News Updates: November 28, 2013

I HR Conclave - 2013

Publication: Press Trust of India
Edition: Online
Date: November 27, 2013
Headline: Pharma sector in good health, to create more jobs: Experts

Synopsis: Indian as well as multinational pharmaceutical companies are likely to create more jobs in 2014 on the back of expected double digit growth in the key sector, according to industry experts. The pharma industry in India has clocked double digit growth rate (about 14 per cent) in the last five years and this is expected to continue in 2014 too. Several multinational firms operate in this space, which has great scope for hiring and job creation, they said at a human resource conclave today. The industry currently employs about 4,50,000 people and has contributed significantly in creating a rich talent pool of researchers, scientists, doctors and project managers, the experts said at the meet, organised by the Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) here. Shailesh Ayyangar, OPPI President and Managing Director, India and Vice-President, South Asia, Sanofi, said: "The very nature of the pharmaceutical business - treating patients and providing integrated healthcare access - will go a long way in meeting key career aspirations of Gen Y." "Gen Y, or the 20-to-30-something age group, today constitutes a major part of the country's workforce and will bring us tomorrow's leaders. The industry needs to retain and nurture existing talent and equip young workers with necessary skills," OPPI Director General Ranjana Smetacek said.

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Publication: Business Standard – B2B
Edition: National
Date: November 28, 2013
Headline: Pharma industry need to adjust to attract and retain Gen Y

Synopsis: Being a knowledge-based industry, pharmaceutical companies will have to adjust to the changing workplace dynamic to retain existing talent and take steps to attract young generation. This is what head honchoes of the industry have to say at the HR Conclave, organised by The Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) on November 27, 2013 in Mumbai. “Gen Y, or the 20-to-30-something age group, today constitutes a major part of the country’s workforce and will bring us tomorrow’s leaders. The pharma industry also needs to retain and nurture existing talent and equip young workers with the skills and knowledge, necessary for a better understanding of emerging challenges and opportunities,” said Ranjana Smetacek, Director General, OPPI, at the conclave - titled ‘Talent attraction: Engaging Gen Y’. The event brought together industry stalwarts, multinational pharmaceutical companies, distinguished academicians and HR Leaders from the pharmaceutical and allied sectors. The pharmaceutical industry is a knowledge-based industry, which is growing steadily and plays a major role in the Indian economy. The country’s emergence as an important manufacturing base, as well as a market for the global pharmaceutical industry, makes this an attractive sector for young professionals in a wide range of specialties involving drug development, marketing, project management and technology.

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FDI

Publication: Press Trust of India
Edition: National
Date: November 28, 2013
Headline: Govt to review FDI policy in pharma, housing tomorrow

Synopsis: The Cabinet is likely to take a decision tomorrow on relaxing FDI norms for the housing sector and reducing foreign investment limit to 49 per cent in rare and critical areas of the pharma segment. The Cabinet would also deliberate on the stand to be taken by India in the forthcoming WTO meet in Bali between December 3-6. "All the three issues are there in the Cabinet's agenda.

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Publication: Financial Chronicle (Editorial)
Edition: National
Date: November 27, 2013
Headline: Capping foreign stake in existing Indian drug companies is not a good idea

Synopsis: Is India's pharmaceutical industry a strategic sector in which any foreigner, either a foreign company or a foreign institutional investor (FII), should not hold stake beyond a certain limit? Or is it like any other industry where foreign companies or investors should be allowed to hold as much stake as they want and run the business as per their own wisdom? The issue will be decided on Thursday when the Union cabinet meets. The matter of multinationals taking over Indian drug companies and then using them for low-cost manufacturing so that cheaper medicines can be sold in their home markets has been a hot topic for a while. The debate started with two large takeovers. The first was Ranbaxy, sold lock stock and barrel to Daiichi Sankyo of Japan. The second was

Piramal Healthcare, all of whose factories were sold to Abbott Laboratories of the US. An assumption of those against more FDI in existing companies is that if the promoter of a firm is Indian, he will keep prices of medicines low to help poor Indians, and this will not be so in the case of MNC-owned firms. In our view, the assumption is entirely wrong for two reasons. First, not all Indian promoters are so driven by philanthropy that they will keep prices low for the public good. Second, the price of any product, be it an essential medicine or any other, is dependent on demand and supply and the state of competition, and not on nationality of a promoter. Moreover, when it comes to essential drugs, the Indian government strictly imposes the drug price control order (DPCO), which is good enough to ensure that the balance is not tilted in favour of foreign-owned companies or, for that matter, Indian companies.

Publication: The Hindu
Edition: National
Date: November 28, 2013
Headline: Ban on takeover of critical drug plants by foreign firms mooted

Synopsis: The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) is taking to the Cabinet on Thursday a proposal to ban complete takeovers by foreign companies of critical lifesaving drugs production facilities. The proposal is to lower the cap for foreign direct investment (FDI) from 100 per cent to 49 per cent, subject to approval of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB).

