

1. [U.S. industry body says India agreed to not issue 'compulsory' drug licences](#) – Reuters

India has given private assurances that it will not grant licences allowing local firms to override patents and make cheap copies of drugs by big Western drugmakers, a U.S. business advocacy group said.

The comments were revealed in a submission last month by the U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) to the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), which is reviewing global intellectual property laws for an annual report identifying trade barriers to U.S. companies.

The USTR has placed India on its "priority watch" list for two years in a row saying the country's patent laws unfairly favour local drug makers. A bone of contention has been a legal provision that allows the overriding of patents on original drugs and granting of 'compulsory licences' to local firms to make cheaper copycat medicines.

1. [U.S. industry body says India agreed to not issue 'compulsory' drug licences](#) – Reuters

Also appeared in [The Economic Times](#)

2. [India 'privately' against patent-overriding drug permits: USIBC](#) – The Economic Times

3. [Cap profits, cut drug prices: Panel](#) – The Times of India

4. [Drug price regulator NPPA seeks to recover Rs 4,551 crore for overcharging](#) – ET Health

Also appeared in [Business Standard](#)

5. [Nadda asks states to use up health funds first](#) – Business Standard

6. [Generic gliptin's market grows at the expense of patented medicines](#) – Business Standard

7. [Dinesh Thakur, whistle-blower of unsafe medicines, takes on Made in India](#) – Mint

8. [Health sector has been given 'top' priority in budget: Nadda](#) – Firstpost

9. [20% of patients in India resistant to last-resort antibiotics](#) – Mint

10. [Antibiotic Resistance Is Worrisome, but Not Hopeless](#) – NDTV

11. [Another panel to probe supply of cancer drugs: Min](#) – The Times of India

12. [Generic drug stores open doors, prescriptions yet to make the switch](#) – The Times of India

13. [Panel for restructuring of MCI](#) – Business Standard

Also appeared in [The Economic Times](#)

2. [India 'privately' against patent-overriding drug permits: USIBC](#) – The Economic Times

Indian government has "privately reassured" industry lobby group US-India Business Council that the country would not invoke 'compulsory licensing' for commercial purposes that could allow local drugmakers to make cheaper products by overriding patents of big global players.

The US-India Business Council, however, wants the Indian government to make "a public commitment" to forego using compulsory licensing for commercial purposes and use this clause for public emergencies only, the advocacy group has said in a submission to the US Trade Representative.

3. [Cap profits, cut drug prices: Panel](#) – The Times of India

In a move that could significantly bring down prices of expensive medicines, a high-level committee has recommended capping of trade margins for costly drugs at 35% of MRP (maximum retail price). The recommendations - part of a report submitted by an inter-ministerial committee - have been put in the public domain by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, inviting comments on the suggestions. The committee was set up to study

steep hike in trade margins and suggest ways to increase affordability of expensive medicines and medical devices across the country.

Though the report suggests capping trade margins on expensive drugs at 35% of MRP, it also recommended a different slab for lesser priced medicines. For products priced at Rs 2 per unit, the margin may be capped at 50%. The government is now trying to narrow this gap and pass on the price benefit to consumers. After incorporating suggestions, the proposal will take the shape of a Cabinet note and a final decision will be taken after that.

4. [Drug price regulator NPPA seeks to recover Rs 4,551 crore for overcharging](#) – ET Health
Drug price regulator NPPA is trying to recover a whopping Rs 4,551 crore, including interest, from various pharma companies for overcharging as of February this year. As much as 82 per cent of the total amount is under litigation.

"Since inception of National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), there are 1,389 cases as on 29.02.2016 where demand notices have been issued by NPPA to pharmaceutical companies," Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers Hansraj Gangaram Ahir said in a reply to Lok Sabha today.

Also appeared in [Business Standard](#)

5. [Nadda asks states to use up health funds first](#) – Business Standard
States should first learn to spend the money allocated to healthcare through the Budget instead of getting into an argument about the amount being allocated, Union Health Minister J P Nadda said on Tuesday.

"There is a huge misunderstanding that we have less money. There is no question of shortage. The point is that you (states) should spend it properly. Last year, Bihar returned more than Rs 1,000 crore. Where is the shortage of money? We should first build capacity to spend it," he said.

Health budget has been increased by 21 per cent from Rs 25,946 crore in 2015-16 to Rs 31,300 crore in 2016-17. "Every year, there has been a trend that real health allocation (revised estimates or RE) has been less than the Budget health allocation. This time, RE has been increased by almost Rs 1,500 crore."

6. [Generic gliptin's market grows at the expense of patented medicines](#) – Business Standard
In their bid to get a larger share of the pie in the anti-diabetic drug market, 14 companies have launched their own teneligliptin during the last eight months. In contrast, the market growth for four other gliptins – which are patented - has plateaued. Doctors believe this generic drug may eclipse the patented ones in future.

According to the latest data of IMS Health, a global information and technology services company, those which have launched their own teneligliptin in last eight months include Glenmark, Intas, Ajanta, Eris Life Sciences, Mankind, Micro Labs, Alembic, Zydus Cadila, Unichem, Wockhardt, Corona Remedies and Macleods.

