



23 June, 2023

## Medicines Patents Pool

**Context:** The Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) has signed sublicense agreements with Indian companies Eugia, Hetero, and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, as well as Indonesian firm BrightGene, to produce generic versions of the cancer drug Nilotinib.

- Nilotinib is marketed globally as Tasigna by Novartis and is used for treating chronic myeloid leukaemia.
- The MPP, a United Nations-backed organization, aims to increase access to life-saving medicines for low- and middle-income countries.
- These sublicense agreements are the first of their kind for a cancer treatment drug and are a result of a license agreement between the MPP and Novartis Pharma AG.
- Selected manufacturers can produce generic versions of Nilotinib in India and seven middle-income countries.
- The drug can also be supplied in 44 territories covered by the license through a non-exclusive agreement, pending regulatory authorization.
- The move aims to provide an affordable treatment option for individuals with chronic myeloid leukemia in those countries.
- Charles Gore, the executive director of the MPP, highlights the collaboration with the generic manufacturers to develop generic Nilotinib.
- Overall, the Medicines Patent Pool's agreements will enhance accessibility and affordability of Nilotinib for patients in low- and middle-income countries.

## Medicines Patent Pool

- The Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) was established in 2010 by UNITAID with the support of the WHO.
- The MPP aims to increase access to affordable, high-quality medicines for people in low- and middle-income countries.
- The MPP negotiates licenses with pharmaceutical companies to encourage the production of generic versions of patented medicines.
- It focuses on essential medicines used for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, hepatitis C, and other prevalent diseases in resource-limited settings.
- The MPP collaborates with generic manufacturers, research institutions, and public health organizations.
- The MPP works towards increasing access to medicines through several strategies, including:
  - **Voluntary licensing:** Negotiating licenses with patent holders to encourage the production of generic versions of patented medicines.
  - **Technology transfer:** Facilitating the transfer of manufacturing technology to generic manufacturers in low- and middle-income countries, enabling local production.
  - **Patent pooling:** Consolidating patents for a specific medicine to simplify licensing and promote broader access.
  - **Collaborative research:** Supporting research and development efforts to develop improved formulations and new treatments.
  - **Market shaping:** Engaging in pricing negotiations and strategies to reduce the cost of medicines.
- It works closely with governments, international organizations, civil society groups, and the pharmaceutical industry.
- The MPP's efforts aim to address barriers to access to essential medicines and contribute to achieving universal health coverage.

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## What is patent pool?

- A patent pool is a collaborative agreement among multiple companies or entities to collectively license and share their patents related to a particular technology or industry.
- The main objective of a patent pool is to streamline licensing processes, reduce costs, and promote innovation by providing access to a broader range of technologies.
- Patent pools are typically formed when multiple companies hold patents that are essential for implementing a specific standard or technology.
- Examples of patent pools include:
  - MPEG LA: MPEG LA is a prominent patent pool that licenses essential patents related to audio and video compression standards, such as MPEG-2, MPEG-4 AVC (H.264), and MPEG-2 Systems.
  - Bluetooth: The Bluetooth Special Interest Group (SIG) manages a patent pool for Bluetooth wireless technology. It allows member companies to access essential patents related to Bluetooth technology.
  - Wi-Fi: The Wi-Fi Alliance administers a patent pool known as the Wi-Fi Patent License Program. It grants companies access to essential patents related to Wi-Fi technology.
- Patent pools help avoid costly and time-consuming individual negotiations for patent licenses, promote interoperability, and enable widespread adoption of technologies by providing a unified licensing platform.
- However, competition law considerations and potential antitrust issues can arise with patent pools, especially when a significant number of essential patents are concentrated within the pool or when competition in the industry is affected. Proper governance and fair licensing terms are crucial to ensure compliance with competition regulations.

## UNITAID

- UNITAID is an international organization focused on improving access to treatment and prevention for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in low- and middle-income countries.
- It operates under the World Health Organization (WHO) and was established in 2006.
- UNITAID uses innovative financing mechanisms to fund its initiatives, including the air ticket solidarity levy and voluntary contributions.
- The organization employs market-based interventions to address access barriers, promote price reductions, and support innovation in health technologies.
- It collaborates with governments, international organizations, and civil society to strengthen health systems and meet the needs of affected populations.
- UNITAID's impact includes expanding access to HIV/AIDS treatment, supporting TB and malaria interventions, and promoting the development of affordable diagnostics.
- The organization plays a vital role in addressing global health challenges and improving access to life-saving medicines and technologies.

## India-United States Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X)

**Context:** The India-United States Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) was launched to promote co-development and co-production of advanced technologies by Indian and American startups in the defence sector.

- The event aimed to develop mechanisms for future collaborations across industries, academia, and investors.

