

1. [Budget 2016: Lower tax on patent income to boost R&D](#) – The Times of India

The Budget has introduced a special 'royalty tax' which lowers the effective rate of tax on income earned from patents. The objective is to encourage indigenous research and development, and to make India an innovation hub. The benefit will be available across knowledge-based sectors of the economy, including pharmaceuticals.

The FM proposed a special patent regime with a 10% rate of tax on income from worldwide commercialization of patents which are developed and registered in India. Usually, the domestic company which has commercialized the patent would be paying tax from income at the standard rate of 30% after deducting expense. With this proposal, the tax liability on income from commercialization

of patents goes down, and thus would be beneficial for knowledge-based firms, experts say, adding that it would reduce the outflow of intellectual property from India.

2. [Health Budget 2016: A mere eyewash?](#) – The Times of India

The much awaited Union budget 2016-17 is here. FM Arun Jaitley has announced that the government will set up 3000 new drug stores across the country to handle the shortage of drugs, especially in rural areas. He has also provided health insurance of up to Rs 1 lakh per family.

1. [Budget 2016: Lower tax on patent income to boost R&D](#) – The Times of India
 2. [Health Budget 2016: A mere eyewash?](#) – The Times of India
 3. [Emphasis on healthcare muted: Dr Reddy's chairman](#) – Business Standard
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Another important announcement was about the launch of National Dialysis Programme to deal with the high costs involved in renal dialysis processes. As part of the programme, every district hospital will have facilities of renal dialysis. Jaitley also added in his budget speech that dialysis equipment will be exempt from customs duty, fully or partially.

3. [Emphasis on healthcare muted: Dr Reddy's chairman](#) – Business Standard

Dr Reddy's Laboratories chairman Satish Reddy said the budgetary emphasis on the healthcare front was fairly muted even though the focus on infrastructure, rural development and social sector spending are important catalysts for boosting the economy's growth rate.

While certain initiatives such as the new health insurance scheme or the National Dialysis Services programme are good, perhaps a more holistic, well rounded thrust would have served the sector better in delivering good health to those in need of it, according to him.

Also appeared in [The Hindu](#), [NDTV](#)

4. [NHRC notice over excise duty on life-saving drugs](#) – The Hindu

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken suo motu cognisance of reports that the Centre has recently removed a custom duty waiver and also imposed excise duty on certain life saving drugs, making them costlier for the patients.

The National Human Rights Commission has observed that any action that pushed up the cost of medicines was bound to adversely affect people's right to health care, especially at a time when the healthcare system in the country as a whole was plagued with various ills.

The National Human Rights Commission has issued notices to the Secretaries of the Union Ministry of Finance and Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, calling for their reports in the matter within four weeks.

5. [Pharma cos probed for 'inefficient' generic drugs](#) – The Times of India

An expert committee formed by the health ministry has recommended that the licences of at least 10 leading pharmaceutical companies to manufacture a generic version of the life-saving drug - Liposomal Amphotericin B - be suspended. The drug is used to treat fungal infections in critically-ill patients.

The health ministry, in its reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, has confirmed the action. It states that show-cause notices had been issued to 10 companies manufacturing the injectable drug to reply within three weeks as to why licences issued to them for their product Liposomal Amphotericin B injection should not be suspended.

Generic drug is copy of original drug whose patent has ended. It costs 80-85% less because there's no research and development cost involved.

6. [Budget has nothing for medical device industry: AIMED](#) – The Times of India

Even as the AP government has proposed a medical devices manufacturing park in the Port City, the Association of Indian Medical Device Industry (AIMED) on Tuesday expressed concern over the 'neglect' of the sector in the Union Budget 2016-17.

In a release here, the association coordinator Rajiv Nath said, "The government is well aware that three mega medical device parks are coming up in the country - in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. If we do not provide appropriate budgetary and regulatory support, there will not be much investment. And even if investment comes, these units will not become commercially viable in the absence of support from the government."

