EVALUESERVE | IP and R&D

**April 2026 Edition**

# IPRD SPARK



## Inside This Edition



Curated insights shaping the future of Intellectual Property and R&D.

# Welcome to IPR&D Spark | April Edition

Innovation today is no longer defined by isolated breakthroughs, it is shaped by the evolution of technologies, policies, and industries together. As artificial intelligence integrates with infrastructure, healthcare and material science, while regulatory frameworks adapt in parallel, the pace of change is no longer linear, it is systemic.

In this edition of **IPRD Spark**, we look at how this convergence is redefining the innovation landscape. From advances in AI-driven design and next-generation connectivity to shifts in global regulatory expectations and patent practices, each development reflects a broader move towards more integrated and adaptive systems.

What stands out is not just the speed of innovation, but its increasing interdependence. Scientific discovery, digital transformation, and policy are no longer operating in silos, they are influencing one another in real time, shaping both opportunities and constraints.

As this interconnected ecosystem continues to evolve, an important question emerges:

**Are we prepared to navigate innovation as a complex, interconnected system rather than as a series of isolated advances?**

**– Editorial team**

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# Industry News

Key Industry Developments and Updates

Policy & Patent Updates

# USPTO Introduces Pre-order Submissions in Reexamination Proceedings

## By: Christy Titus George

**Mar' 26**: The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) has introduced a notable procedural shift in reexamination proceedings, allowing patent owners to file a pre-order paper, of up to 30 pages, before the Office determines whether a request raises a substantial new question of patentability (SNQ). Applicable to requests filed on or after **April 5, 2026**, the submission must be made within a strict, non-extendable 30-day window from service.

The pre-order paper is limited in scope, focusing specifically on arguments and evidence related to the SNQ threshold.

While requesters may respond under defined conditions, the update effectively creates an earlier point of engagement for patent owners, enabling them to shape the initial direction of the proceeding.

From a strategic standpoint, this development is likely to reshape reexamination dynamics. It places greater emphasis on rapid assessment and early coordination with counsel, particularly in high-value matters where influencing the process at the outset could prove decisive. (Source)

## EPO Expands ANSERA-based Search Training To Support Next-generation Prior Art Analysis

### By: Anuj Raj

**Mar’ 26**: As part of its digital transformation agenda, the European Patent Office (EPO) is advancing the rollout of its ANSERA-based search tool, bringing together national patent offices to accelerate adoption. Developed under **Strategic Plan 2028**, the cloud-based platform aims to enhance prior art search and modernize examination processes.

The initiative focuses on enabling national offices to implement the tool independently, with an emphasis on examiner training and standardized practices, signaling a broader push towards greater alignment across the European patent ecosystem.

For applicants and IP teams, this could mean more consistent and rigorous examination standards, reinforcing the need for thorough prior art analysis and precise claim drafting. (Source)

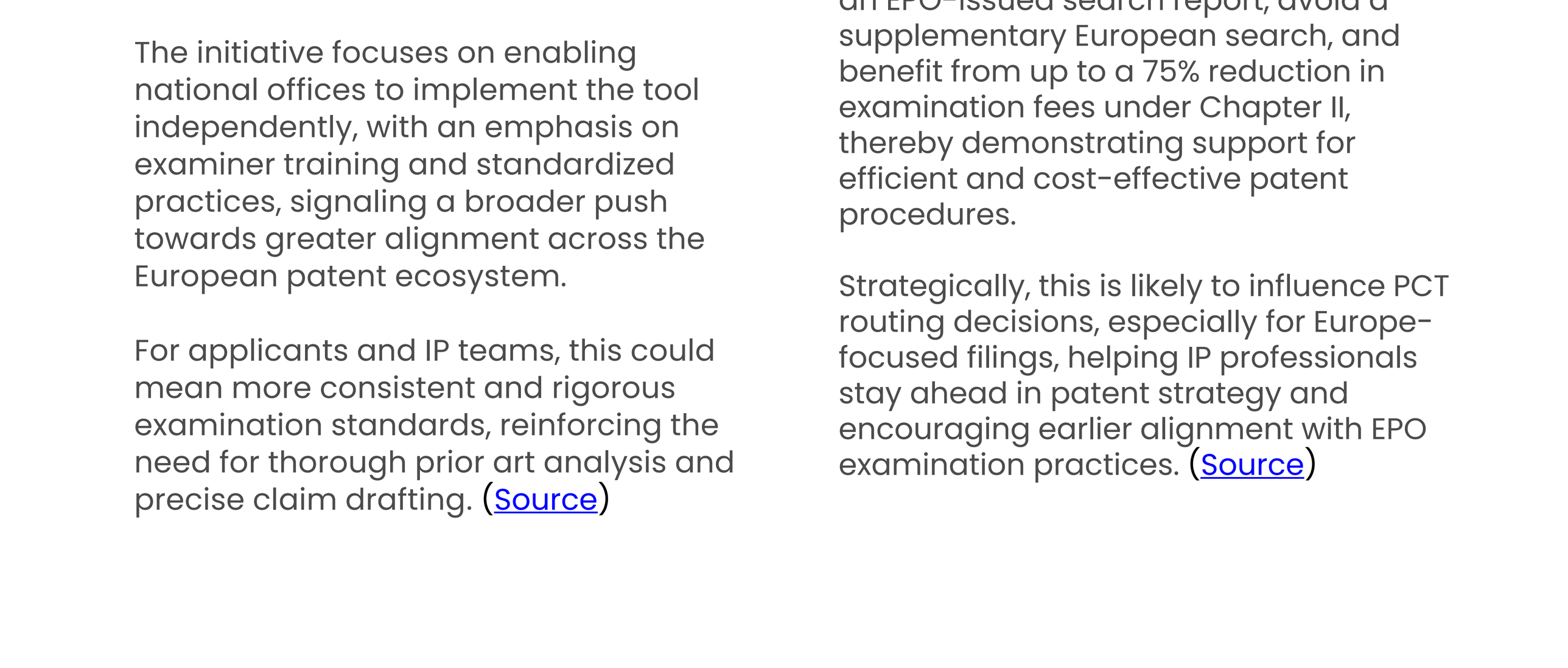
## New EPO–IP Australia PCT pilot slashes costs and streamlines European patent filings

### By: Jitendra Shreemukh

**Mar’ 26**: **Effective March 1, 2026,** the European Patent Office and IP Australia launched a two-year PCT pilot allowing Australian applicants to designate the EPO as both ISA and IPEA, providing a new, reliable pathway for patent filings via IP Australia or the WIPO International Bureau.

The pilot enables applicants to receive an EPO-issued search report, avoid a supplementary European search, and benefit from up to a 75% reduction in examination fees under Chapter II, thereby demonstrating support for efficient and cost-effective patent procedures.

Strategically, this is likely to influence PCT routing decisions, especially for Europe-focused filings, helping IP professionals stay ahead in patent strategy and encouraging earlier alignment with EPO examination practices. (Source)



Policy & Patent Updates

# EPO convergence programme introduces common practices on broad claims and double patenting

## By: Dinesh Sharma

**Mar' 26**: Following its March Administrative Council meeting, the European Patent Office (EPO) concluded the second cycle of its convergence program, introducing common practices on broad claims and double patenting. Part of the Strategic Plan 2028, the initiative aims to improve consistency across the European Patent Network.