Publication: The Indian Express
Edition: National
Date: November 28, 2013
Headline: FinMin against FDI cap on critical pharma projects

Synopsis: Even as the industry ministry is all set to propose a new policy on foreign direct investment in the pharma sector, reducing the cap on FDI in brownfield pharma projects to 49 per cent in critical areas, opposition from departments including the finance ministry continues. According to the proposed policy, to be taken up by the Cabinet soon, 100 per cent FDI would be allowed in brownfield projects, subject to government approval. However, if the projects deal with rare facilities and critical verticals, only 49 per cent FDI would be allowed with the government approval. Further, 25 per cent of the total investment in the brownfield projects should be used in R&D activities. However, the finance minister is not on the same page with the DIPP when it comes to the proposed 49 per cent FDI cap on projects dealing with rare facilities. The ministry has argued that such a move would discourage potential investors.

Publication: Deccan Herald
Edition: National
Date: November 27, 2013
Headline: Ministries clash over FDI cap in drug firms

Synopsis: The finance ministry is resisting pressure from other departments to cap foreign ownership of domestic drugmakers, fearing such a move would discourage potential investors, a senior ministry source said. The industry ministry and the health ministry have proposed that the government limit foreign ownership to 49 per cent of domestic pharmaceutical firms that produce critical drugs such as vaccines and cancer treatment medicines. The proposed cap comes as Finance Minister P Chidambaram is seeking foreign money to help revive the economy and fund a wide current account deficit. "It will be a retrograde step and discourage investors," said a senior official at the finance ministry, who has direct knowledge of the issue.

Publication: Business Today
Edition: National
Date: November 27, 2013
Headline: Ministries differ over capping foreign stakes in drug firms

Synopsis: The finance ministry is resisting pressure from other departments to cap foreign ownership of domestic drug makers, fearing such a move would discourage potential investors, a senior ministry source said. The industry ministry and the health ministry have proposed that the government limit foreign ownership to 49 percent of domestic pharmaceutical firms that produce critical drugs such as vaccines and cancer treatment medicines. The proposed cap comes as Finance Minister P Chidambaram is seeking foreign money to help revive the economy and fund a wide current account deficit.

Publication: Reuters India
Edition: Online
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Publication: Pharmabiz
Edition: Online
Date: November 28, 2013
Headline: FDI policy hangs

Synopsis: India's attempt to regulate increasing inflow of foreign direct investments into the pharmaceutical sector does not seem to yield the desired result as yet. Although government allows 100 per cent FDI in pharma sector through automatic approval route in new projects and investments in the existing companies only through the Foreign Investment Promotion Board approval, there has been a steady rise in the number of acquisitions of large Indian pharmaceutical companies over the last ten years. The first major acquisition in pharma sector was in 2008 when the Japanese giant, Daiichi Sankyo, took control of India's largest pharma company, Ranbaxy Labs for $4.6 billion. Another major acquisition was of Shantha Biotechnics by the French pharma company Sanofi-Aventis. And the most recent FDI investment was for acquiring Indian generic drugs company, Agila Specialties, by the US based MNC Mylan Inc for a sum of Rs. 5,168 crore. The government had cleared this deal a couple of months ago. Now, Sanofi is understood to be planning to acquire a medium size company, Elder Pharmaceuticals. FDI in the pharma sector has more than doubled to $1.07 billion during April-August period of this year as against an FDI of $487 million during April-August 2012, as per the latest data of the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion. Over 96 per cent of the total FDI in the sector between April 2012 and April 2013 has come into brownfield pharma projects. The situation is scary as MNCs already control 35 per cent of the domestic pharmaceutical business.

Publication: Pharmabiz
Edition: Online
Date: November 28, 2013
Headline: Consensus within Govt still eludes on limiting FDI in pharma sector

Synopsis: Consensus within the Government still eludes on the clauses of the proposed policy on foreign direct investment in the pharmaceutical sector, which is expected to be taken up by the Cabinet for approval at its next meeting. The proposal, prepared by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), has stringent norms including limiting of all foreign participation through FDI and foreign institutional investors to 49 per cent. The proposal, scheduled for discussion on Monday by the Cabinet, has been deferred. According to sources, the proposal by the DIPP was already sent to all concerned departments. The Finance, Commerce and Health Ministries have backed the suggestions to change the current policy and limiting the FDI. However, the Prime Minister's Office is not in favour of the change and wants to continue with the existing pattern, while the

Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) is yet to spell out its suggestions. However, DoP also in principle is in favour of limiting the investment, thus showing divergent views within the Government over the policy, it is learnt.

