

India Pharma 2026 Showcases Sectoral Transformation Through Four Key Plenary Discussions

Spotlight on Policy, Regulation, AI and CRDMO at India Pharma 2026

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The first day of the 9th India Pharma 2026 witnessed four high-impact plenary sessions that brought together policymakers, industry leaders, regulators and technology experts to chart the future of India's pharmaceutical and life sciences ecosystem. The discussions reflected a strong consensus on accelerating innovation through policy support, regulatory transformation and adoption of next-generation technologies.



The inaugural plenary session on ***“Policy Thrust for Catalysing Innovation”***, highlighted the urgent need to bridge the gap between policy intent and on-ground execution. **Shri Manoj Joshi**, Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, emphasised industry-led model for Research and Development, importance of strengthening government lab networks and attuning regulatory model to that of European systems. **Shri Rajiv Bahl**, Secretary Department of Health Research said though research funding has increased manifold over the last few years, the country needs a Bharat model of R & D with confidence of the market in the innovators and increased trust between industry and academia. Industry leaders echoed the need for increased venture capital participation and co-funding mechanisms to nurture research-driven

enterprises, stronger industry-academia integration and underscored the importance of integrated ecosystems to translate early-stage discoveries into global solutions. The session concluded with a strong call to “Discover in India” and position the country as a global innovation hub.



The second plenary session on ***“Enabling Regulatory Ecosystem to Foster Innovation”*** focused on creating a predictable, efficient and globally aligned regulatory framework. Dr. Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi, Drug Controller General of India highlighted the importance of stakeholder consultations in shaping responsive regulatory systems. Industry Experts called for expedited approval pathways, single-window clearance mechanisms and greater global harmonisation to reduce duplication and accelerate patient access. Industry leaders further underlined the need for digital enablement and continuous collaboration between regulators and industry. The session underscored that a future-ready regulatory ecosystem will be critical to unlocking next-generation therapies and strengthening India’s global competitiveness.



The third plenary session on ***“Harnessing AI and Next-Gen Technologies for Disruptive Innovation”*** explored the transformative potential of artificial intelligence across the pharmaceutical value chain. Pharma leaders emphasised reimagining processes rather than merely digitising existing systems. They highlighted the growing importance of strong data and technology foundations to enable scalable AI adoption and stressed the immediate benefits of automation in improving clinical efficiency. The session concluded on a forward-looking note, with experts agreeing that AI will play a pivotal role in accelerating drug discovery, enabling precision medicine and shaping a smarter, innovation-led healthcare ecosystem.



The fourth plenary session on ***“Unleashing India’s CRDMO Potential”*** brought focus to India’s growing role in the global Contract Research, Development and Manufacturing Organization (CRDMO) landscape. The panel noted that India’s CRDMO industry, currently valued at around \$8 billion, has been growing at a robust pace of 10–12 percent, reflecting strong global outsourcing demand. Industry leaders stressed that speed will be a critical differentiator in scaling India’s R&D and manufacturing capabilities, and highlighted the transformative role of AI and digital technologies, including digital twins, in reshaping the CRDMO ecosystem. The session concluded by outlining the strategic priorities required for India to lead the next phase of global growth in complex modalities and outsourced pharma services.

Overall, the plenary sessions on Day 1 of India Pharma 2026 reinforced India’s readiness to lead the next phase of global pharmaceutical innovation, driven by policy intent, regulatory agility and technological advancement.

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