

Pakistan protests against India's MFN status

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New Delhi: Pharmaceutical industry associations in Pakistan have protested against the granting of most-favoured nation (MFN) status to India alleging that India does not follow the necessary drug regulation policies as prescribed by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Furthermore, Pakistan is concerned that if it allows import of pharmaceuticals from India, business of local producers will get hindered, moreso because the pharma industry in Pakistan is at a nascent stage and is highly unorganised. It is expected that Pakistan will allow the import of only those drugs from India that are approved by the European pharmacopoeia.

Pakistan, in an effort to liberalize trade relations with India, for the first time ever issued a negative list of items that India cannot export to Pakistan. The list, which has been operational from March 2012, contains 1,209 items. Under the pharmaceuticals products category in this list, as many as 49 items were banned.

Some of the items that are banned include ibuprofen, paracetamol, penicillin, ampicillin, antibiotics containing insulin, eye drops, ointments and vaccines for veterinary medicine among others. If a MFN status is granted to India, the negative list will eventually be phased out.