The new guidance clarifies how overly broad claims are assessed during search and what examiners should communicate when raising double-patenting objections, thereby enhancing predictability for applicants operating across jurisdictions.

As the program moves into its third cycle, with a focus on divisional applications and internet disclosures, the EPO continues its push toward greater harmonization in examination practices. (Source)

# Legal Watch

Key Legal Developments in the IP Landscape

Landmark IP Rulings

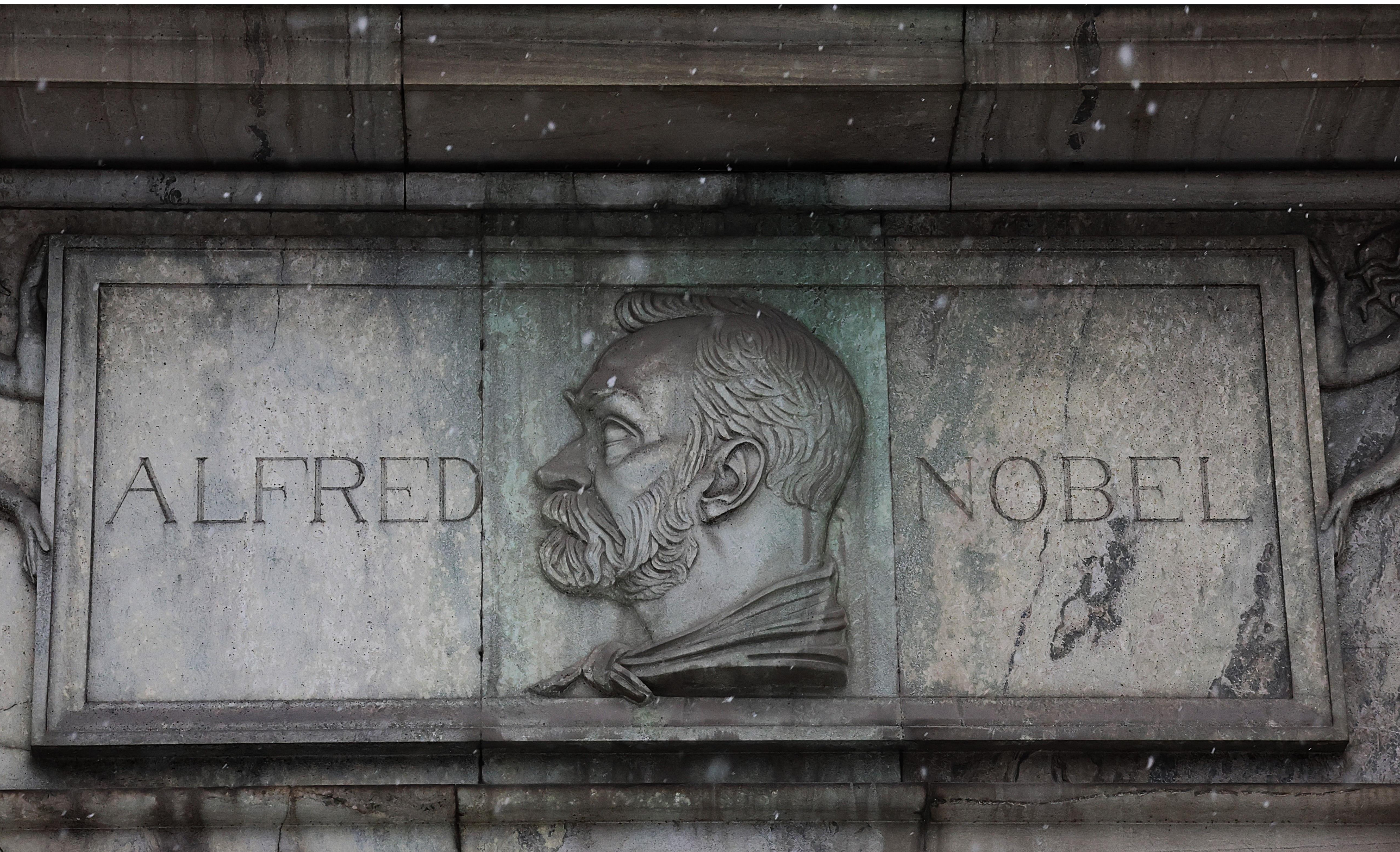
# Nobel Prize Winners Face New Loss in Bid for US CRISPR Patents

## By: Rahul Bhattacharya

**Mar' 26**: In a significant development, the U.S. Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB) has once again ruled against Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier, reaffirming the Broad Institute's priority over CRISPR-Cas9 applications in human cells.

The decision adds to the decade-long dispute over foundational gene-editing rights, reinforcing the Broad Institute's control over some of the most commercially valuable uses of the technology in the U.S.

For the CVC group, the outcome narrows immediate options, pointing towards further appeals or licensing negotiations, while underscoring how high-stakes scientific breakthroughs continue to be shaped by equally complex IP battles. (Source)



# When Interfaces Become Designs: GUI Protection Reimagined

## By: Divya Arora

**Mar’ 26**: In a significant shift, the Calcutta High Court in NEC Corporation v. Controller has recognized graphical user interfaces (GUIs) as eligible for design protection, overturning objections from the Indian Patent Office.

The ruling, however, stands in contrast to earlier Delhi High Court decisions that treated GUIs as artistic works, a distinction that may influence how IP practitioners advise clients on design registration and enforcement, highlighting a growing inconsistency in India’s IP framework.

As Generative AI continues to influence interface design, this decision highlights the importance of understanding evolving IP boundaries to foster confidence and readiness for future legal challenges. (Source)

