



Drug safety & contamination alert

- **The World Health Organization has issued a medical product alert regarding three oral liquid (cough/cold) medicines produced in India: Coldrif, Respifresh TR and ReLife. These were found to contain diethylene glycol (DEG), a toxic chemical, at levels far exceeding acceptable limits.**
 - **The Indian drug regulator (CDSCO) confirmed the contamination, halted production at the implicated manufacturing sites, suspended their approvals, and initiated recalls of the affected batches.**
 - **Health authorities emphasize special vigilance especially in informal or unregulated supply chains, where contaminated products may circulate undetected.**
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Vector-borne disease surge after floods in Punjab

- **Following severe flooding across Punjab that affected thousands of villages, the state is now seeing a sharp rise in dengue and chikungunya infections.**
 - **The dengue positivity rate jumped from about 3.8 % to over 11.5 % in October, indicating a rapid increase in transmission.**
 - **In response, the state government has intensified anti-mosquito measures (fogging, inspections), ramped up testing and treatment, and mobilized health centres to procure more fogging equipment.**
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Health systems, policy & innovation updates

- **AIIMS Bhubaneswar** has proposed establishing a nationwide network of Travel Health Clinics (THCs). The plan is to make AIIMS Bhubaneswar a central coordinating hub to assist rollout, training, and operations of THCs across India.
 - In Punjab, the state government recently unveiled a **State Mental Health Policy**. The policy aims to integrate mental health services into primary healthcare, reduce stigma, and improve access—especially in the context of disasters and emergencies.
 - In Kerala, the Health Minister introduced the “**Health Sector Vision 2031**” policy, which among other goals includes aspirations for universal health coverage by 2031.
 - The CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education), in collaboration with AIIMS, has launched a virtual mental health literacy series for students, teachers, counselors, and parents in CBSE schools, to strengthen mental wellness awareness.
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Research & public health trends

- Indian scientists have developed a novel, low-cost method (inspired by “coffee-stain effect”) to detect trace contaminants and banned dyes in food and water, reaching extremely sensitive detection levels.
- Analysts continue to highlight persistent health inequities in India, with socio-economic and gender disparities driving unequal health outcomes. A recent study (using NFHS-5 data) points out that many women report higher morbidity than men, and factors like insurance coverage, wealth, marital status, and urban/rural residence play major roles.