7. [Medical devices should come under Drug Price Control Order: Department of Pharmaceuticals](#)

– The Economic Times

To control the high prices of medical devices such as stents and implants, Department of Pharmaceuticals has proposed to Health Ministry to bring them under the Drug Price Control Order.

"For the first time the Department of Pharmaceuticals has proposed to the Health Ministry for bringing medical devices and stents under the drug price control order," Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers Ananth Kumar told reporters here today.

As per the procedure they (Health Ministry) will prepare the National List of Essential Devices which will be then enforced by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), he added.

8. [Budget 2016-17: Cuts in R&D tax breaks disappoints life sciences industry](#) – Mint

The Union budget on Monday left many pharmaceutical and biotech companies disappointed due to the proposed cut of weighted tax deduction on research and development (R&D) expenses.

The Indian pharmaceutical industry spends, on an average, about 6-8% of their sales on R&D, compared to 15-20% by companies in the developed world.

The size of the Indian pharmaceutical industry is around \$15.2 billion as on 2014, according to industry body Assocham and market research firm RNCOS.

"The deduction for expenditures on scientific research (R&D) being cut from 200% to 150% beginning April 2017 and eventually phasing out from 2020 will have a negative impact on the Indian pharmaceutical industry," said Ramesh Swaminathan, chief financial officer, Lupin Ltd.

9. [Rs 120-a-month therapy gives breast cancer patients hope](#) – The Times of India

combination of anti-diabetic and chemotherapy drugs, costing less than Rs 120 a month, has improved survival rates by a significant 40% in a section of breast cancer patients. A pilot study by Tata Memorial Hospital has brought hope to patients of triple negative breast cancer, who had no affordable options to prevent a relapse so far.

Around 33% of breast cancers at the Tata Hospital are triple negative. This form of cancer affects younger women more and often can be difficult to treat. The findings, based on 64 patients treated at a Chiplun-based outreach hospital attached to Tata, showed that the five-year survival rate of 37 women who took the maintenance doses rose to 90% as compared to 50% in those who did not take the drugs. The patients were given two pills of anti-cancer and one anti-diabetic drug every day for one-and-a-half years.

10. [In US, waste in cancer drugs costs \\$3 billion/year](#) – The Times of India

The federal Medicare programme and private health insurers waste nearly \$3 billion every year buying cancer medicines that are thrown out because many drug makers distribute the drugs only in vials that hold too much for most patients, researchers have found.

The expensive drugs are injected by nurses who measure the amount needed for a particular patient and then, because of safety concerns, discard the rest.

If drug makers distributed vials containing smaller quantities, nurses could pick the right volume for a patient and minimise waste. Instead, many drug makers exclusively sell one-size-fits-all vials, ensuring that many smaller patients pay thousands of dollars for medicine they are never given, according to researchers at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, who published a study on Tuesday in BMJ, formerly known as the British Medical Journal.

11. [AstraZeneca cancer drug fails in mesothelioma test](#) – ET Health

A closely watched AstraZeneca drug did not extend lives of patients with the rare cancer mesothelioma when given on its own, but the drugmaker said it still believed the medicine had a role to play in combination treatments.

Mesothelioma is a deadly form of cancer that affects the lining of the lungs or abdomen. Patients typically live only nine to 12 months after initial diagnosis.

In a clinical trial tremelimumab failed to meet the goal of improving overall survival in hard-to-treat mesothelioma patients whose disease had already been treated unsuccessfully with standard drugs, AstraZeneca said on Monday.

12. [The budget is not committed to overall healthcare](#) – ET Health

Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley must be applauded for bringing budget's focus on rural community as well as senior citizens. Budget's proposal to set up 3,000 medicine shops in rural areas and announcement of insurance scheme for senior citizens is noteworthy.

But then, given India's humungous population with majority of people having very modest income, the biggest challenge that our country faces is to ensure low cost quality healthcare access for majority of citizens.