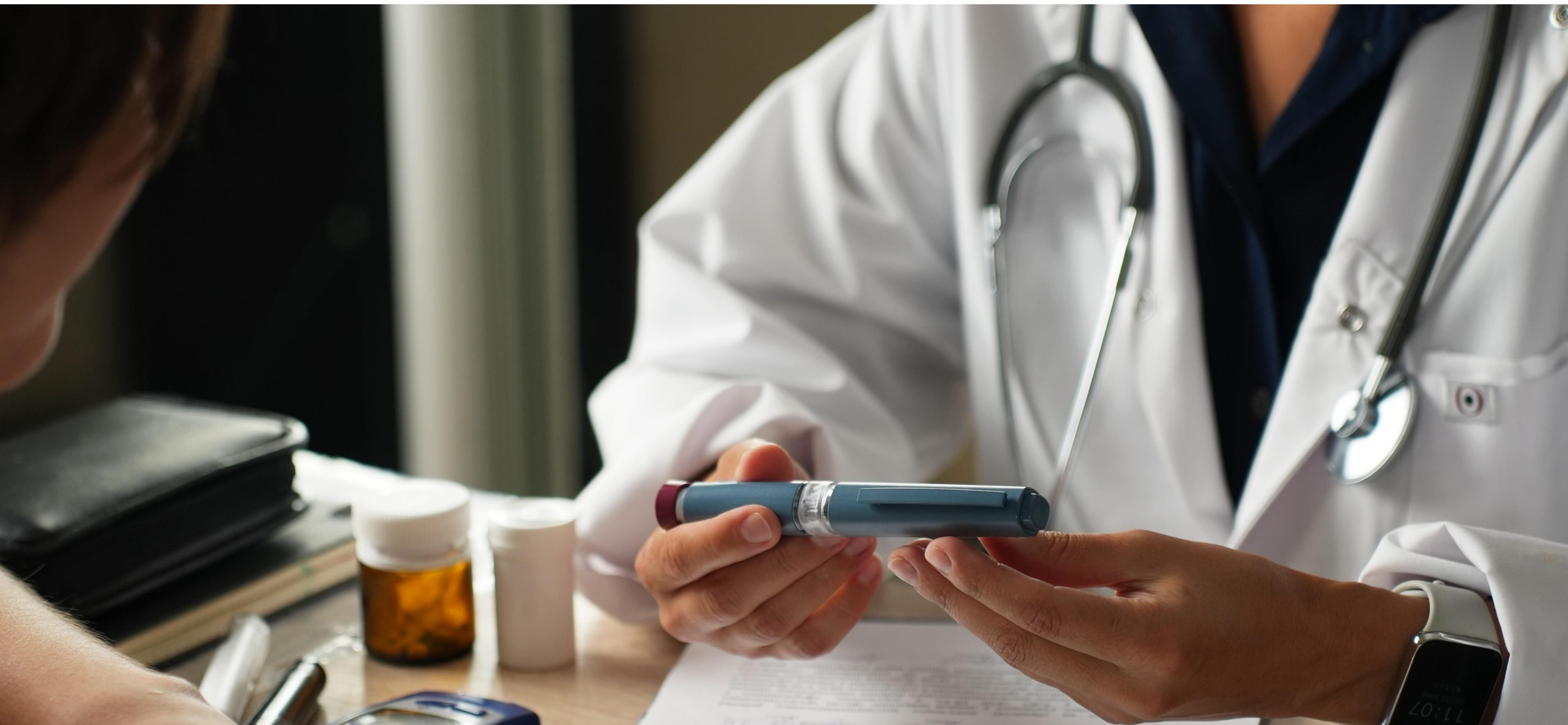
# Global Markets Prepare for a Post Ozempic Patent Landscape

## By: Divya Arora

**Mar’ 26**:  Following the expiry of key semaglutide patents, India, China, and Canada are preparing to introduce generic versions of Novo Nordisk’s Ozempic and Wegovy, potentially reshaping access to diabetes and obesity treatments.

The shift allows manufacturers to enter without licensing constraints, with early estimates indicating significant price reductions, particularly in emerging markets.

As companies position for entry and regulators begin reviews, the development highlights how patent expiries can rapidly alter both affordability and competitive dynamics in global healthcare. (Source)



Landmark IP Rulings

# In Landmark Decision, SCOTUS Shuts the Door on Expansive Copyright Liability for Internet Providers

## By: Rahul Bhattacharya

**Mar' 26**: In a landmark ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court clarified that ISPs are not liable for subscriber copyright infringement solely based on their failure to terminate service, significantly shaping copyright law and ISP responsibilities.

The decision overturns a lower court ruling that could have exposed ISPs to billions in damages, emphasizing that ISPs are not liable solely for subscriber infringement awareness. This should reassure ISPs and internet service providers about their legal protections moving forward.

By limiting the scope of responsibility for infrastructure providers, the ruling offers a significant legal safeguard for the telecommunications industry, while reshaping the balance of accountability between content owners and digital service providers in the evolving online ecosystem. (Source)

# Techno Spotlight

Breakthroughs Shaping the Future of Technology

Chemicals & Material

## A Step Closer to Building Functional Materials One Molecule at a Time

By: Rachna Gupta

**Mar’ 26**: Scientists have developed a novel strategy to assemble complex organic molecules into highly functional surface-based architectures, bringing the vision of building materials one molecule at a time closer to reality.

Led by researchers at CiQUS, the work focuses on carbon-rich phthalocyanine units known for their ability to efficiently transport electrical charge. These units are first synthesized in solution and then assembled on a metal surface, where they form extended, cross-shaped molecular structures.

The approach represents a significant step toward designing materials with precision at the molecular scale, with potential implications for next-generation electronics, energy systems, and sensing technologies. (Source)

## Unlocking Lithium from Untapped Reserves Through Faster and Scalable Extraction Methods

By: Rachna Gupta

**Mar’ 26**:  As demand for lithium accelerates with the global energy transition, conventional extraction methods continue to face challenges around cost, speed, and geographic limitations.

Researchers at Columbia Engineering are exploring a solvent-based approach that could transform how lithium is extracted from natural brines, offering a faster and more cost-effective alternative to traditional methods.

If scalable, the technique could unlock previously untapped reserves and expand the viability of lithium production across regions where existing approaches fall short. (Source)

## Rethinking Everyday Cleaning Habits in the Context of Microplastic Pollution

By: Rachna Gupta

**Mar' 26**: Often overlooked in discussions on pollution, kitchen sponges may be a small but consistent source of microplastic release during everyday use.

With each scrub, these common household items can shed tiny plastic particles that pass-through drainage systems unnoticed, contributing to a broader environmental challenge.

As microplastics continue to be detected across ecosystems, from oceans to drinking water, such findings highlight how even routine household practices play a role in an increasingly complex pollution landscape. (Source)

## Exploring a New Form of Aluminum as a Sustainable Alternative to Rare Earth Metals

By: Rachna Gupta

**Mar' 26**: Researchers at King's College London have identified a novel form of aluminum, offering a potential pathway toward more sustainable alternatives to rare earth metals widely used in modern technologies.

The newly discovered structure, known as cyclotrialumane, consists of three aluminum atoms arranged in a stable triangular formation, combining unusual reactivity with structural stability in solution.

If further developed, the discovery could open new possibilities in material design, reducing reliance on costly and resource-constrained rare earth elements across industrial applications. (Source)

## Key M&A/Strategic Alliances

**Mar' 26**:

- bp to sell its Gelsenkirchen refinery and related businesses to Klesch Group. (Source)
- Shell to sell Jiffy Lube International and Premium Velocity Auto to Monomoy Capital Partners. (Source)
- UPM is collaborating with Paramelt to develop a bio-based packaging. (Source)

## Scaling Spider Silk Innovation Through Expanded R&D and Advanced Screening Capabilities

By: Yamini Sharma

**Mar’ 26**: Kraig Biocraft Laboratories is accelerating its next-generation spider silk program, Project Atlas, through a significant expansion of its research and development capabilities.

By adding scientific talent and advanced laboratory infrastructure, the company has nearly tripled its screening capacity, enabling faster evaluation of new spider silk transgenics. Enhanced automation and analytics are further improving insights into material performance and scalability.

