1. Expert panel recommends expanding NPPA's mandate – Business Standard

The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)'s mandate will no longer be limited to fixing the prices of drugs mentioned in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM), according to the recommendations of an expert committee on restructuring NPPA. "It (NPPA) will be given the authority to assess and choose which drug ought to be brought under the price fixation category," a senior government official who is aware of this recommendation told Business Standard. This essentially widens the scope of the NPPA to regulate prices.

At present, the NPPA monitors drugs that are part of NLEM and identifies players that overcharge. Issues on overcharging and price cap have been areas of tension between the pharmaceutical industry and the NPPA. Not agreeing with various drug price orders, the players have appealed to the Department of Pharmaceuticals for several cases in the past.

2. GST Compensation To States Not To Squeeze Government Finances: Finance Secretary – Bloomberg Quint

Compensation of revenue loss due to implementation of the goods and services tax (GST) by states are not going to put a burden on central government finances, said Finance Secretary Ashok Lavasa.

"Now, you have a system by which additional burden of compensating the states is not being passed to consumers in a way it would have otherwise passed on in terms of taxes. So, this is very reasonable arrangement that has been agreed to keeping in view the interest of consumer and state governments," he said.

It also enables the central government to set apart a fund by which states will be compensated, he said.

About Rs 50,000 crore will be needed to compensate states for loss of revenue from rollout of GST, which is to subsume a host of central and state taxes like excise duty, service tax and VAT, in the first year beginning April 1. The last GST Council meeting headed by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley reached a consensus on the way states are to be compensated for any loss of revenue from implementation of the new indirect tax regime from April 1, 2017.

3. **Drugmakers under fire for possible US price fixing – The Indian Express**
   Two prominent US lawmakers on Thursday called on federal antitrust regulators to probe whether Sanofi SA, Eli Lilly and Co, Merck & Co Inc and Novo Nordisk A/S colluded to set prices for insulin and other diabetes drugs. The request by US Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Elijah Cummings follows a similar letter they sent last fall calling for an investigation into 14 drug companies over price increases of generic drugs. US prosecutors could file the first charges by the end of the year in their subsequent criminal investigation of generic drugmakers over suspected price collusion, Bloomberg reported on Thursday. In their latest letter to the Justice Department and Federal Trade Commission, Sanders, an independent, and Cummings, a Democrat, raised questions about skyrocketing prices for insulin, and included a chart showing that many of the price spikes appeared to occur in tandem.

4. **India may get its malaria drug by 2018 – The Times of India**
   Contrary to the perception that drug research is mostly focused around the diseases of the elite, the antimalarial drug pipeline has increased nearly three-fold since 2008, with at least three new medicines expected to be launched in two to five years. India, where a lot of clinical trials have already begun, is likely to get a breakthrough anti-malarial drug Tafenoquine by 2018. The drug, a one-day two-dose treatment, has already entered phase-three trials and once approved will replace the current 14-day treatment for plasmodium vivax malaria, which is prevalent in India. At least two other molecules — artefenomel and KAF 156 —are also in advanced stages of development with researchers expecting a positive outcome over the next five years.

5. **Maharashtra govt sets up task force on diabetes, obesity – Press Trust of India**
   Maharashtra government has set up a task force to generate awareness about non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and obesity and suggest ways to control companies making fast food items.

   The 17-member body, set up by the Public Health Department, consisting of health experts among others, will focus on generating awareness about non-communicable diseases and suggesting ways to impose curbs on companies making fast food items, seen as a leading cause of such ailments, according to a government resolution (GR).

6. **Is Indian pharma breeding superbugs? – Mint**
   Here's a terrifying thought: A toxic stew of corporate neglect, lax regulators and a defensive government might be turning India's water bodies into breeding grounds for drug-resistant "superbugs." This, certainly, is what a series of recent reports and studies have suggested. And the Indian government's response to the reports won't set many minds at rest. Consider Hyderabad, known as much for its lakes as for its cutting-edge IT and biotech companies. According to Reuters, Kazhipally Lake near Hyderabad has become "a giant petri dish for anti-microbial resistance." The lake — close to manufacturing facilities for hundreds of Indian companies making generic drugs, as well as some multinationals — has been studied for a decade by researchers from the University of Gothenborg in Sweden, who have consistently documented far higher-than-normal levels of drug-resistant pathogens in the water. The companies insist that they follow all relevant environmental regulations and don't discharge waste into the lake or other water bodies.

7. **European regulator EMA to review Biocon-Mylan's version of insulin glargine – Mint**
   Drug makers Mylan NV and Biocon Ltd on Thursday said the European Medicines Agency (EMA) has agreed to review Mylan's application seeking permission to bring biosimilar version of insulin glargine to Europe. Insulin glargine, a long-acting insulin analog used to treat adults with type 2 diabetes and adults and pediatric patients (children 6 years and older) with type 1 diabetes for the control of high blood sugar A biosimilar is a complex biological product that follows a different approval pathway compared to chemical drugs.

Similar reports –

- European Medicines Agency accepts marketing application of Biocon, Mylan product – The Economic Times
- EMA accepts Biocon, Mylan insulin for review – The Hindu

8. **CIPI urges DoP to exempt SSIs from several provisions of DPCO-2013 on lines of DPCO-1995 – Pharmabiz.com**

The Confederation of Indian Pharmaceutical Industry (CIPI), an association of small scale pharma units in the country, has urged the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) to exempt SSIs from several provisions of DPCO, 2013 on the lines of exemptions granted to them from the provisions of paragraph 8 of the Drugs (Price Control) Order, (DPCO) 1995.

In a letter written to DoP secretary, CIPI said that the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers in its order no. 5.0.134 (E) dated March 2, 1995 had exempted small scale manufacturers from the provisions of paragraph 8 of the Drugs (Price Control) Order, 1995 which specifies that the maximum retail price of scheduled formulations shall be fixed by the manufacturers on the basis of ceiling price notified by the government plus local taxes wherever applicable. But in the DPCO, 2013 no such relief has been given to small scale manufacturers.