13. [Antibiotic-resistant pathogens: Fighting infections with viruses](#) – Hindustan Times

The treatment harnesses viruses called phages to attack and kill dangerous bacteria, including 'superbugs' which have become progressively resistant to antibiotics.

In Novou's case, it was Staphylococcus, a common bacteria which can cause anything from a simple boil to horrible flesh-eating infections.

Mostly ignored up to now by mainstream medicine, the alternative treatment has started to gain adherents over the last 15 years, especially in France, Belgium and the United States.

The renewed interest is partly driven by a problem which the World Health Organization (WHO) recently described as a "global health crisis": the dramatic rise of antibiotic-resistant strains of deadly pathogens.

14. [Overuse of drugs gives rise to 'super bugs'](#) – The Hindu

Between 6 and 10 per cent of cases in private hospitals and up to 30 per cent of cases in government hospitals are untreatable due to Anti-Microbial Resistance

It is a lethal combination that is laying many Indians low. Low priced antibiotics, easy availability, unapproved combinations and untreated effluents in the capital of generic drug manufacturing industry. And the effect is showing.

"Between 6 and 10 per cent of cases in private hospitals and up to 30 per cent of cases in government hospitals are untreatable due to Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR)," informs Dr Sanjeev Singh. Called superbugs or drug-resistant bacteria, the World Health Organisation (WHO) now estimates that this can cause 10 million deaths worldwide by 2050.

15. [Jan Aushadhi Yojana to be launched in a month](#) – Mint

Jan Aushadhi, the government scheme to make quality drugs available at affordable prices, will be relaunched in March with private participation, union minister for chemicals and fertilizer Ananth Kumar said on Tuesday.

The announcement came a day after finance minister Arun Jaitley, presenting the Union Budget said the government will open 3,000 Jan Aushadhi stores across the country in 2016-17.

According to the department of pharmaceuticals, more than 500 medicines will be covered by the scheme. Kumar added that the scheme, which was started in 2008, will be renamed the Prime Minister's Jan Aushadhi Yojana.

16. [Dedicated Pharma Cluster on Cards](#) – Indian Express

The State Government is planning for a dedicated pharmaceutical cluster in the industrial estates around the City.

This was informed to the executive members of the Pharmaceutical Council of India who had a meeting with Chief Secretary Aditya Prasad Padhi at the State Secretariat here on Monday.

“The Government will provide all support to the companies which will set up employment intensive enterprises in Odisha,” Padhi said.

17. [Novo Nordisk and AstraZeneca seek tonic from key drug trials](#) – Reuters

Novo Nordisk and AstraZeneca, two drugmakers whose financial outlooks disappointed investors last month, are both hoping for a boost in the coming weeks from results of two closely watched clinical trials.

AstraZeneca wants to prove its blood-thinner Brilinta can help stroke patients, in addition to those with heart problems, while Novo aims to showcase the cardiovascular benefits of its blockbuster diabetes treatment Victoza.

While positive outcomes are not guaranteed, industry analysts believe AstraZeneca may have the easier task.

18. [Rajiv Memani: Time to improve on the good work done](#) – Business Standard

The 2016 Budget has come at a time of unusual volatility in the international economic environment. Amid the gloomy landscape, the Economic Survey called India "a haven of stability and an outpost of opportunity". India's macroeconomy is stable, founded on the government's commitment to fiscal consolidation and low inflation. Its economic growth is amongst the highest in the world, helped by a reorientation of government spending towards needed public infrastructure. These achievements are remarkable, given the continuing global headwinds and two successive poor monsoons. The task now is to sustain the growth in an even more difficult global environment.

The finance minister has recognised that much ground has shifted in the global tax debate. Many countries -including those with relatively lower corporate tax rates - have enacted the so-called "patent or innovation box" regime to spur innovation and domestic manufacturing. The regime grants a lower tax rate on profits from intangibles, "boxing" them off from the rest of the system. Along with the road map for phasing out tax incentives, the Budget has introduced a "patent box" regime in India under which patent-related income would be taxed at 10 per cent.