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- It focused on the "Make in India" initiative and the philosophy of "Make in India, for the world" to foster self-reliance and global competitiveness.
- The two-day event was co-organized by Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), the Ministry of Defence, and the US Department of Defence (DoD), hosted by the US-India Business Council (USIBC).
- Keynote addresses were delivered by US Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall and US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti.
- Indian and American startups showcased their technologies in domains such as maritime, AI, autonomous systems, and space.
- Panel discussions and roundtables were held to deepen collaborations and explore joint opportunities in defence innovation, research, and development.
- INDUS-X aims to strengthen bilateral trade relationships, defence establishment linkages, and enhance connectivity between American and Indian defence startups.
- It has the potential to catalyse India's target of achieving USD 5 billion in defence exports by 2025 and diversify its defence supply chain.
- The event released an INDUS-X factsheet and discussed export control regulations.
- INDUS-X aligns with the US-India roadmap for defence industrial cooperation and the US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET).
- During this very visit, the GE Aerospace has signed an MoU with HAL to manufacture the Jet Engines in India.

## Four Foundational Defence Agreements between India and USA

### Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA):

- Signed in 2020.
- Provides India with real-time access to American geospatial intelligence.
- Enhances the accuracy of automated systems and weapons like missiles and armed drones.
- Allows sharing of information on maps and satellite images.
- Helps access topographical and aeronautical data for navigation and targeting.
- Facilitates Air Force-to-Air Force cooperation between India and the US.
- Supports response to natural disasters.

### Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA):

- Signed in 2018.
- Enables the US to provide India with encrypted communications equipment and systems.
- Allows secure communication between Indian and US military commanders.
- Facilitates communication between aircraft and ships of both countries.
- Supports communication during times of peace and war.
- Enhances interoperability between Indian and US forces.
- Promotes secure data links with other militaries using US-origin systems.

### Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA):

- Signed in 2016.
- Allows the US and India to replenish and access supplies, spare parts, and services from each other's bases and facilities.
- Supports Navy-to-Navy cooperation.
- Facilitates logistics support and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.
- Builds mutual trust between the two militaries.
- Institutionalizes and smoothens the process of logistics support.

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## General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA):

- Signed in 2002.
- Prescribes security standards and protocols for safeguarding shared information.
- Covers information shared by the Pentagon with India's defense ministry.
- Includes information shared by US defense firms with Indian defense public sector undertakings (DPSUs).
- Does not cover exchange of classified information with Indian private companies.
- Strengthens information sharing and security cooperation between the two countries.

## NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

### PM Mobile App



**Context:** Recently, the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry has introduced face authentication feature in the PM-Kisan mobile app, becoming the first central welfare scheme to implement this feature.

#### Purpose of Face Authentication:

- The face authentication feature in the PM-Kisan mobile app eliminates the need for one-time passwords or fingerprints during the e-KYC (electronic Know Your Customer) process.
- This feature uses iris data from Aadhaar records and has been made accessible through the Unique Identification Authority of India.

#### What is PM Kisan Mobile App?

- It is a mobile application launched by the Government of India as a part of the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme.
- The app allows farmers to register themselves, check their eligibility, and track the status of their application and payments.

#### What is PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi?

- PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi, also known as the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, was launched in 2019.
- It provides financial assistance of Rs 6,000 per year to eligible farmers' families in three equal installments at every four months.
- It is one of the world's largest Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes.
- The scheme has successfully transferred over Rs 2.42 lakh crore to the accounts of more than 11 crore farmers to date.

### Substandard Cough

### Syrups



**Context:** Recently, the World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that 300 children have died across three countries (Uzbekistan, Gambia and Nigeria) since August 2022 due to substandard cough syrups made in India.

#### Alerted Syrups:

- WHO issued an alert for seven cough syrups produced in India, highlighting their substandard quality.
- India's Drugs Controller General made it mandatory to test cough syrups before export.

#### Content Issues:

- Recent incidents linked to high levels of diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol, damaging kidneys.
- Unscientific combinations of chemical components can also be harmful.

#### Government Action:

- Ban on 14 fixed-drug combinations lacking therapeutic relevance and posing risks.
- Need to curtail the sale of over-the-counter cough syrups.

**Symptom vs Disease:** A cough is a symptom, not a disease itself. It is crucial to identify and treat the underlying cause of the cough instead of solely relying on cough syrup.

**Avoiding Codeine:** Cough syrups containing codeine should not be given to children as it is addictive and can be lethal.

**Symptoms:** Drowsiness, dizziness, blurred vision, nausea or difficulty in verbalizing etc.

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## National Florence Nightingale Awards



**Context:** Recently, the President of India (Droupadi Murmu) presented the National Florence Nightingale Awards for the years 2022 and 2023 to nursing professionals at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

**What is the National Florence Nightingale Award?**

The National Florence Nightingale Awards are prestigious honors bestowed by the Government of India to recognize and appreciate the outstanding services rendered by nursing professionals in the country.