Patents / Intellectual Property Rights / Compulsory Drug Licensing

Publication: Business Standard
Edition: National
Date: November 27, 2013
Headline: Industry to benefit from utility model for patents

Synopsis: Union minister of state for commerce and industry, E M Sudarsana Natchiappan, has requested academicians and industry to work out a utility model (a simpler form of patent) for the country to improve commercialisation of innovations. He also announced the government was planning to set up a permanent office and related facilities for the Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) near Chennai. Inaugurating the conference on Valuation and Monetisation of Knowledge Assets with a theme on translational intellectual property strategies for businesses, organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Natchiappan said, "I would draw the attention of the CII that whenever you have a conference, try to work out on a utility model also. The Chinese are very much benefited by the utility model. The Indian Patents Act is not having a provision for utility model. We are thinking to bring that knowledge." He said once the idea is developed, probably after the elections, the Centre can bring an amendment in the 2014 sessions of Parliament to accept the utility model in the Indian Patent Act.

Publication: Frontline
Edition: National
Date: November 28, 2013
Magazine Print edition : December 13, 2013
Headline: Trade secrets revealed

Synopsis: The proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership on intellectual property rights being negotiated secretly, as exposed by WikiLeaks recently, is breathtaking in its overweening ambition to cement the corporate takeover of as much knowledge as possible. Of all the various monopolies and forms of control that have come to characterise the world today, the control over knowledge is probably the most insidious and potentially devastating. The TRIPS (Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) agreement that was signed along with other trade agreements in 1994 was more than just a significant success for the lobbies of multinational drug companies and other corporate behemoths. It was also a breakthrough in a negative sense, one that really became what is called a "game changer" in terms of its implications for the ways that knowledge is gained and shared (or not shared), for the ways that creativity and innovation are defined and straitjacketed, and even for the ways that lives are lived or lost.

FDA / Drug Regulatory / DCGI / Drug Policy

Publication: The Times of India
Edition: National
Date: November 28, 2013
Headline: Govt tries to protect drug cos, spice exporters

Synopsis: The government is bargaining hard at the World Trade Organization to ensure that pharma industry and spices exporters are not adversely hit by the proposed agreement on trade facilitation as developed countries have suggested that any consignments rejected by customs authorities will be destroyed. The move is expected to impact drug makers the most, given the recent experience in Europe where generic medicines were seized as they were classified as 'spurious', even as they were transiting. On several instances, officials said, spices too have been destroyed as the consignments were said to be non-compliant with local standards. Rejection of consignments has emerged as a key area of concern for countries such as India in the proposed agreement on trade facilitation that developed countries and WTO say would provide a $1 trillion stimulus to the global economy. While the focus of the collapsed dialogue in Geneva has so far been on the food security proposal, the agreement to speed up clearances for consignments has several gaps, with nearly 60 proposals in the first part itself, where various countries have conflicting proposals.

Publication: Financial Chronicle
Edition: National
Date: November 27, 2013
Headline: Wockhardt hit by second FDA ban, to take $230 million knock

Synopsis: Pharma major Wockhardt received another blow in the form of a fresh import alert from the US drug regulator, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), on its Chikalthana facility at Aurangabad in Maharashtra. This is the company's second plant in India to get an FDA import alert after a similar ban on Waluj. In a filing on BSE, the company said it had received a warning letter from the US for its manufacturing units located at L1, Chikalthana, Aurangabad and B15, Waluj, Aurangabad. "USFDA has, however, excluded five products from the import alert. Metoprolol XR is under the import alert. The company has already initiated several steps to address the observations made by the USFDA and shall put all efforts to resolve the matter at the earliest," the company said in its filing. According to the FDA website, an 'import alert' results in detention without physical examination of drugs from firms that have not met drug GMP (good manufacturing practices) condition.

Publication: Moneycontrol
Edition: Online
Date: November 27, 2013
Headline: Need to be watchful of FDA import alert pattern: Dandekar

Synopsis: Drug-maker Wockhardt has fallen foul of the US drug regulator once again and this time, the focus is on its Chikalthana plant. The US drug regulator FDA issued import alert on drug-maker Wockhardt 's Chikalthana plant, citing non-compliance with good manufacturing practices. Commenting on the import alert, Vikas Dandekar, India bureau chief, Pharmasianews.com said it will not be easy to come out of such sanctions. It will take a year or more for the company to restore manufacturing practices and to get a green signal to export some of these drugs back to the US. Dandekar is surprised at the absence of stringent domestic regulatory actions against the companies facing import alerts from US and UK regulators After the crippling blow, it remains to be seen if the USFDA follows the defined steps before issuing import notices or will they skip steps to showcause non-compliant companies.