These developments are expected to shorten innovation cycles and strengthen Kraig Labs’ position in advanced biomaterials, with potential applications spanning industrial and defense sectors. (Source)

## Designing Proteins Through Motion with Advances in Physics Aware Artificial Intelligence

By: Yamini Sharma

**Mar’ 26**:  MIT researchers have introduced VibeGen, an AI model that shifts protein design beyond static structures to focus on how molecules move and respond.

By allowing scientists to define desired motion patterns, the system generates entirely new protein sequences using physics-aware AI and diffusion-based models, enabling more precise control over function and behavior.

This approach expands the boundaries of molecular engineering, with potential applications in adaptive therapeutics, sustainable materials, and self-healing systems, while opening design spaces previously unexplored by conventional methods. (Source)

Life Sciences

## Predicting Sepsis Outcomes Earlier Through Machine Learning Driven Clinical Insights

By: Deepak Kumar

**Mar’ 26**:  A multicenter study highlights the growing role of machine learning in predicting sepsis outcomes well before clinical deterioration becomes evident.

Analyzing data from nearly 48,000 ICU patients, researchers identified distinct recovery trajectories and used dynamic changes in vital signs to anticipate decline up to 18 hours in advance, with consistent performance across global datasets.

Beyond prediction, the model has demonstrated tangible clinical impact, reducing ICU stays, ventilation time, and mortality, underscoring how early, data-driven insights can reshape decision-making in critical care. (Source)

## Advancing Safer and Scalable Gene Editing Through Novel DNA Integration Techniques

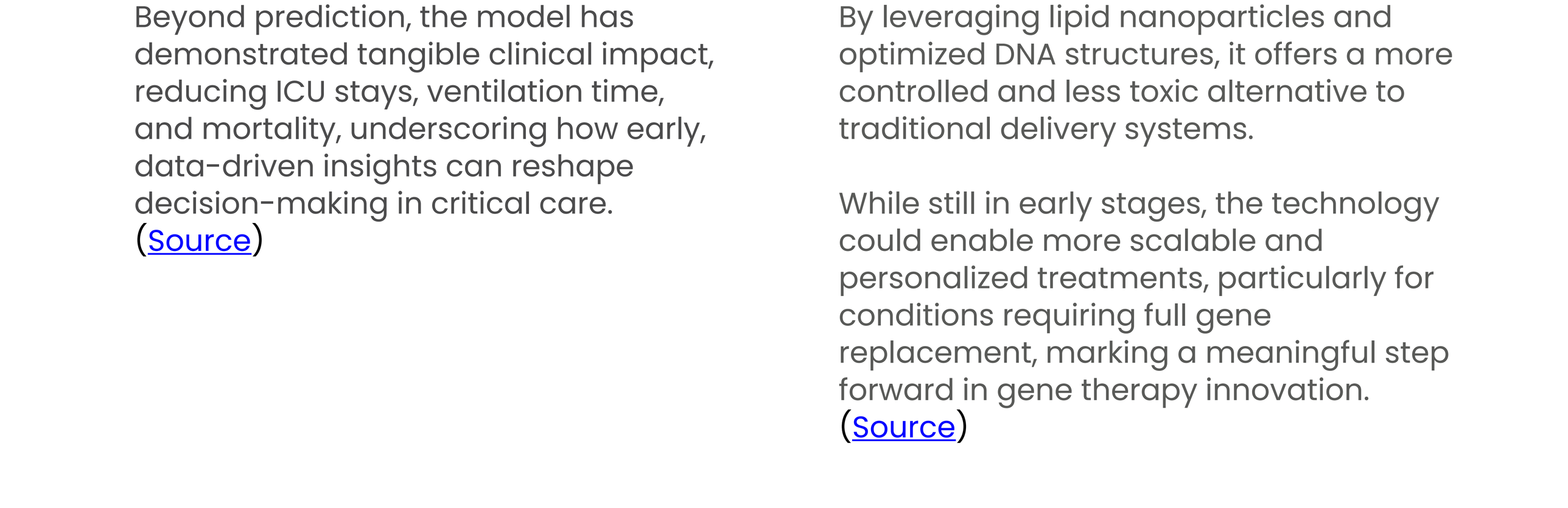
By: Vatsal Garg

**Mar’ 26**: A new gene-editing approach, INSTALL, is emerging as a promising advancement in the development of next-generation genetic therapies.

Developed at Mass General Brigham, the method enables the safe insertion of large DNA segments using circular single-stranded DNA, avoiding the immune responses often associated with conventional techniques and improving precision.

By leveraging lipid nanoparticles and optimized DNA structures, it offers a more controlled and less toxic alternative to traditional delivery systems.

While still in early stages, the technology could enable more scalable and personalized treatments, particularly for conditions requiring full gene replacement, marking a meaningful step forward in gene therapy innovation. (Source)



Hi-Tech

## Scaling AI Infrastructure Through Advanced Data Center Networking and Strategic Partnerships

By: Chandandeep Kaur

**Mar' 26**: NVIDIA and Marvell Technology have announced a strategic partnership aimed at scaling AI data-center infrastructure through NVLink Fusion, a rack-scale networking platform designed for heterogeneous AI systems.

The collaboration brings together high-speed interconnects, advanced optical-electrical integration, and scale-up networking, with Marvell contributing custom XPUs and networking solutions, while NVIDIA provides its broader AI compute ecosystem.

Backed by a $2 billion investment, the partnership underscores a growing shift in focus from compute alone to the critical role of networking in enabling large-scale AI workloads and next-generation data center architectures. (Source)

## Advancing Automotive Electronics Through High Performance Microcontroller Innovation

By: Chandandeep Kaur

**Mar' 26**: Infineon Technologies has expanded its automotive portfolio with the AURIX TC4x microcontroller family, designed to support real-time control in electric vehicles and advanced driver-assistance systems.

Built on a multi-core TriCore architecture, the platform integrates hardware security, functional safety features, and high-speed communication interfaces to meet the growing complexity of automotive systems.

Optimized for applications such as powertrain control, battery management, and vehicle gateways, the TC4x series reflects the increasing demand for scalable, secure, and high-performance electronics in next-generation mobility. (Source)

Hi-Tech

## Advancing Agentic AI Infrastructure Through Next Generation Data Center CPU Design

By: Atul Kumar Pal

**Mar’ 26**: Arm has introduced its first in-house production silicon, the Arm AGI CPU, designed specifically to support emerging agentic AI workloads that require continuous reasoning, planning, and execution.

Built with up to 136 Neoverse V3 cores, the processor delivers high memory bandwidth and low-latency performance, optimized for sustained, deterministic operation across demanding AI environments.

Designed for high-density, power-efficient deployments, the platform integrates with custom accelerators such as Meta’s MTIA, highlighting a broader shift toward tightly coordinated compute architectures to support next-generation AI infrastructure. (Source)

## Demonstrating the Future of Connected Robotics Through Advanced Wireless Technologies

By: Chandandeep Kaur

**Mar’ 26**:  Ericsson has demonstrated a pre-standard wireless trial showcasing real-time connectivity for humanoid robots, highlighting the performance required for next-generation AI-driven applications.

The trial featured a humanoid robot transmitting live video and interactive data, illustrating the role of high-speed, low-latency networks in enabling responsive and connected robotic systems.

