter brand (OTC). "Abbott has reviewed the DCGI (Drug Controller General of India) notification and we are concerned about the unilateral approach in prohibiting the manufacture, sale and distribution of certain fixed dose combinations that have already been approved for use by the DCGI. We are exploring all options," the Abbott spokesperson told HT. Abbott Healthcare is a unit of US-based Abbott Laboratories.

The Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India, which backs foreign drug majors such as Pfizer and Abbott, said: "With this sweeping action, patients are to be denied access to some medicines that are approved as safe in India and globally."

6. [Antibiotic combination marketed by Abbott in India on list of banned drugs](#) – The Times of India
A Reuters investigation revealed in December that a unit of Abbott in India was selling a combination of the antibiotics cefixime and azithromycin without approval from the central government. The combination is not approved for sale in major pharmaceutical markets, including the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France and Japan.

Abbott markets the combination of cefixime and azithromycin under the Zimnic AZ brand. At least 15 other companies in India manufacture and market the same combination under different brand names.

7. [High Court stays ban on Pfizer's Corex syrup sale](#) – Mint
In a major relief to US pharmaceutical Pfizer Inc.'s India unit, the Delhi high court on Monday granted a stay on a government ban on its cough syrup Corex.

The government banned 344 drug combinations last week after a panel of experts found they posed a health risk.

Earlier in the day, in a statement to the BSE, Pfizer India said that the prohibition of the drug would likely adversely impact the company's revenue and profitability. Corex recorded sales of Rs.176 crore for the first nine months of the financial year ended on 31 December 2015.

Also appeared in [Business Today](#)

8. [Pfizer India will choke on Corex ban'](#) – The Hindu
The ban on cough syrup Corex will hit Pfizer India hard, the Indian arm of U.S. pharmaceutical giant Pfizer said on Monday.

Pfizer India's stock plummeted 9 per cent and finally closed with a loss of 8.67 per cent at Rs 1760.80 on the BSE, after the ban that was announced last week.

The Ministry of Health had on March 10, prohibited the manufacture, sale and distribution of 350 fixed dose combinations, including Corex, over safety concerns.

Another article in [The Hindu](#)

9. [Ban on 343 drugs; Pfizer gets interim stay on Corex](#) - The Hindu Business Line
Even as the Health Ministry's ban on 340-odd combination drugs kicked in on Monday, two drug majors Pfizer and Abbott approached the Delhi High Court. The day ended with Pfizer getting an interim stay on the ban of its cough syrup Corex.

A similar petition by Abbott against the ban on its Phensedyl is scheduled to come up tomorrow, an industry source familiar with the development confirmed. Pfizer's next hearing will come up a week later.

10. [Court stays ban on Pfizer's Corex cough syrup](#) – The Financial Express
In a relief to pharma major Pfizer and giving hopes for several others, the Delhi High Court on Monday stayed a government notification that banned manufacture and sale of the US-based multinational's popular cough syrup Corex, and also directed the government not to take coercive steps against its retailers and distributors, reports from the Bureau in New Delhi.

The government had on March 10 banned the manufacture, sale and distribution for human use of 350-odd fixed dose combination (FDC) drugs — including codeine-chlorpheniramine FDC that Corex is — with immediate effect.

11. [Drug formulations under price control rise to over 800](#) – Express Pharma
The process of fixing the ceiling prices could take another two months

The government has increased the number of drugs under price control to over 800 formulations, bringing medicines used for treatment of diseases such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, analgesics and cardiovascular diseases under its purview.

Officially confirming addition of over 200 formulations under price cap, the Department of Pharmaceuticals has notified amendment of the Schedule I of Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) 2013 for substituting the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) 2011 by NLEM 2015.

12. [Ban to Curb Cough Syrup Addiction](#) – Indian Express
The recent ban on sale of combination drugs, Codeine-laced cough syrups Phensedyl and Corex in particular, by the Centre has come as a relief for parents who hope that it would check addiction of the youths effectively.

Phensedyl and Corex containing codeine, a narcotic with addictive potential, were meant to be sold only on prescription but were easily available over the counter and several youths had access to those. The unscientific combination of codeine along with other ingredients in these syrups gives the user a euphoric effect and emits no stink.

