

# Quality tests on export of Indian cough Syrups

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**Context-** From June 1, all cough syrups exported from India have to undergo mandatory testing of their products at specified government laboratories said the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)

## **Key highlights:**

- The recent move on testing was issued after three alerts by the **World Health Organisation(WHO)** in the last seven months over contaminated India-made cough syrups.
- The Indian cough syrups were allegedly linked to the **death of 70 children in Gambia with acute kidney injury and 18 children in Uzbekistan** and contaminated products including **Guaifenesin** an expectorant for cough relief and chest congestion being reported from the western pacific countries of Micronesia and Marshall islands, denting the \$41 billion pharmaceutical industry image of India.
- In all the cases the contaminants **diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol** were detected. These two contaminants are thought to have contaminated solvents used for manufacturing the syrups. While the solvents are not harmful, both the contaminants are toxic to humans causing abdominal pain,vomiting, diarrhea, headaches,altered mental status, inability to pass urine and acute kidney injury.

## **About the notice**

- The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said that the export of cough syrups shall be permitted to be exported subject to export samples being tested and

production of a certificate of analysis by the laboratories.

- The DGFT earmarked four central and two regional drug testing labs like the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission, Regional Drug testing lab (RDTL), Chandigarh, Central drugs testing labs, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, RDTL Guwahati and the NABL- National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration laboratories. Accredited drug testing labs of the State governments.
- India has exported cough syrups worth \$17.6 billion during 2022-23.

### **Indian Pharma**

- India ranks third in the Pharmaceutical production volume and 14th by value.
- The industry includes a network of 3000 drug companies and 10,500 manufacturing units.
- India is the largest provider of generic drugs, supplying over 50% of the global demand for vaccines, about 40% of generic demand in the US and about 25% of all medicine in the UK.