The demonstration also emphasized an AI-agnostic approach, allowing integration across diverse platforms and ecosystems—pointing toward more flexible and interoperable architectures for future robotics deployments. (Source)

Landmark IP Rulings

# Building the Future of Wireless Connectivity with High Speed and Intelligent Systems

## By: Chandandeep Kaur

**Mar' 26**: Qualcomm has introduced the FastConnect 8800 platform, designed to support next-generation connectivity standards including Wi-Fi 8 and Bluetooth 7.

The chipset delivers ultra-high speeds and extended range, while integrating multiple technologies such as Ultra Wideband and Thread to enable more seamless and efficient device communication.

With the addition of Proximity AI, the platform enhances spatial awareness and device interaction, reflecting a broader shift toward more intelligent, responsive, and interconnected wireless ecosystems. (Source)

Consumer Goods

## L’Oréal Advances Beauty Innovation Through AI Driven Molecular Discovery and Simulation

By: Simmi Kapoor

**Mar’ 26:** L'Oréal has expanded its partnership with NVIDIA to advance beauty innovation through AI-driven computational chemistry, integrating NVIDIA’s ALCHEMI framework into its R&D ecosystem.

The collaboration enables scientists to simulate ingredient behavior and interactions at an atomic level, significantly accelerating formulation discovery and reducing reliance on traditional trial-and-error methods.

By shifting AI from marketing applications to core scientific research, the initiative reflects a broader transformation in how innovation is approached, making product development faster, more precise, and increasingly data-driven. (Source)

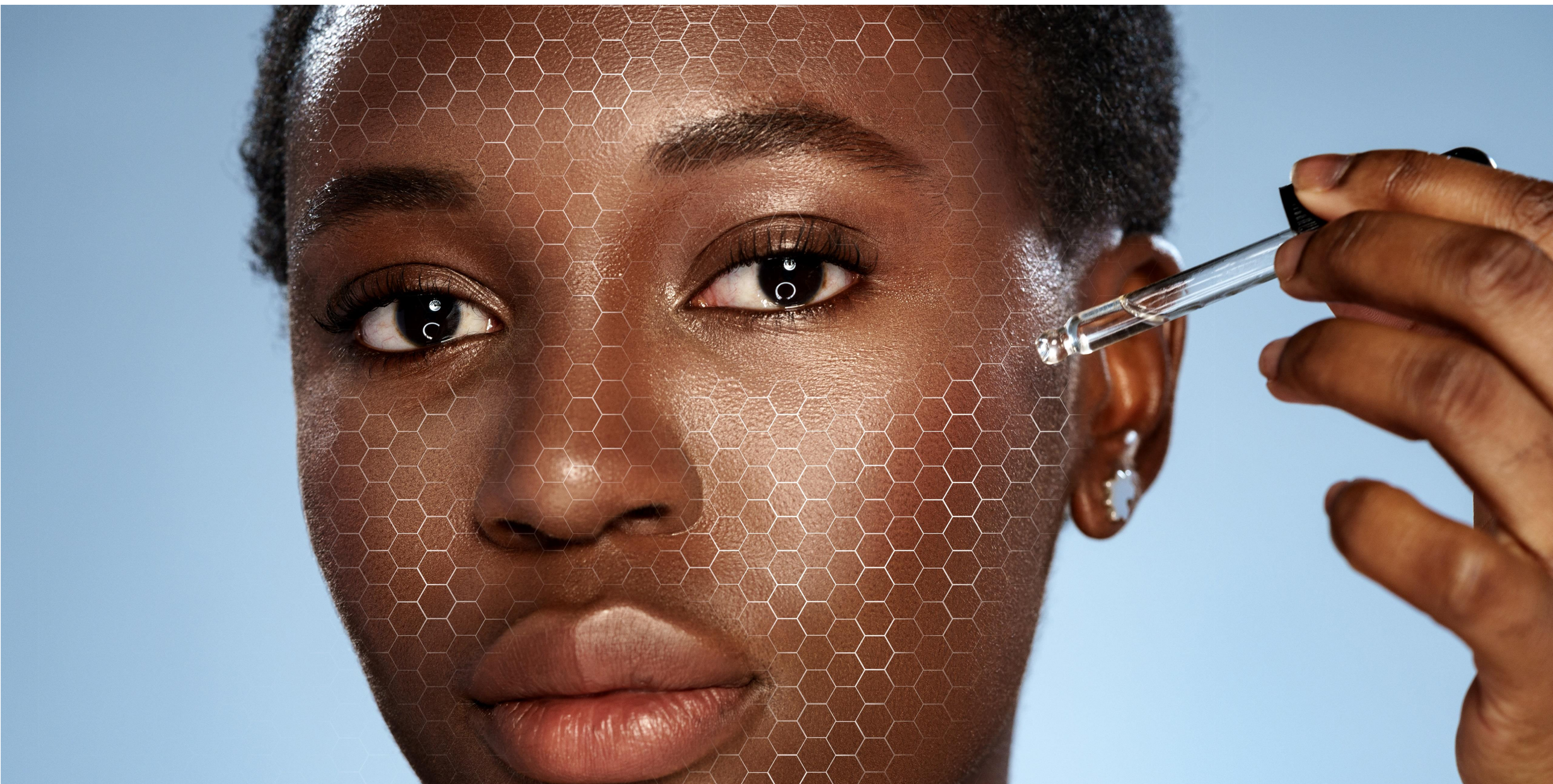
## PepsiCo Expands into Functional Nutrition with Launch of Protein Focused Snack Brand

By: Simmi Kapoor

**Mar’ 26:** PepsiCo Foods has launched “Good Warrior,” a protein-focused snack brand targeting busy, health-conscious consumers, marking its entry into the rapidly growing functional snacking segment.

The initial offering features grass-fed beef sticks with high protein and no added sugar, positioned as a convenient alternative to traditional snacks amid rising consumer demand for nutrition-focused products.

The launch reflects PepsiCo’s broader strategy to expand its “better-for-you” portfolio, signaling a continued shift toward functional foods and evolving consumption preferences. (Source)



## Danone Expands Its Functional Nutrition Portfolio Through Strategic Acquisition of Huel

By: Akshyansh Kumar

**Mar’ 26:** : Danone has announced plans to acquire Huel, a provider of nutritionally complete meal solutions, as part of its broader Renew Danone strategy.

The move strengthens Danone’s presence in the functional nutrition space while expanding into the fast-growing “Complete Nutrition” category, supported by Huel’s digital-first, direct-to-consumer model.

By combining Huel’s innovation and brand strength with its own global scale and distribution capabilities, Danone is positioning itself to accelerate growth and deepen its footprint in evolving nutrition markets. (Source)

## SIRIO Europe Advances Nutrient Delivery Through Innovative Chewable Formulations

By: Akshyansh Kumar

**Mar’ 26:** SIRIO Europe has launched LifeChews, a plant-based chewable format designed to improve the delivery of lipid-soluble nutrients while addressing challenges around stability and taste.

The formulation uses a micro-scale dispersion approach inspired by natural lipid structures to enhance digestion and absorption, demonstrating significantly improved bioavailability in testing.

