

1. [Prices of 500 drugs reduced in last two years: Ananth Kumar](#) – Business Standard

Government has reduced the prices of 500 drugs, surgical supplies and other medical consumables in last two years, Fertiliser Minister Ananth Kumar today said. Sharing the achievements of the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers in last two years, Kumar said that Jan Aushadhi Stores which provide medicines at a reasonable prices are being increased from around 100 (in 2014) to 3,000. "Strong action was taken at the pricing regulation end to reduce essential drug prices and provide relief to the public and the ailing. Prices of about 500 drug formulations, surgical supplies and medical consumables have been reduced," Kumar said in a statement.

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3. [India-US investment treaty may not be signed in June](#) – The Hindu Business Line
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2. [CEO Poll: Modi govt meets expectations of India Inc on reforms](#) – Business Standard

With the Narendra Modi government completing two years in office, an overwhelming majority of the 50 chief executive officers (CEOs) surveyed by this newspaper said the government has met their expectations on economic reforms. The average rating was seven out of 10. "I think there are perceptible signs of improvement in the ease of doing business. We have also seen some important policy changes, like the Bankruptcy Code Bill, **the National Intellectual Property Rights Policy** and the Startup India policy, which are reflective of this government's intent to enable economic growth. What we need now is a bigger push in the investment policy in manufacturing to make it viable for Make in India to succeed," said **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, chairman and managing director of Biocon.**

3. [India-US investment treaty may not be signed in June](#) – The Hindu Business Line

India and the US are unlikely to sign the long-pending bilateral investment treaty (BIT) during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington next month. A high-level delegation of officials from the US had visited India earlier this month and had held talks with Finance Ministry on the investment pact. The next round of talks is expected to take place during the second round of India-US Strategic and Commercial Dialogue. However, to ensure early conclusion of the talks, issues of intellectual property rights and the totalisation agreement are being discussed separately.

4. [Opioids are pain in the back: Study](#) – Financial Express

A new research from The George Institute for Global Health and the University of Sydney has found that opioids painkillers, a common treatment for low back pain, provide minimal benefit. The findings of the systematic review, published in JAMA Internal Medicine, also demonstrate that many patients do not tolerate the medicine, with half of the trial participants withdrawing because of adverse effects to the medication or lack of effect. "For people who can tolerate the medicine, taking an opioid analgesic such as oxycodone will reduce pain, but the effect is likely to be small. This result reinforces the recent US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendation that if opioids are used, they should be combined with non-drug options such as physiotherapy or non-opioid painkillers, as appropriate."

5. [Food regulator set to ban 'cancerous' bread additive](#) – Times of India

The country's food regulator has recommended to the health ministry that potassium bromate be removed from the list of permissible additives. The move to drop the additive from the list comes after a study by Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) suggested presence of potassium bromate, which has been identified as a possible carcinogen by the World Health Organisation (WHO), in 84% of 38 commonly available pre-packaged breads and ready-to-eat pizzas. Health minister J P Nadda said he has asked FSSAI to examine the issue and fast-track its report and promised to take immediate action. "I have told FSSAI to take matter seriously and submit a report," he said.

6. [President Mukherjee invites China to be part of India's growth story](#) – Hindustan Times

India wants a bigger market for its products from the pharmaceutical and IT sectors in China, President Pranab Mukherjee said on Wednesday, adding that expanding bilateral trade would make it more equitable.

There is potential for economic and commercial cooperation between the two countries and "the stability of our relationship in recent years provides an enabling basis for utilising these opportunities," Mukherjee said at an India-China business forum. "Although the trade balance continues to be in favour of China, we look forward to expanding our commerce to make it more equitable. India would like to see a greater market for our products in China – particularly in sectors where we have natural complementarities – as in the areas of drugs and pharmaceuticals, IT and IT-related services and agro-products," Mukherjee said.

7. [Your medical bill is set to come down soon](#) – Hindustan Times

The government has decided to regulate more than 350 drug formulations, which are sold at the companies' own discretion. This will bring down prices of drugs, which fall under the National List of Essential Medicines by up to 80%. These 350 formulations are used to make around 500 drugs, including polio drops, glucose, plasma sachets, hormonal injections and multivitamins. So far 305 formulations have come under price control, out of 799. For 350-odd formulations the government did not have market data. Formulations are used to make drugs: for instance, paracetamol is used to make Crocin. The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) had written to the department of pharmaceuticals (DoP) in April to amend the Drug Pricing Control Order.

8. [Health Ministry to bring steroid-based skin creams under Schedule H drugs for patient safety](#) – Pharmabiz

In order to address the concerns over sale of steroid or other prescription-drugs-based skin creams advertised and sold without prescription for cosmetic and skin problems, government has considered the proposal to amend abolishing a footnote in the country's rule book on medicines that currently exempts skin creams from being labeled as Schedule H drugs. The recommendation for such an exemption is in view of the consideration of the proposal made by the Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists (IADVL) to amend note appended to Schedule H omitting exemption for topical or external use for steroid preparations from the provisions of Schedule H drugs during the recent Drugs Technical

Advisory Board (DTAB) meet held in Delhi. Dermatologists had complained to the government that the exemption allowed pharmaceutical companies to sell potentially dangerous medications that may cause harm to patients who, unaware of their side effects, use them without medical guidance. The revised rule will apply only to skin creams that contain steroids or other prescription drugs. It will not apply to ordinary face-cleansing and fairness creams and moisturisers.

9. [In search of affordable medicines for the poor](#) – governancenow.com
Russia, China urge BRICS bloc to have coherent policy for affordable medicines. A high-level panel hosted by India as part of the BRICS group of countries discussed the issues of trade deals that inhibit access to medicines and also limit policy space for governments to legislate in public interest. Minister of state for health and family welfare Shripad Naik called the proliferation of regional trade agreements “a reality” but added that these processes should move “within the ambit” of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Increasing patents for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – the incidence of which has steeply risen in India in the past few years – and also for biologics, is a glaring reality that poses emerging challenges to governments. The flexibilities ensured under the WTO’s Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement “are less likely to solve the problem of affordability and accessibility for this”. The developing states will have to find alternate methods to access these medicines “so people in developing countries may live”, the South African minister added.
10. [The clinic at your doorstep: How the Delhi government is rethinking primary healthcare](#) – Scroll.in
A clinic for every 10,000 people is making great strides in primary healthcare with quacks in the area saying they are running out of business. The idea behind mohalla clinics is to decentralise primary healthcare even further. “We want to create 1,000 mohalla clinics. For every dispensary that targets 50,000 people, there must be five mohalla clinics,” said Dr Arun Banerjee, additional director, planning, Directorate General of Health Services, Delhi. A government hospital or a dispensary can be very intimidating place. The bigger the unit, the more difficult it is to navigate, especially for an illiterate or a semi-literate person.