On the other hand, the monthly sales of other four patented gliptins – Saxagliptin, Linagliptin, Vildagliptin and Sitagliptin – have seen a miniscule sales increase in last 6-8 months. The patent of these drugs lies with AstraZeneca, Boehringer Ingelheim, Novartis and MSD respectively. While the patented drugs cost around Rs 38-45 per day's dosage, the teneligliptin is priced in the range of Rs 7-12 for per day's dosage.

7. [Dinesh Thakur, whistle-blower of unsafe medicines, takes on Made in India](#) – Mint
The man who helped US prosecutors reach the largest safety settlement ever with a generic-drug company is now trying to take on the entire pharmaceuticals industry in India, which he alleges makes unsafe medicines and sells them worldwide.

Dinesh Thakur, the whistle-blower who helped the US government show systemic product-testing failures at Ranbaxy that led to the \$500 million settlement in 2013, says poor-quality manufacturing is a problem at many more companies in India, the second largest supplier of over-the-counter and prescription drugs in the US. Frustrated by a fractured oversight system and the lack of progress even after the Ranbaxy case, Thakur is now suing the Indian government to force an overhaul of the industry's regulation.

8. [Health sector has been given 'top' priority in budget: Nadda](#) – Firstpost

The health sector has been given "top" priority and there has been a "sizable" increase of 21 per cent in this year's budget allocation, the government on Tuesday said.

"Health has been given top priority. A high allocation for health has been given in this year's budget. Providing Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and reaching out to the poor and vulnerable which is this NDA government's commitment, I think this budget will be helpful in taking that forward," Union Health Minister J P Nadda said.

9. [20% of patients in India resistant to last-resort antibiotics](#) – Mint

About 20% of patients in India have become resistant to carbapenems, the most advanced class of antibiotics, a survey has found, showing that the fight against potentially fatal infections is getting tougher.

The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), which functions under the health ministry, came up with the finding from a surveillance programme it started last year at seven tertiary-care government hospitals.

NCDC's data shows that up to 70% of patients have become resistance to common antibiotics. "In this situation, we need to develop a new set of antibiotics, which will more advanced than carbapenems," said Garg. Antibiotics are at different stages of development at Indian pharmaceutical companies, but not one drug maker is ready with a marketable medicine.

10. [Antibiotic Resistance Is Worrisome, but Not Hopeless](#) – NDTV

A century ago, the top three causes of death were infectious diseases. More than half of all people dying in the United States died because of germs. Today, they account for a few percent of deaths at most. We owe much of that, of course, to antibiotics, which came into use around the middle of the previous century.

Concern about the rise of resistance often focuses on overuse of antibiotics. There's plenty of evidence that we, the users, are the problem. In a recent multicountry study conducted by the World Health Organization, almost two-thirds of people believed that antibiotics could be used to treat colds and the flu, which are, of course, caused by viruses. Antibiotics kill bacteria, not viruses. The same number of people also knew that antibiotic resistance was a real problem that could affect them, but this knowledge did not seem to prevent them from misusing the drugs.

11. [Another panel to probe supply of cancer drugs: Min](#) – The Times of India

The state government on Tuesday decided to set up another inquiry committee headed by the director of Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (IGIMS), Patna, to probe alleged irregularities in supply of cancer drugs.

Replying to a question raised by Sanjay Kumar Singh of CPI during the pre-lunch session in the Bihar legislative council, health minister Tej Pratap Yadav said the panel would submit its report within a month.

The minister said the panel would probe the complaints regarding irregularities in supply of anti-cancer drug worth Rs 33 lakh of a particular company (between June 12, 2015 and January 2016) in which the wife of an IGIMS doctor was allegedly involved. "Guilty persons would not be spared," the minister said.

12. [Generic drug stores open doors, prescriptions yet to make the switch](#) – The Times of India
Soon after Union finance minister Arun Jaitley announced allocations to boost Jan Aushadhi stores, the city recently got its first generic medicine shop at Ghatkopar. A second such store in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region has opened in Dombivli. Over 400 medicines used to treat cancer, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, tuberculosis and the like are available at one-fifth or one-tenth of the cost of their branded counterparts in the stores.

About a dozen such stores have already opened their doors in Maharashtra over the last one year. The Jan Aushadhi shops scan the original prescription and store them for future reference, while patients' names are also registered in their database for better surveillance and communication.

13. [Panel for restructuring of MCI](#) – Business Standard

A parliamentary panel has called for restructuring the Medical Council of India (MCI), stating that its current composition is "biased" against larger public health goals and is an "exclusive club" of medical doctors from corporate hospitals and private practice.

The Committee, which presented its report in Rajya Sabha today, said the elected MCI neither represents "professional excellence nor its ethos", and that more than half of the members are either from corporate hospitals or in private practice.

"The Committee is surprised to note that even doctors nominated under Section 3(1)(a) and 3(1)(e) to represent state governments and Central government have been nominated from corporate private hospitals which are not only highly commercialised and provide care at exorbitant cost but have also been found to be violating value frameworks," the report said.