Beyond the product itself, the launch reflects a broader industry shift toward convenient, consumer-friendly delivery formats that support compliance and expand the role of preventive nutrition. (Source)

## Global Regulators Accelerate the Shift Toward Non-Animal Testing in Drug Development

### By: Basharat Ahmed Sofi

**Mar' 26:** Global regulators, including the FDA, MHRA, and EMA, are accelerating the shift toward **New Approach Methodologies (NAMs)** as alternatives to animal testing in preclinical research.

Recent guidance highlights the growing acceptance of in vitro human-based systems, in silico models, and virtual control groups as part of safety assessment and regulatory decision-making.

These developments signal a coordinated move toward more predictive, human-relevant, and ethically aligned drug development frameworks across major jurisdictions. (Source 1; Source 2; Source 3).

## IARC Advances Evidence-Based Cancer Classification With New Digital Explorer

### By: Kritika Sharma

**Mar' 26:** The **International Agency for Research on Cancer** (IARC) is set to launch the WHO Classification of Tumors (WCT) Evidence Explorer in June 2026, marking a step toward greater transparency in how cancer classification decisions are informed.

Developed under the EU-funded WCT EVI MAP project, the digital platform uses evidence gap maps to organize and surface scientific data across tumor types, helping users identify where evidence is strong—and where key gaps remain.

The platform and its planned rollout underscore a broader push within pathology toward more systematic, data-driven, and openly documented approaches to tumor classification and cancer research. (Source).

# EPA and HHS Launch Coordinated U.S. Action on Microplastics

## By: Anamika Pahari

**Mar' 26:** U.S. federal agencies are elevating microplastics from an emerging issue to a clear regulatory and public health priority. The EPA and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have announced parallel actions that bring microplastics squarely into both environmental oversight and biomedical research.

The EPA has included microplastics in its draft Sixth Contaminant Candidate List, signaling potential future regulation of drinking water, while HHS—through ARPA-H's new STOMP program—will focus on measuring, studying, and developing methods to remove microplastics from the human body.

These moves point to a more coordinated federal approach to treating microplastics as both an environmental pollutant and a human health risk. (Source).

# FDA and EMA Tighten Expectations for Real-World Evidence in Regulatory Decisions

## By: Mayank Kakkar

**Mar' 26:** Regulators in the U.S. and Europe are tightening expectations around the use of real-world data (RWD) in regulatory decision-making. Both the FDA and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) have signaled that acceptance of real-world evidence depends on data quality, governance, and fitness for purpose—not volume alone.

The FDA has stressed rigorous study design, traceable patient-level data, and strong data standards, while the EMA has reinforced similar requirements through its Data Quality Framework for premarket use of RWD.

Together, the guidance underscores a clear message: real-world evidence is increasingly integral to regulatory pathways, but only when it meets high and consistent evidentiary standards. (Source1; Source2)

## ECHA Endorses Broad EU PFAS Restriction With Limited Exemptions

### By: Mayank Kakkar

**Mar' 26:** EU regulators are moving closer to sweeping controls on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The European Chemicals Agency's (ECHA) scientific committees have backed an EU-wide restriction, citing the chemicals' persistence, long-range environmental spread, and links to serious health effects.

ECHA's Risk Assessment Committee has issued a final opinion supporting broad limits, while the Socio-Economic Analysis Committee has endorsed targeted exemptions where alternatives are not yet available. Both committees have also called for stronger emissions controls, including monitoring, PFAS management plans, labeling, and reporting requirements.

The opinions signal a firm regulatory push to curb PFAS use across the EU, while narrowly accommodating essential applications in the near term. (Source).

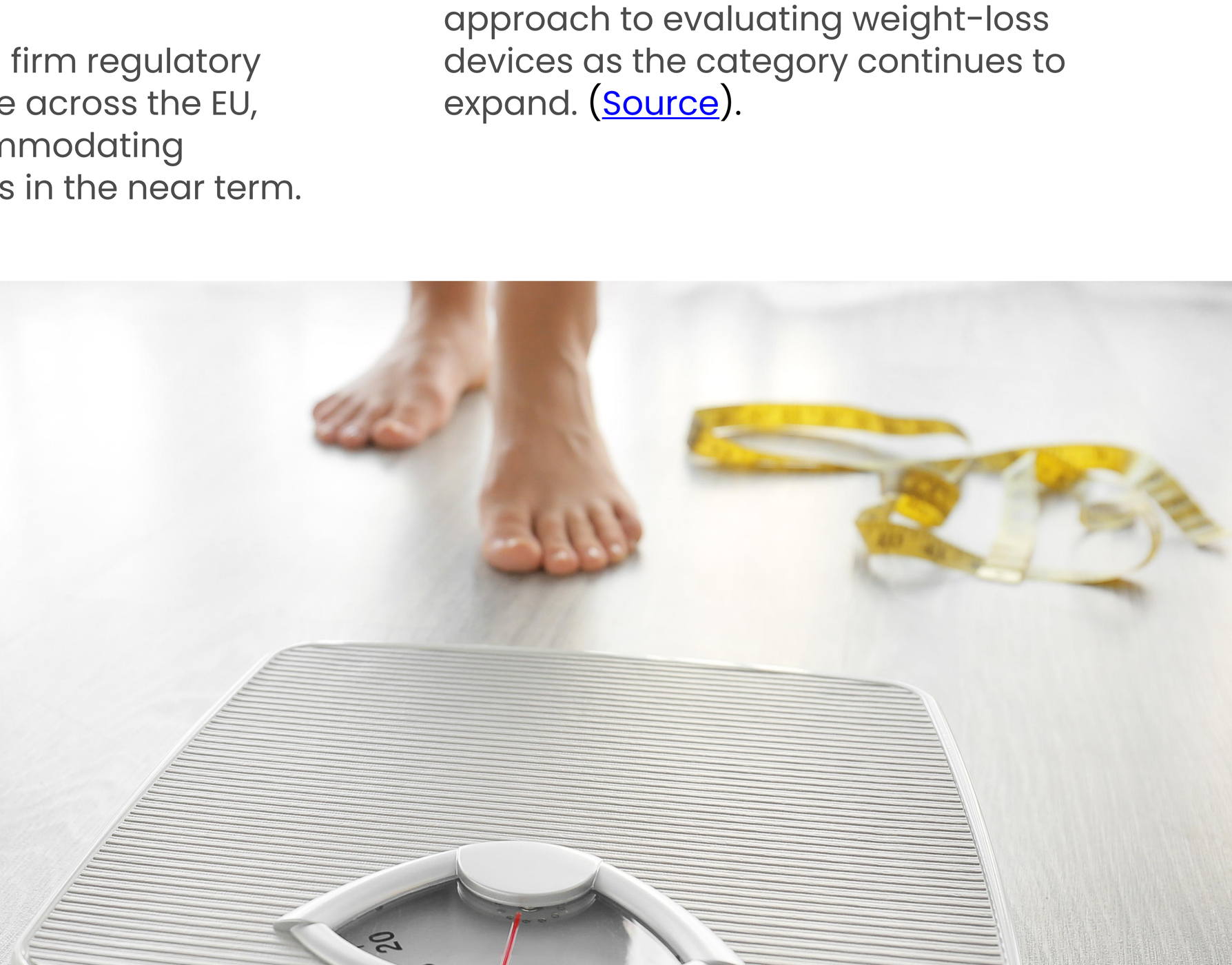
## FDA Sets Clear Evidence Standards for Next-Generation Weight-Loss Devices

### By: Basharat Ahmed Sofi

**Mar' 26:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has clarified regulatory expectations for the next wave of medical weight-loss devices, finalizing guidance that sharpens the evidentiary bar for premarket approval.

