# HEALTHCARE ROUNDUP FOR

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## Prime Minister Narendra Modi warns against misuse of antibiotics amid resistance concerns

On 28th December 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his monthly 'Mann Ki Baat' radio, flagged the issue of antibiotic resistance and urged people not to take such medicines without consulting a doctor. He referred to a recent report by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), which indicated that antibiotics were proving ineffective against several diseases, including pneumonia and urinary tract infections (UTIs). Modi described this as a matter of great concern.

According to the Prime Minister, a major reason for antibiotic resistance was the indiscriminate use of these medicines by people. He emphasized that antibiotics were not medicines to be taken mindlessly and should only be used under a doctor's guidance.

PM Modi noted that nowadays, many people believed that taking a pill could cure all health problems, which had contributed to infections becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics. He urged citizens to refrain from self-medicating, particularly with antibiotics, and stressed that medicines required proper guidance while antibiotics specifically required consultation with a doctor. The Prime Minister concluded that following this practice would significantly help in improving individual health and addressing the growing concern of antibiotic resistance in the country.

# FDA approves home-based brain therapy for depression care

On 11th December 2025, The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Flow Neuroscience's at-home brain stimulation device to treat depression, offering an alternative to conventional antidepressant medications that can cause long-term side effects. The approval came amid a sharp rise in depression cases in the United States, with rates increasing by 60% over the past decade and affecting more than 20 million adults, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The device, known as FL-100, delivered a mild electrical current to brain regions involved in mood regulation and was designed for home use under remote clinical supervision. It became the first at-home brain stimulation device approved in the U.S. to treat moderate to severe major depressive disorder in adults aged 18 and above. The treatment was cleared for use either as a standalone therapy or alongside other treatments in patients who were not considered resistant to medication.

Flow said it planned to launch the prescription-only device in the U.S. in the second quarter of 2026, with a targeted retail price ranging between $500 and $800. The company was in discussions with insurance providers and expected to announce coverage partnerships in early 2026. According to Flow, the device had already been used by more than 55,000 people across Europe, the UK, Switzerland and Hong Kong.

The FDA's approval was based on a mid-stage clinical study in which 58% of patients achieved remission after 10 weeks of treatment. Flow reported that among global users, 77% experienced symptom improvement within three weeks. The typical treatment course lasted 12 weeks, with sessions gradually reducing in frequency. Reported side effects were generally mild and temporary, including skin irritation, headaches and tingling sensations.

# 89% hospital deliveries lead to lower maternal death rate: Union Health Minister JP Nadda

On 23rd December 2025, Union Health Minister JP Nadda said the institutional delivery rate in India increased to 89 per cent, leading to a significant reduction in the maternal mortality rate during childbirth. Speaking at an event after laying the foundation stone for medical colleges in Dhar and Betul districts of Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Nadda said the government's healthcare approach focused on prevention and ensuring citizens remained healthy.

He explained that maternal mortality rate (MMR), which measures deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth per 100,000 live births, had declined due to improved access to institutional deliveries. The two medical colleges in Dhar and Betul were announced under a public-private partnership (PPP) model and were expected to be built at an estimated cost of Rs 260 crore and Rs 300 crore, respectively. Mr. Nadda said these would be the first medical colleges in the country to operate on a PPP model, aimed at improving access to doctors in rural areas.

Highlighting developments in medical education, Mr. Nadda said the number of medical colleges in India had increased from 387 in 2014 to 819, while MBBS seats had risen from 51,000 to 1.29 lakh. He added that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had set a target to add 75,000 MBBS seats by 2030.

Mr. Nadda also referred to India's economic progress under the Modi government, noting that the country had moved from being among the 'fragile five' economies to becoming the world's fourth-largest economy. He praised the Madhya Pradesh government for strengthening health infrastructure, including the launch of air ambulance services and the expansion of medical colleges, particularly in tribal areas.