Publication: Pharmabiz
Edition: Online
Date: November 28, 2013
Headline: SSIs oppose setting up of CDA on fears of creation of dual drug licensing authority

Synopsis: Even as the Parliamentary Standing Committee is examining the new Drugs and Cosmetics (amendment) Bill, 2013 that seeks to set up the Central Drugs Authority (CDA), the small scale pharma companies are opposing the bill tooth and nail as they fear that the creation of CDA will lead to dual licensing authority in the country. Questioning the real motive of several provisions in the bill that give licensing powers to CDA, the SSIs want the CDA to monitor and implement the drug regulations in the country as was recommended by Dr Mashelkar Committee report as well as the earlier Haathi Committee report. "Both these committees did not recommend any licensing powers to the CDA, instead these committees had recommended the creation of CDA for proper monitoring and implementation of the drug regulations in the country," SSI sources said.

Publication: Pharmabiz
Edition: Online
Date: November 28, 2013
Headline: Health secretary issues show cause notices 20 drug units in Pondicherry for violation of Section 122 E of D&C Rules

Synopsis: The health secretary to the government of Pondicherry, G Ragesh Chandra has issued show-cause notices to 20 pharmaceutical manufacturing companies operating in the Union Territory for violation of provision of 122E of the Drugs & Cosmetics Rules. The action is the latest in the one-month enquiry conducted by the health department on the secret alliance between the former licensing authority M Rajkumar and a section of manufacturers on getting manufacturing licences for combination drugs, said the health secretary. Speaking to Pharmabiz, Ragesh Chandra said prior approval of the drugs controller general of India (DCGI) is required to manufacture fixed dose combination (FDCs) drugs. But some companies in Pondicherry went ahead with the production of formulations without the permission of the national regulator after establishing a secret alliance with the former state licensing authority, M Rajkumar. He said, following allegations of corruption, Rajkumar was suspended seven months ago and started enquiries, followed by it action is taken on cases with evidence.

Publication: Pharmabiz
Edition: Online
Date: November 28, 2013
Headline: IPR Yatra reiterates rationale use of medicines through govt intervention

Synopsis: Aimed at creating awareness about the proper functioning of pharmacies in private and public sector and the need for rational use of medicines, India Pharma Revolution (IPR), a Delhi-based Group of Pharmacists reached Goa and met state government health officials on November 18 after touring 25 states. In order to sensitise patients towards health safety, pharmacists through the IPR yatra advocated the need of common man to access knowledge on Adverse Drug Reactions (ADR), rationale use of medicines, drug interactions, side effects and toxicity through the establishment of drug information centres and pharmacovigilance centre in the Goa state. Among the other demands IPR yatra pursued were setting up of warehouses for stocking all lifesaving drugs and creation of medical supply depot for storage of generic drugs. "State government should take the initiative on this front as central government will readily support such a system. Besides this, quacks should also not be allowed to practice medicine and the state government should take this aspect seriously," members of the yatra said. Other demands included creation of separate directorate of pharmacy in the state and also restructuring of pharmacists cadre.

Drug Pricing

Publication: The Economic Times
Edition: National
Date: November 28, 2013
Headline: Pharma sector: Export gains, domestic bounce-back augur well

Synopsis: Drug makers posted healthy results in the quarter to September due to their strong performance in the United States largely because of rupee depreciation. High realisations from exports more than compensated for the subdued performance in the domestic market, where trade-related disruptions and price revisions after the implementation of the new drug pricing policy took their toll on the pharmaceutical companies.

General Industry

Publication: The Economic Times
Edition: National
Date: November 27, 2013
Headline: Mithra Pharma's campus to facilitate entry of Indian companies to EU market

Synopsis: Belgium-based Mithra Pharma has launched campus which, the company said, will act as a "gateway" for Indian companies to enter the EU market. "The campus will provide an innovative and regulatory platform that will enable and facilitate increased presence and access to the European market for Indian pharmaceutical companies. The company aspires to create new synergies through cross fertilisation of R&D ideas and commercial exchanges via this platform," a company statement issued.

Publication: Business Standard
Edition: National
Date: November 27, 2013
Headline: Correction offers good value in pharma stocks

Synopsis: Shares of pharma majors as Sun Pharma, Lupin and Cipla have corrected meaningfully in the past two months. From its 52-week high in mid-October, Sun is down over 12 per cent, Lupin has corrected by more than nine per cent, while Cipla has fallen by almost 15 per cent from a 52-week high of Rs 450 in September. The correction is mainly due to investors churning their portfolio in favour of other sectors. Fundamentally, there seems to be no reason for this correction and the strong show posted by these companies during the September quarter stands testimony.

Disease

Publication: Hindustan Times
Page no: 12
Date: November 28, 2013
Headline: Science alone cannot end HIV/AIDS

Synopsis: The article on the edit page examines the how far we have come with dealing with the HIV/AIDS epidemic effectively in terms of treatment, funding and solutions. It enumerates how the number of direct HIV-related deaths and adverse outcomes have reduced, and the need for a vaccine against the disease.