

1. [Patent registration: Centre plans cutting approval time to 15 months from 5-6 yrs](#) – Indian Express

In a move that is likely to give a push to innovation and encourage patent registration in the country, the department of industrial policy and promotion (DIPP) is working towards reducing the time taken in getting approval for a patent application from the current 5-6 years to 15 months.

A senior official told [The Indian Express](#) that the industry department has already initiated the process of bringing down the time taken for completion of the process by recruiting as many as 459 additional patent examiners to examine the patent applications, a process that usually takes around 18 months.

2. [Access amid innovation](#) – The Times of India

The world needs to nurture innovation as well as ensure access to medicines, said Linus von Castelmur, Switzerland's ambassador to India, at 'Innovate or @opy Paste -a debate on innovation and intellectual property in the health sector' in Delhi. Doctors, researchers, representatives of pharmaceutical companies and others discussed challenges in the sector.

Soumya Swaminathan, secretary, department of health research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and director general, Indian Council of Medical Research, spoke about ICMR's and allied Indian bodies' "frugal innovation" such as a diagnostic tool for TB being developed with features such as low cost. On the other hand, Suja Subramaniam, senior director, head of patents, Roche Sequencing, underscored what it takes to develop a new drug. On average, it requires \$2.6 billion, 6,587 experiments, 423 researchers and 12 years to make a new medicine, said Subramaniam. The world needs to nurture innovation as well as ensure access to medicines, said Linus von Castelmur, Switzerland's ambassador to India, at 'Innovate or @opy Paste -a debate on innovation and intellectual property in the health sector' in Delhi. Doctors, researchers, representatives of pharmaceutical companies and others discussed challenges in the sector.

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3. [Ortho implants may become 50% cheaper](#) – The Times of India

Prices of exorbitantly-priced orthopaedic implants are expected to come down by 40-50%, with a government body suggesting-for the first time ever-price caps to make them more affordable for patients. At present, there are no controls on steeply-priced medical devices like cardiac stents and orthopaedic implants, giving rise to fleecing of consumers.

Hip and knee surgeries are out of reach for over 80% of affected patients thanks to the steep cost of implants. Knee implants cost between Rs 80,000 to Rs 1 lakh, while hip implants range from Rs 70,000 to Rs 1.5 lakh. The National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC), a government body under the ministry of health and family welfare asked to look into ways to make medical devices affordable, has suggested ceiling prices in its report submitted to the drug pricing regulator National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), sources told TOI.

4. [Zydus launches diabetes drug at Rs 7/day, 1/6th of MNCs' price](#) – The Times of India

Ahmedabad-based Zydus Cadila is launching an anti-diabetic drug, teneligliptin, at an aggressive price of Rs 7 per day, almost 1/6th the price at which the established gliptins by MNCs are sold. The company said the pricing of the "breakthrough" drug, Tenglyn, is aimed at "making it affordable and accessible to diabetic patients".

The drug is priced one-third of the price charged by other domestic companies, including Glenmark Pharma and Ajanta, which are selling the same drug, teneligliptin, for around Rs 20 for a day's therapy. Experts say with competition, prices of these drugs could come down later, but as of now companies are "waiting and watching" the development.

5. [Bumper haul of expensive new drugs heads to U.S. and Europe](#) – Reuters

Drug companies have brought a host of expensive new medicines to market in the United States and Europe this year, figures show, another bumper haul for an industry often accused of over-charging. Drug prices are set to be a major issue in the run-up to the U.S. presidential election next year, with Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton having pledged to rein in costs in a country that has the world's highest prices.

The busy drug pipeline to the West also illustrates how the vast bulk of research cash is spent on developing money-spinning medicines for rich countries, rather than to tackle tropical diseases that kill millions in the developing world.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has so far approved 38 novel drugs in 2015, more than the 34 that had been cleared by this stage a year ago and just short of 2014's final total of 41, which was an 18-year high.

6. [Sanofi, AstraZeneca in major drug-sharing deal](#) – The ET Health

French pharmaceutical company Sanofi and Britain's AstraZeneca said Friday they have agreed to share freely 210,000 proprietary chemical compounds as they pursue the development of new drugs.

Sanofi hailed the move as "a new open innovation model between two major pharmaceutical groups" who normally are major competitors in a multibillion business creating the building blocks of treatments for diseases.

The novel arrangement of exchanging compounds from their separate compound libraries will "allow both to sift a much larger and more diversified number of small molecules likely to become future medicines," Sanofi added in a statement.

7. [Govt unveils roadmap for phasing out corporate tax exemptions](#) – Mint

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government on Friday laid down a comprehensive road map for phasing out the corporate tax exemptions over the next two years as it looks to reduce the tax rate, simplify the administration and improve India's competitive edge globally.

"The pharmaceutical industry benefits from exemptions available for R&D. Information technology companies benefit from the investment depreciation allowance available under Section 10A. Infrastructure companies also get some tax benefits under specific clauses. Sectors like heavy engineering, where large capital investments are made may also get impacted," he said. "There will be a political fallout also since area-based exemptions given to north-eastern states are now proposed to be done away with."

"Companies will welcome the phasing out of exemptions as long as their corporate tax burden does not increase. The pharma sector will be impacted given that R&D activities will not get a tax advantage," said Rahul Garg, direct tax leader at PricewaterhouseCoopers India.

8. [Unregulated antibiotic sales may raise risk of superbugs](#) – Business Standard

Global growth of unregulated over-the-counter and internet sales of precious antibiotic medicines is further fuelling the rise of deadly, drug-resistant "superbug" bacteria, according to a UK government-commissioned review. In recent decades, bacteria resistant to multiple drugs have evolved at the same time as drugmakers have cut back investment in finding new ways to fight them, creating a global health threat as superbug strains of infections like tuberculosis and gonorrhoea have become untreatable.

9. [Strides gets FDA approval to sell generic Dutasteride in US](#) – Business Standard

Pharma major Strides Shasun Ltd said it has US food and drug administration (FDA) approval to sell generic capsules of Dutasteride, a drug used to treat prostate gland enlargement.

Strides says it is the first generic drugs player to get approval to sell the drug in the US, which went off patent on November 20, the firm said in a statement.

10. [Yusuf Hamied appointed to high-level UN panel on health](#) – Business Standard

Yusuf Hamied, non-executive chairman of Indian pharma company Cipla, has been named by [UN](#) chief [Ban Ki-moon](#) to a high-level [panel](#) on [health](#) technology [innovation](#) and access. The panel is tasked with escalating investments in research and development for diseases where financial returns are not guaranteed.

Hamied will be part of the 16-member panel that will be co-chaired by former President of Switzerland Ruth Dreifuss and former President of Botswana Festus Mogae.