# 2025 sees Indian pharma move beyond traditional generics

For the Indian pharmaceutical industry, 2025 marked a decisive shift as companies repositioned themselves to capitalise on the impending global patent cliff and moved beyond a traditional dependence on generics. Drugmakers signalled strong intent to enter higher-value segments, particularly GLP-1 therapies and biosimilars, as part of a broader strategy to expand and consolidate their market presence. Industry leaders said the year witnessed several novel product launches, collaborations, digital advancements and structural reforms, reflecting a clear push towards innovation.

Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance Secretary General Sudarshan Jain said 2025 had emerged as an inflection point, indicating the industry's efforts to move up the value chain. Longstanding challenges related to capital constraints and undervaluation were addressed through policy interventions such as the Promotion of Research and Innovation Programme (PRIP) and the introduction of a $12 billion R&D fund, which encouraged risk-taking and innovation. Industry leaders noted that early signs of this shift were visible through acquisitions of higher-value products, licensing deals and regulatory approvals for next-generation drugs.

One of the most closely watched developments was the impending patent expiry of Novo Nordisk's Semaglutide, which drove Indian companies to adopt early-mover strategies in GLP-1 therapies, particularly in tier-2 and tier-3 markets. Regulators expected a limited number of branded launches to begin from March 2026, while the global GLP-1 market was projected to reach $100 billion by 2030.

Despite global trade uncertainties, pharmaceutical exports remained resilient, crossing $30 billion, supported by India's strength in small-molecule drugs and improved trade engagements with the UK, EU and other markets. Experts said innovation, scientific capability and regulatory agility would define the industry's growth trajectory in the coming years.

# Union Health Minister reviews TB Mukh Bharat campaign and healthcare delivery in Haryana

On 29th December 2025, Union Health Minister J P Nadda held a meeting with Haryana government officials to review progress under the ‘TB Mukh Bharat’ campaign and strengthen the implementation of national health programmes. The meeting was also attended by Haryana Health Minister Arti Singh.

Mr. Nadda emphasised the need for robust drug regulation, noting that continuous monitoring across the pharmaceutical supply chain was crucial for ensuring the quality and safety of medicines. He urged authorities to institutionalise best regulatory practices and prioritise patient satisfaction, regulatory oversight, and compliance. He also highlighted the importance of strong supply chains and monitoring for free drugs and diagnostics schemes.

The minister stressed the critical role of timely and quality diagnostics in effective healthcare delivery and called for professional management in hospital administration, stronger oversight of blood banks, and uninterrupted supply of laboratory reagents and consumables. He encouraged engagement with HLL Lifecare Ltd to set up AMRIT Retail Pharmacy stores in every district hospital and lauded Haryana’s adoption of telemedicine for bridging access gaps

Mr. Nadda reaffirmed the government’s resolve to eliminate tuberculosis, urging targeted district-level interventions, treatment adherence, nutritional support, and community participation through initiatives like Ni-kshay Mitra. The meeting concluded with a commitment to strengthening drug regulation, diagnostic services, hospital management, and TB elimination efforts.

# Union Health Ministry plans to remove cough syrups from OTC drug list

On 31st December 2025, The Union Health Ministry initiated steps to revoke exemptions for the category and remove it from the over the counter (OTC) drug list, citing rising safety concerns over syrup formulations. In a notification the ministry stated that "Syrup" would be omitted from the "Class of Drugs" under Schedule K of the Drugs Rules, 1945.

The move followed the deaths of at least 24 children in Madhya Pradesh after consuming DEG-adulterated Corlif cough syrup, and a child in Rajasthan who reportedly consumed an unprescribed Dextromethorphan Hydrobromide syrup. A senior drug regulator noted that these incidents were a possible trigger for the decision.

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and the Drugs Consultative Committee (DCC) had recommended deleting exemptions for syrup formulations during the 67th DCC meeting. Schedule K drugs are typically exempted from Chapter IV of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and can be sold OTC, including common household medicines like antiseptics and antacids.

Experts had long cautioned against unmonitored OTC sale of syrups, particularly for children. Moving syrups from the OTC list was expected to reduce misuse or abuse, as dispensing would require a valid prescription. Past incidents in countries such as Uzbekistan and Cameroon, linked to Indian-made syrups, had also raised international safety concerns.

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