17th asia PHARMA EXPO | ASIA LAB EXPO
PharmaTech expo | LabTech expo

INDIAN PHARMA COMPENDIUM 2026

Bangladesh pharma industry set to shine at Asia Pharma Expo 2026

OUR BUREAU, MUMBAI

BANGLADESH'S pharmaceutical industry, now meeting 98% of domestic demand and exporting to 157 countries, is taking centre stage at the 17th Asia Pharma Expo 2026 & Asia Lab Expo 2026, underway at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre (BCFEC), Purbachal, Dhaka, from March 29–31, 2026.

Jointly organized by GPE EXPO PVT LTD and the Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (BAPI), the event continues its 23-year legacy as the region's premier platform for pharmaceutical manufacturing technology, bringing together more than 850 exhibitors from over 30 countries.

The expo will spotlight cutting-edge innovations in pharmaceutical processing, packaging, APIs, excipients, laboratory instruments, cleanroom systems, water management, and turnkey project services.

A Proven Gateway to South Asia's Pharma Growth

Following the success of APE 2025, which drew 14,500 trade visitors and 750+ exhibitors from 32 countries, the 2026 edition aims to deepen international collaboration and technology transfer. The expo is positioned as a B2B hub where global

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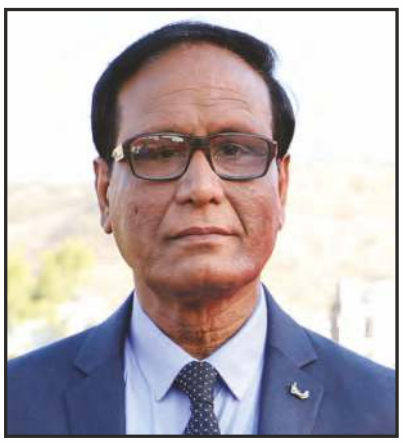
High-potency APIs fuel India's pharma ambitions beyond generics



DR. SANJAY AGRAWAL

INDIA has long been known as the "pharmacy of the world," supplying affordable generic medicines to millions across continents. The country plays a critical role in global healthcare by producing a significant share of the world's generic medicines and vaccines. However, the next phase of India's pharmaceutical evolution is unfolding beyond traditional generics. A new frontier is emerging- High-Potency Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (HPAPIs) which is reshaping India's strategic ambitions in the global pharmaceutical value chain.

As someone who has spent decades in the pharmaceutical industry as a consultant, innovator, and advisor, I believe HPAPIs represent one of the most important drivers of the industry's transition from a volume-driven generics model to a value-driven innovation ecosystem.

Moving beyond the generics model

India's pharmaceutical industry has built its reputation on cost-effective manufacturing, strong process chemistry capabilities, and a highly skilled scientific workforce. Over the years, Indian companies have established themselves as reliable suppliers of affordable medicines to both developed and developing markets. This success has made India a central pillar in global pharmaceutical supply chains.

However, the traditional generics model is increasingly facing pricing pressures, especially in regulated markets such as the United States and Europe. Intense competition and declining margins are compelling companies to rethink their long-term strategies.

To sustain growth and strengthen global competitiveness, the Indian pharmaceutical sector must move toward complex generics, specialty drugs, biosimilars, and high-value APIs. These segments offer higher entry barriers, greater technological sophistication, and stronger long-term profitability.

In my view, the Indian pharmaceutical industry is entering a transformation phase. In the coming years, growth will be driven not merely by volumes but by innovation, complexity, and specialization. High-potency APIs will play a crucial role in this shift.

Understanding high-potency APIs

High-Potency Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients are compounds that produce a strong therapeutic effect even at extremely low doses. These molecules are widely used in treatments for serious and life-threatening conditions such as cancer, hormonal disorders, and targeted therapies.

Because of their high potency, even minute quantities can deliver the intended therapeutic effect. However, this same potency also presents challenges in manufacturing. HPAPIs must be produced in highly controlled environments with strict containment systems to ensure the safety of workers and prevent cross-contamination.

Producing HPAPIs requires specialized infrastructure, advanced containment technologies, and rigorous safety protocols. These requirements make the segment significantly more complex than traditional API manufacturing.