The guidance emphasizes robust clinical design, including randomized, preferably sham-controlled studies, clearly defined safety and efficacy endpoints, and at least 12 months of weight-loss data for most devices. FDA will also weigh broader outcomes, including cardiometabolic benefits, obesity-related comorbidities, and patient-reported quality of life.

The framework signals a more comprehensive, outcomes-driven approach to evaluating weight-loss devices as the category continues to expand. (Source).



# Study Links Paternal Nicotine Exposure to Offspring Metabolic Risk

## By: Megha Walia

**Mar' 26:** New research is expanding the conversation on preconception health beyond maternal factors. A mouse study suggests that paternal nicotine exposure may impair glucose metabolism in offspring, potentially increasing the risk of diabetes later in life.

Researchers observed sex-specific metabolic changes in descendants of nicotine-exposed males, including altered insulin levels, blood glucose regulation, and liver function. Notably, the findings point to nicotine itself, rather than other components of tobacco smoke, as the driver of these effects.

The study underscores the growing evidence that fathers' nicotine use may have lasting metabolic consequences for offspring, strengthening calls to include male tobacco exposure in preconception health guidance. (Source).

Automobile, e-mobility, and Mechanical

# Peugeot Reinforces Its Bet on Gas Engines Despite the EV Push

## By: Nitesh Kumar

**Mar’ 26:** As the auto industry accelerates toward electrification, Peugeot is signaling that internal combustion engines are not exiting quietly. The company has introduced a new 1.2-litre Turbo 100 petrol engine, replacing its troubled PureTech unit with a design focused squarely on improved reliability.

Featuring a timing chain, largely redesigned components, and efficiency-focused engineering choices such as the Miller cycle and a variable-geometry turbo, the engine will debut in Peugeot’s 208 supermini before expanding to other models.

The move underscores a broader industry reality: even as EV adoption grows, refinements to conventional engines continue to play a strategic role in Europe’s near-term mobility transition.. (Source).

# Gen Z Shows Growing Openness to Chinese Car Brands

## By: Nitesh Kumar

**Mar’ 26:** Younger consumers appear more willing to look past geopolitical lines when it comes to car buying. A new Cox Automotive study finds that 69% of Gen Z respondents would consider purchasing a Chinese-made vehicle, compared with far lower enthusiasm across the broader population.

That openness, however, sits alongside low brand awareness. While BYD leads recognition among Chinese automakers, familiarity remains limited, pointing to a sizable perception gap. Support rises sharply when Chinese brands are paired with established U.S. automakers, suggesting trust and localization remain critical.

Such findings highlight both the opportunity and the challenge facing Chinese carmakers: Gen Z may be receptive, but market entry will likely hinge on partnerships, branding, and credibility.(Source).

Automobile, e-mobility, and Mechanical

## Audi’s RS3 Marks a Final Tribute to the Five-Cylinder Era

### By: Sachin Patel

**Mar’ 26:** Audi is using its latest RS3 to celebrate—and potentially close—the chapter on one of its most distinctive powertrains. The RS3 Competition Limited marks 50 years of Audi’s five-cylinder engine, arriving as emissions rules and electrification continue to narrow the future for performance combustion engines.

Limited to 750 units, the model retains the familiar 2.5-litre turbocharged output while sharpening the experience with less sound insulation, a louder recalibrated exhaust, and track-focused hardware.

The variant reads as both a celebration and a farewell, underscoring how legacy performance engineering is increasingly being preserved through limited-run statements rather than long-term lineups. (Source)

## Honda Pushes Back on Reports of Prologue EV Exit

### By: Sachin Patel

**Mar’ 26:** Honda is pushing back against claims that it plans to pull the plug on its Prologue electric SUV. A recent industry report suggested production could end later this year amid soft U.S. EV demand and the unwinding of federal incentives, but Honda has dismissed the speculation, stating the Prologue remains part of its lineup.

The denial comes as sales momentum has slowed after a strong 2025 and follows Honda’s decision to discontinue other EV projects, including the Acura ZDX.

The episode highlights the growing tension between automakers’ electrification plans and the uneven pace of consumer demand—leaving even committed players recalibrating their EV strategies in real time. (Source)

# Standard Essential Patents

Standard Essential Patent (SEP) Landscape

# Avanci Deepens China Presence With Expanded Vehicle SEP Licensing

## By: Jitendra Shreemukh

**Mar' 26:** Avanci is strengthening its footprint in the Chinese automotive market, announcing that seven Chinese automakers have signed ten new licensing agreements under its 4G and 5G Vehicle SEP programs.

The deals give manufacturers streamlined access to standard-essential patents from dozens of licensors through a single licensing framework—reflecting the growing appeal of one-stop SEP solutions as vehicles become more software-defined and connectivity-dependent.

More broadly, the agreements signal China's deeper integration into global SEP licensing regimes, particularly as its automakers scale international sales and increasingly align with global connectivity standards. (Source).

