World AMR Awareness Week (WAAW): 18–24 November 2026

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News

World AMR Awareness Week (WAAW), led by the World Health Organization (WHO), is observed from 18 to 24 November 2026. This year's theme is 'One Health, one action: Prevent AMR now'. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites stop responding to the medicines meant to kill them. WHO says bacterial AMR was associated with more than 4.7 million deaths worldwide in 2021. In 2023, about one in six laboratory-confirmed bacterial infections resisted antibiotics.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Dates	18–24 November (every year)
2026 theme	'One Health, one action: Prevent AMR now'
Name history	2015–19 'World Antibiotic Awareness Week'; 2020–22 'World Antimicrobial Awareness Week'; from 2023 'World AMR Awareness Week'
Global Action Plan	May 2015 – 68th World Health Assembly; updated plan 2026–2036
Deaths	Bacterial AMR – associated with over 4.7 million deaths in 2021
India's plan	NAP-AMR 2017–21; NAP-AMR 2.0 (2025–29) – 18 Nov 2025
First State plan	Keralam – KARSAP, 25 Oct 2018

Point	Details
Chennai Declaration	Aug 2012 – Indian medical societies' AMR roadmap
Drug rules	Schedule H1 (notified 2013; in force 1 March 2014); 'Red Line' campaign (2016)

Background

- Science: Antibiotics act only against bacteria; they are useless against viral illnesses such as the common cold and flu. Unnecessary use, not completing the course, use as growth promoters in livestock and poultry, and pharmaceutical effluents all spread resistance. The 'One Health' approach holds that human, animal, plant and environmental health are interlinked.
- Global action: In May 2015 the 68th World Health Assembly adopted the Global Action Plan on AMR; to meet its awareness objective, the first awareness week was held that November. The updated Global Action Plan 2026–2036 targets fewer human deaths, less antimicrobial use in agrifood systems and less environmental pollution. WHO estimates AMR could add US$412 billion a year in treatment costs up to 2035, plus productivity losses of US$443 billion a year.
- India: After the 2011 national antibiotic policy, 'Schedule H1' was notified in August 2013 and came into force on 1 March 2014 under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 – chemists selling third- and fourth-generation antibiotics must keep prescription records for three years. In February 2016 the 'Medicines with the Red Line' campaign began – a red line on the strip means it must not be bought without a doctor's prescription. The first National Action Plan (NAP-AMR) came in 2017 and the second (2025–29) on 18 November 2025. On 25 October 2018 Keralam released 'KARSAP', India's first State-level AMR action plan.

Tamil Nadu link: In August 2012 India's leading medical societies (including the Indian Medical Association, the Association of Surgeons of India and the Indian Society of Critical Care Medicine) met in Chennai and issued a roadmap to tackle AMR – the 'Chennai Declaration'; the meeting was coordinated by Dr Abdul Ghafur. It recommended an infection-control committee and antibiotic stewardship in every hospital, and is regarded as a landmark national commitment with international relevance.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Dates: 18–24 November (every year); 2026 theme: 'One Health, one action: Prevent AMR now'; Name history: 2015–19 'World Antibiotic Awareness Week'; 2020–22 'World Antimicrobial Awareness Week'; from 2023 'World AMR Awareness Week'; Global Action Plan: May 2015 – 68th World Health Assembly; updated plan 2026–2036.

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livestock and poultry, and pharmaceutical effluents all spread resistance.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. The 2012 roadmap on antimicrobial resistance issued jointly by Indian medical societies is known as the:

A) Madurai Declaration

B) Chennai Declaration

C) Coimbatore Declaration

D) Vellore Declaration

Answer: B – Explanation: Chennai Declaration (August 2012) – it called for an infection-control committee in every hospital.

2. Which Indian State was the first to release its own State-level action plan on antimicrobial resistance (2018)?

A) Keralam

B) Tamil Nadu

C) Madhya Pradesh

D) Delhi

Answer: A – Explanation: Keralam – KARSAP, 25 Oct 2018. India's first National Action Plan on AMR (NAP-AMR) came in 2017.

3. Under a 2016 awareness campaign, what does a vertical red line on a medicine strip indicate?

A) Sold only on prescription

B) Nearing expiry

C) Ayurvedic medicine

D) Imported medicine

Answer: A – Explanation: It must not be bought without a doctor's prescription (antibiotics included) – meant to curb self-medication.

4. 'Schedule H1', which makes chemists keep prescription records of certain antibiotics for three years, falls under which Act?

A) Pharmacy Act, 1948

B) NDPS Act, 1985

C) Consumer Protection Act

D) Drugs & Cosmetics Act

Answer: D – Explanation: Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 – Schedule H1 was added in 2013. The NDPS Act deals with narcotic drugs.

5. Antibiotics are of no use in treating which of the following?

A) Typhoid

B) Tuberculosis

C) Cholera

D) Common cold

Answer: D – Explanation: Common cold – caused by viruses (rhinovirus). Typhoid, tuberculosis and cholera are bacterial diseases.

Sources: WHO – who.int (WAAW 2026 event page; AMR fact sheet: 2021 deaths, US$412 bn and US$443 bn estimates; GLASS 2025; Global Action Plan 2026–2036); PIB / MoHFW (NAP-AMR 2.0, 18 Nov 2025); NCDC – ncdc.mohfw.gov.in (NAP-AMR); CDSCO (Schedule H1; Red Line campaign, Feb 2016); Keralam Health Department (KARSAP); Journal of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy – academic.oup.com (2013, Chennai Declaration). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.