13. **Editorial by Pranab Mukherjee: [A strong ecosystem for egging on innovation in India will require participation of all stakeholders](#)** – The Economic Times

Innovation is the key to progress and prosperity. It converts knowledge into social good and economic wealth. There are many social needs that public, private and civil society institutions have not been able to meet fully. At the same time, there is tremendous ingenuity among the people, which if tapped, could address the necessities of the common man.

With a strong R&D base and academic talent, India has the potential to become a leading innovation player in certain key economic sectors such as biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, automotive components, information technology, software and IT-enabled services. At the same time, it has a significant number of people living below the poverty line.

14. [Drug regulator orders probe of all products of Johnson & Johnson](#) – Hindustan Times

More trouble for baby products maker, Johnson and Johnson. Indian top drug regulation body has ordered scrutiny over Johnson and Johnson products. Last month, J&J had lost a lawsuit in United States after a 62 year old woman died of ovarian cancer, reportedly caused due to the prolonged use of Johnson's baby talc.

The drug regulator in India has ordered sample testing of J&J products across the country.

"The brands is under scrutiny at our end and we have ordered sample testing across India," GN Singh, Drug Controller General of India told HT. "Depending on preliminary outcomes we will extend the probe." Further, government will inspect J&J factories and manufacturing units in India, in case of non-compliance found.

15. [Compulsory patent licensing: Govt must come clean on the issue or face another Rahul jibe, phirangiyonki sarkar](#) – Firstpost

That the Indian government has surreptitiously reassured the US Indo Business Council that compulsory licensing will not be issued to save in emergencies and for non-commercial purpose, is alarming to say the least.

The UPA II courageously allowed compulsory licensing of the kidney cancer drug patented by the German drug major Bayer when it was being made available in India at an unconscionably high price of Rs 2.88 lakh per month. An intrepid Hyderabad based generic drug company Natco Pharma applied and got the compulsory license to manufacture the same drug and make it available at a vastly reasonable price of Rs 8,800 per month.

16. [DCGI withdraws alert on eye injection](#) – ET Health

The alert on stopping the use of Bevacizumab to treat eye-related ailments has been withdrawn across the country.

The drug regulatory body announced this after an expert committee formed to evaluate the safety concerns pertaining to the drug gave a green signal to its usage.

Bevacizumab, a cancer drug sold under the name Avastin, is also used for multiple retinal conditions like diabetic macular edema, retinal venous occlusions and age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a leading cause of vision loss.

17. [Suven Life gets patent for neuro-degenerative drug](#) – The Economic Times

Suven Life Sciences has been granted a patent each by China, Eurasia and Hong Kong for a drug used in the treatment of neuro-degenerative diseases.

The company has been granted "one product patent from China, one product patent from Eurasia and one product patent from Hong Kong corresponding to the New Chemical Entities (NCEs) for the treatment of disorders associated with Neuro-degenerative diseases", it said in a BSE filing.

18. [Cannabis drug success in epilepsy trial lifts GW Pharma shares up](#) – Mint

An experimental cannabis-based drug has successfully treated children with a rare form of severe epilepsy in a keenly anticipated clinical trial, more than doubling the value of its maker GW Pharmaceuticals.

The study of GW's Epidiolex in Dravet syndrome is the first of four final-stage Phase III epilepsy trials, with results expected this year, that the drugmaker hopes will confirm the therapeutic benefits of cannabinoids, the active ingredients found in marijuana.

GW said on Monday the 120-patient trial showed patients taking Epidiolex achieved a median reduction in monthly convulsive seizures of 39% compared with a reduction on placebo of 13%.

19. [Financial burden of cancer can harm quality of life](#) – Reuters

Almost a third of U.S. cancer survivors face financial burdens, and physical and mental health tends to be worse for those who do, according to a new study.

There are more than 14 million cancer survivors in the U.S., the authors wrote in a paper released by the journal Cancer.

"We found that cancer survivors with three or more financial problems had clinically meaningful differences in their physical and mental health-related quality of life and were two to three times more likely to report depressed mood and six to eight times more likely to worry about cancer recurrence," lead author Hrishikesh P. Kale of Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond told Reuters Health by email.