September 2026: 330 drug samples Not of Standard Quality, one spurious – CDSCO monthly drug alert

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News

In its September 2026 surveillance report (reported on 23 Oct 2026), the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) under the Union Health Ministry flagged 330 drug samples as 'Not of Standard Quality' (NSQ): 42 by Central Drugs Laboratories and 288 by State Drug Testing Laboratories. One sample from NCT Delhi was 'spurious' – made by unauthorised makers using another company's brand name; it is under investigation. CDSCO said the failure applies only to the tested batch. The August 2026 figure was 220.

Key facts

Report	September 2026 surveillance; reported 23 Oct 2026
NSQ	330 – Central labs 42 + State labs 288
Spurious	1 – NCT Delhi; unauthorised maker using another's brand name
Comparison	August 2026 – 220 NSQ (Central 29, State 191)
CDSCO	Under Union Health Ministry via DGHS; headed by Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI); HQ New Delhi

Practice	NSQ & spurious list published monthly on the CDSCO portal

Background

- Law: Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 – Sec 17 (misbranded), 17A (adulterated), 17B (spurious: made under another drug's name, fictitious manufacturer, substituted substance, etc.). NSQ = failing one or more specified quality parameters.
- Schedule M: Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) under the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945. Revised Schedule M notified 28 Dec 2023; large firms by June 2024; MSMEs (turnover up to ₹250 crore) given time till 31 Dec 2025.
- Science: diethylene glycol (DEG) is an industrial solvent; substituted for pharmaceutical solvents (propylene glycol, glycerine) it causes acute kidney failure. In Oct 2025 WHO issued a Medical Product Alert on Coldrif, Respifresh TR and ReLife.

Tamil Nadu link: Coldrif cough syrup, linked to child deaths in Chhindwara district, Madhya Pradesh in 2025, was made by Sresan Pharmaceuticals at Sunguvarchatram, Kancheepuram district; it contained about 48.6% diethylene glycol. Tamil Nadu banned its sale (1 Oct), stopped production and fully revoked the firm's manufacturing licence (13 Oct 2025); owner G. Ranganathan was arrested in Chennai on 9 Oct. 'Drugs' are in the Concurrent List; under the Act most drug-manufacturing licences are issued by State Licensing Authorities.

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