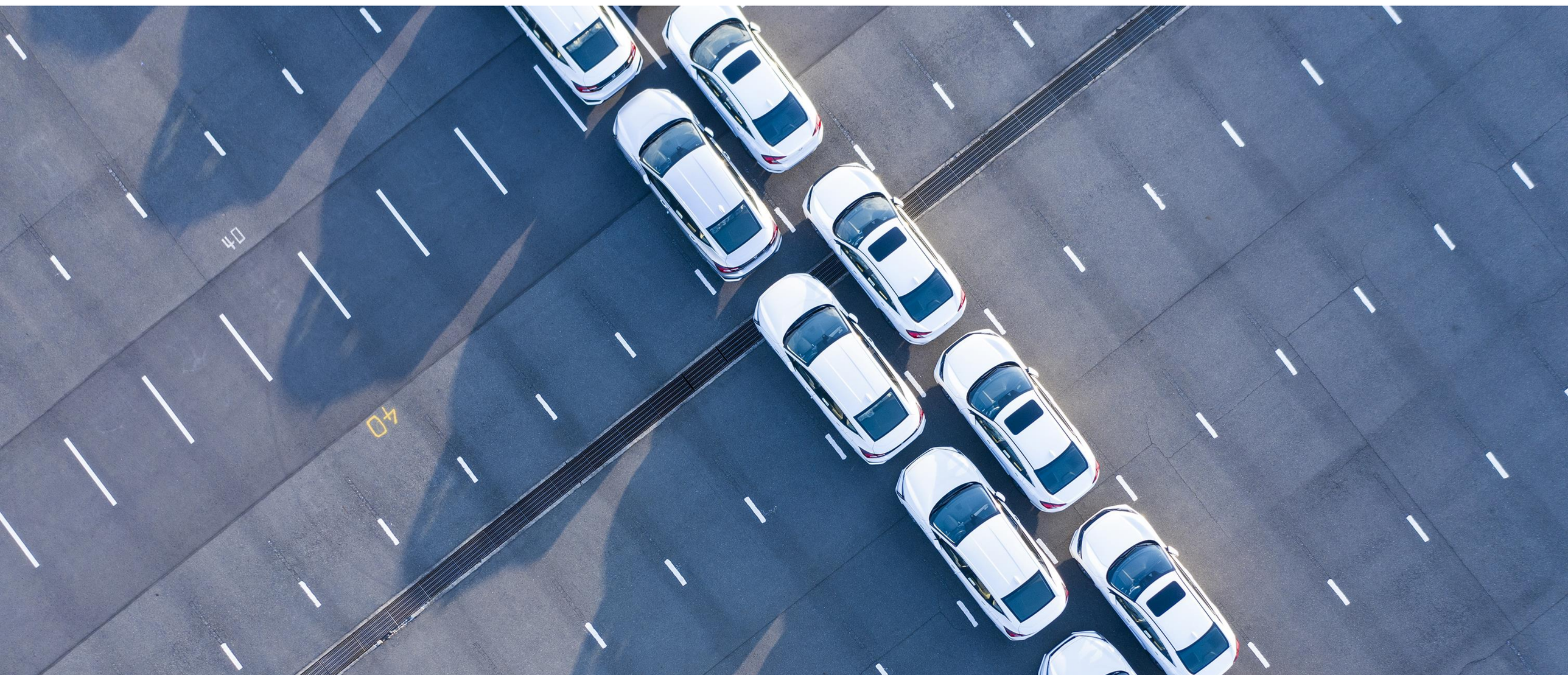
# Nokia and Ericsson Break Ranks to Push Autonomous Network Standards

## By: Jitendra Shreemukh

**Mar' 26:** Long-time rivals Nokia and Ericsson are setting aside competition to accelerate the evolution of AI-driven autonomous networks. The companies have announced a collaboration aimed at enabling more open, multi-vendor network automation environments.

Under the agreement, Ericsson will integrate with Nokia's SMO Marketplace, while Nokia will join Ericsson's rApp ecosystem—moves designed to improve interoperability and advance standardization around the R1 interface in Open RAN deployments.

Together, the partnership signals a pragmatic shift within the telecom industry: as networks grow more complex and software-defined, collaboration on automation standards is becoming a competitive necessity rather than a strategic risk. (Source).



# H.264 Patent Pool Reset Drives Sharp Jump in Streaming Licensing Fees

## By: Jitendra Shreemukh

**Mar' 26:** Licensing costs for H.264 streaming are set to rise sharply as Via Licensing Alliance overhauls its long-standing fee structure. The patent pool administrator has replaced the familiar $100,000 annual cap with a tiered model that can reach up to $4.5 million for the largest platforms.

The new structure, which takes effect in 2026, applies only to previously unlicensed streaming, social media, and cloud-gaming services, while existing licensees retain legacy terms. Platforms with massive user bases will face the highest fees, reflecting a more aggressive monetization stance.

These changes signal mounting pressure on large digital platforms as SEP holders seek to recalibrate licensing frameworks for the scale and economics of modern streaming. (Source).

# Acer Escalates Global SEP Fight With Nokia and Ericsson

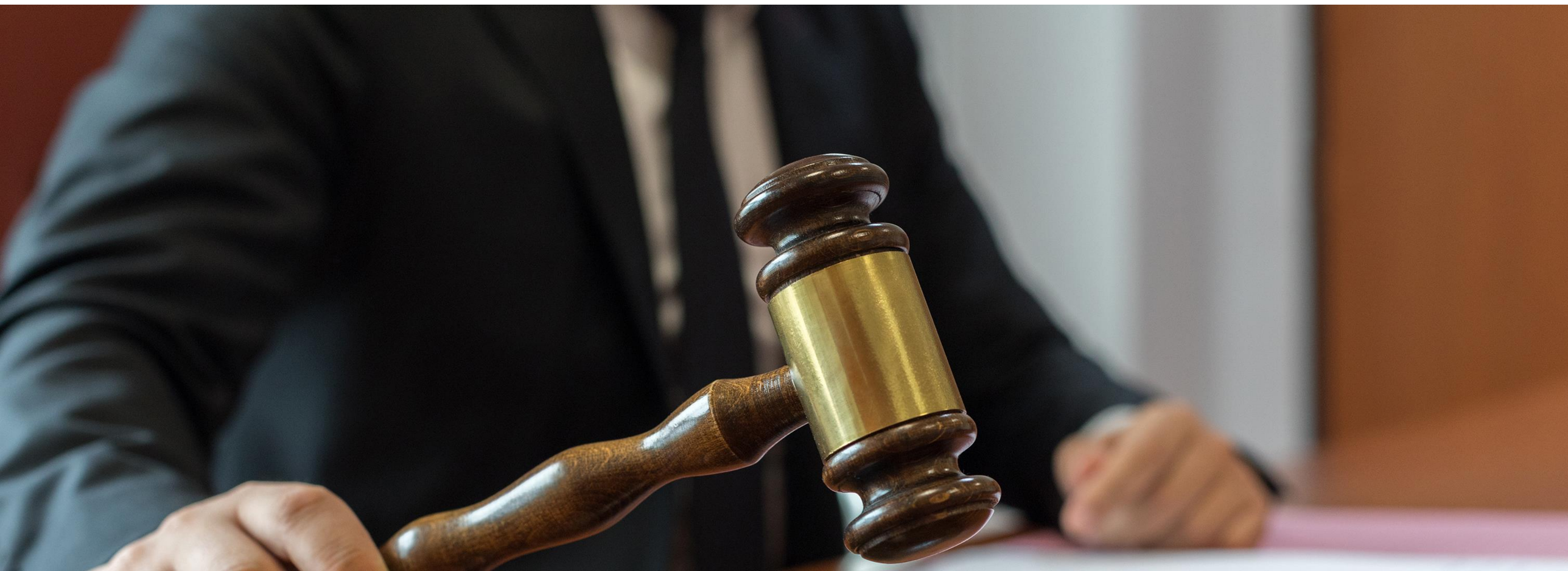
## By: Jitendra Shreemukh

**Mar' 26:** Acer's long-running dispute with Nokia and Ericsson over standard-essential patents is intensifying into a full-scale, multi-jurisdictional battle. Litigation is now unfolding across the Unified Patent Court, Germany, the United States, Brazil, and India, underscoring the global stakes of the licensing standoff.

German courts have already granted injunctions against Acer, increasing pressure on the implementer to secure a license.

In response, Acer has stepped up counter-litigation efforts and transferred patents to a non-practicing entity, signaling a shift toward more aggressive, offensive IP tactics.

The moves highlight how SEP disputes are increasingly playing out as global strategy contests, where litigation leverage, not just FRAND arguments, shapes the balance of power. (Source).



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