On this event, Health and Family Welfare Ministry briefed the president on the progress of the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukta Abhiyaan during the event. It includes:

1. Ni-Akshay Mitra and 2. Campaign against Sickle Cell Anemia

**Pradhan Mantri TB Mukta Abhiyaan:**

Pradhan Mantri TB Mukta Abhiyaan, also known as the Prime Minister's TB-Free India Campaign, is an initiative launched by the Government of India to eradicate tuberculosis (TB) from the country. The campaign was officially launched on 13th March 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

**Goal:**

The primary goal of Pradhan Mantri TB Mukta Abhiyaan is to achieve a TB-free India by 2025, five years ahead of the global target set by the World Health Organization (WHO).

**Ni-Akshay Mitra:**

Ni-Akshay Mitra is an initiative launched in 2022 with the aim of providing additional support to individuals undergoing tuberculosis (TB) treatment in India. The initiative encourages elected representatives, corporates, NGOs, and other stakeholders to become donors and contribute towards the well-being and recovery of TB patients.

**Campaign against Sickle Cell Anemia:**

The mission aims to raise awareness, conduct universal screening, and provide counseling.

The campaign will target seven crore people aged up to 40 years in affected tribal areas.

The special mission was announced in the Union Budget 2023-24 and is expected to achieve its goal by 2047.

## Lambani Embroidery



**Context:** The age-old craft of Lambani embroidery has gained attention recently as designers and NGOs are making efforts to revive and promote this traditional art form.

**Lambani Embroidery:**

Lambani embroidery is characterized by its distinct features. It combines various techniques such as pattern darning, mirror work, cross stitch, overlaying, quilting, patchwork, and appliqué on loosely woven cloth. Geometric shapes, different stitches, and embellishments like beads, shells, and coins are used to create intricate designs.

**Origins of Lambanis:**

The Lambani community has various theories surrounding its origins. Some believe they are descendants of the Romanis from Europe, while others suggest they migrated from the Ghor province of Afghanistan and settled in Rajasthan, eventually spreading across India. They are believed to have assisted the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb to carry goods to the southern part of the country in the 17th century and that is when some of them settled there. They are classified as Schedule Cast (SC) or other backward Classes (OBC) in the society

**Revival Efforts:**

Lambani embroidery, an age-old craft, was facing decline until recent efforts were made to revive it. Designers and NGOs like Banjara Kasuti and Tega Collective have taken up the task of preserving and promoting this traditional art form.

**Banjara Kasuti:**

Asha Patil and Seema Kishore founded Banjara Kasuti with the aim of reviving Lambani embroidery.

**Sustainable Practices:** Banjara Kasuti and Tega Collective prioritize sustainable practices. They source handloomed cotton fabric from local weavers, support traditional craftsmanship, and minimize environmental impact by using natural dyes and handmade techniques.

**Cultural Significance:**

Lambani embroidery holds deep-rooted cultural significance and reflects the rich heritage of the Lambani community. It is a tangible expression of their traditions and craftsmanship.

**About Lambani Community:**

Lambanis wear clothes embellished with thread embroidery, buttons, shells, sequins, silver beads, and other decorative elements. Their homes are uniquely styled with colorful walls adorned with artworks and various art styles.

**Language and Communication:**

- The Lambani community speaks "Gor Boli," also known as "Lambadi."
- Gor Boli does not have a script of its own.

It is written using Devanagari script or in local languages like Telugu or Kannada.

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## Places in News

### The Chashma Nuclear Power Plant (Pakistan)

**Context:** The Chashma Nuclear Power Plant, located in the Mianwali district of Pakistan Punjab, has recently been in the news due to an agreement signed between China and Pakistan to set up a 1,200-megawatt nuclear power plant, Chashma-V, at the site.

**Location:**

The Chashma Nuclear Power Plant is situated in the Mianwali district of Pakistan Punjab.

**Capacity:**

The power plant has a capacity to generate a significant amount of electricity. It is capable of producing 1,200 megawatts of power.

**Collaboration:**

The Chashma Nuclear Power Plant is a result of collaboration between China and Pakistan. China has played a crucial role in assisting Pakistan in establishing and expanding the plant.

**Operational since 2000:**

The Chashma Nuclear Power Plant has been operational since the year 2000. It has been contributing to Pakistan's energy generation and reducing its dependence on conventional energy sources.

**International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitoring:**

The Chashma Nuclear Power Plant is covered under the monitoring and safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This ensures that the plant adheres to international standards of safety and security.

