1. **Govt plans to amend medical council Bill – Business Standard**

The central government plans to amend the Medical Council of India (MCI) Bill, to be renamed the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill. Government sources told Business Standard 15,000 suggestions had been made. Largely, states are asking for more powers. Further, some states want a higher number of regulated seats, in terms of fees. NITI Aayog had recommended 40 per cent of seats be regulated.

The proposed NMC will become the main regulatory body, replacing the MCI. The new body will have eminent doctors and experts to steer medical education. There will be around 20 members, for five-year tenure, with some from other fields such as economics and law.

2. **Govt likely to keep drug-eluting stents under price control – Mint**

The government is likely to reject the demands of stent makers to keep drug-eluting stents out of the ambit of price control, two ministry officials said, and requesting anonymity. Drug-eluting stents account for close to 95% of stents used in patients. Many medical device lobby groups have been pushing for differential pricing for drug-eluting stents. There will likely be no differential pricing for drug-eluting stents based on the technical recommendations of multiple industry bodies. These recommendations, or metrics, range from the stent diameter, polymer material and coating, stent length and strut thickness to clinical evidence of the stent's effect on patients. Two officials said that the prices of drug-eluting stents will be capped soon.

3. **India seeks greater pharma market access in Japan – The Hindu**

Seeking greater market access for the Indian pharmaceuticals sector in the Japanese market, Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the share of India in the Japanese drug market continued to be below par and limited mostly to active pharmaceutical ingredients (or APIs - raw materials for drugs). She said the demand for generic medicines in Japan and India's capability to meet this demand can prove a win-win for both countries. Indian companies should use the India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) much more to boost exports to Japan, she said at a seminar organised by think-tank RIS.

4. **Indian pharma companies ranked 19 on 28 in competitiveness index – Daily News and Analysis**
Indian pharmaceutical companies have ranked at the rear end in the recently conducted 2016 Biopharmaceutical Competitiveness & Investment (BCI) Survey. India ranked at number 19 out of 28 countries that were considered in the survey.This is the third edition of the BCI Survey, a global executive opinion survey and index of economies' biomedical investment-attractiveness created by Pugatch Consilium, commissioned by PhRMA. According to executives, newcomer markets, including India, are still divided on protecting intellectual property and localising innovation.

5. **Huge opportunity for Indian firms in biosimilars – The Hindu**
India is well placed to tap the opportunity set to emerge over the next 15 years in biosimilars sector of pharmaceutical industry with the transformation in technology, market access and regulatory framework, according to Assocham.

A white paper on 'Biosimilars - How can we realise the $240 billion opportunity' that the industry body unveiled here on Tuesday also estimated the global market for the products to grow from $2.2 billion now to $240 billion by 2030. Biosimilars are follow-on biologics which in turn are therapeutic proteins manufactured from natural sources such as human and animal cells, yeast and bacteria.

*Similar reports:*
- Indian biosimilars market may reach $40 bn by 2030: Report – The Economic Times
- Indian biosimilars market may reach USD 40 bn by 2030: Report – The Times of India
- 'Biosimilars offer huge potential for pharma firms' – The Hindu Business Line
- Indian biosimilars market may reach USD 40 bn by 2030 – The New Indian Express

6. **Non-formal medicare in rural areas is rampant, says study – The Hindu Business Line**
The first port of call for medical treatment in an average village in the country seems to be from providers without any formal medical training, suggests a recent study done by two economists from the World Bank. The study, which covered 100 villages with 23,275 households in Madhya Pradesh between 2009 and 2011, was published recently in the journal Health Affairs. "The average village in our sample could access 11 healthcare providers; 49 per cent of these providers had no formal medical training. Usage data are even more striking: 77 per cent of all primary care visits were to providers without any formal medical training. Only 11 per cent of all primary care visits were to the public sector and only 4 per cent were to providers with an MBBS degree," the study noted.

7. **Bharat Biotech's Zika vaccine ready to enter phase-1 trial – Mint**
Vaccine maker Bharat Biotech International Ltd., which is working on a vaccine candidate to prevent the Zika virus infection in humans, said it had crossed an important milestone by completing pre-clinical studies and has sought government approval to begin phase-1 trials, a top executive said. "We have completed pre-clinical toxicology studies in animals successfully, and have sought permission from Drug Controller General of India (DCGI)," said D.V.J.A. Harshavardhan, director of viral vaccines and international affairs at Bharat Biotech. In the proposed phase-1 trials, the vaccine candidate will be tested on around 100 people for safety.

8. **India recorded highest under-five deaths in 2015: Lancet – The Financial Express**
India has recorded the highest number of deaths of children under the age of five in 2015, according to a latest Lancet study which also said that the country performed poorly in terms of tuberculosis and maternal survival. The Global Burden of Disease study 2015 published in the Lancet which assesses the state of world's health, said over a million under-five children have died in 2015. The

study said that cardiovascular diseases account for a large and increasing proportion of deaths in India. “Most countries in the region did better than expected at reducing health loss from strokes (like India, Pakistan) and lower respiratory infections (like Bangladesh, Nepal).

Similar report-

- Non-communicable diseases killed more Indians in 2015 – The Hindu

9. **Sanofi awaits govt approval to launch dengue vaccine in India – Business Standard**
After receiving authorization in 11 countries, Sanofi Pasteur is still awaiting for approval from the government to launch its dengue vaccine Dengvaxia in India. "The need for dengue prevention in India is urgent, and the Indian population is at risk for this debilitating disease, for which there is no cure or treatment and deserves to have a choice to be protected against the disease with a well-tested vaccine proven effective against dengue," Sanofi Pasteur India Country Head Jean-Pierre Baylet told PTI here.

10. **NMPB to expedite implementation of voluntary certification scheme for medicinal plant cultivators – Pharmabiz.com**
The National Medicinal Plant Board (NMPB) under the Ministry of Ayush has decided to expedite the implementation of the Voluntary Certification Scheme for Medicinal Plants (VCSMP), a quality control scheme for medicinal plant cultivation based on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Field Collection Practices (GFCP).

A stakeholders’ meeting called by NMPB in New Delhi recently discussed various aspects of the scheme focusing quality of raw drugs and other agricultural produces subjected for medicinal preparations. According to sources from the medicinal plant board, under this scheme a medicinal plant cultivator or group of cultivators or plant collectors can obtain a certificate from the approved Certification Body, which will be constituted by medicinal plant board in each state.