But complexity also creates opportunity. Globally, HPAPIs are among the fastest-growing segments in pharmaceutical manufacturing, driven by the rise of precision medicine and targeted drug therapies.

For India, this shift presents an opportunity to move up the pharmaceutical value chain from supplying basic generics to producing sophisticated, high-value pharmaceutical ingredients.

The growing demand from oncology and specialty therapies

One of the most important drivers of HPAPI growth is the rapid expansion of oncology and specialty medicines.

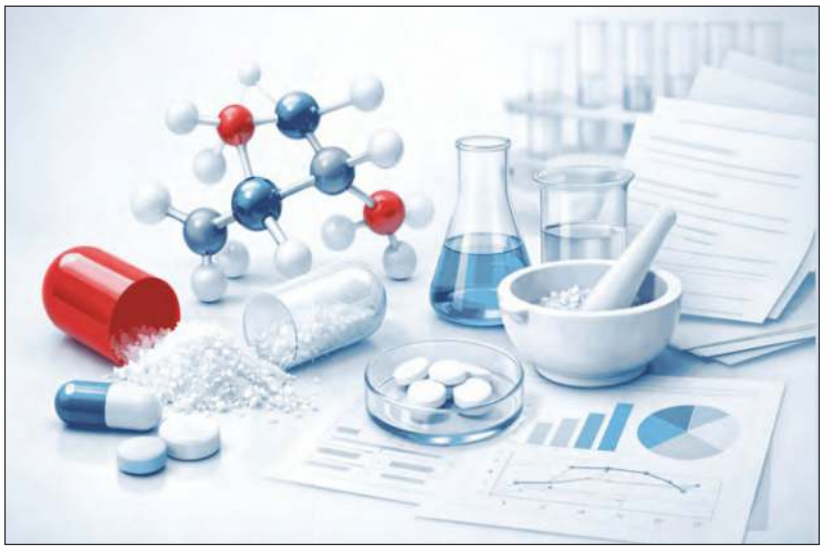
Cancer treatment has increasingly moved toward targeted therapies designed to attack specific cellular pathways. These treatments rely on highly potent molecules capable of delivering powerful therapeutic effects at very small doses. As a result, HPAPIs have become essential components in modern oncology drugs.

With global cancer cases continuing to rise, demand for oncology-related HPAPIs is expected to grow significantly in the coming years. Pharmaceutical innovators around the world are therefore investing heavily in the development and manufacturing of high-potency molecules.

India's strong capabilities in chemistry, process development, and large-scale manufacturing make it well positioned to participate in this rapidly expanding market.

India's competitive strengths in HPAPI manufacturing

India already possesses several structural advantages that support the growth of HPAPI manufacturing.



Strong API manufacturing ecosystem

India has a well-established API manufacturing industry with hundreds of production facilities and decades of experience in complex chemical synthesis.

Highly skilled scientific talent

Indian chemists and pharmaceutical scientists have demonstrated exceptional expertise in multi-step synthesis and process optimization, which are critical for producing high-potency molecules.

Regulatory expertise

Many Indian pharmaceutical facilities meet stringent global regulatory standards and are approved by international regulatory authorities. This enables Indian companies to supply highly regulated markets worldwide.

Cost-effective high-quality production

India offers a unique combination of cost efficiency and quality compliance. This makes it an attractive destination for pharmaceutical companies seeking reliable manufacturing partners.

These strengths provide a solid foundation for India to expand its role in the global HPAPI market.

Investment in high-containment infrastructure

Recognizing the strategic importance of HPAPIs, many Indian pharmaceutical companies are investing in specialized high-containment manufacturing facilities.

HPAPI production requires advanced technologies such as isolators, contained reactors, and controlled environments designed to safely handle highly potent compounds. These facilities must ensure both worker safety and product integrity while meeting stringent regulatory standards.

Over the past few years, several new HPAPI facilities have been established in India to serve both domestic and international pharmaceutical companies. These investments reflect a broader industry shift from large-scale production of simple APIs to specialized manufacturing of complex and high-value molecules.

Such infrastructure development will play a critical role in strength-

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ening India's position as a global hub for advanced pharmaceutical manufacturing.

Policy support and industry development

Government initiatives are also helping to strengthen India's API ecosystem and encourage domestic manufacturing.

Efforts to expand bulk drug parks and provide incentives for local production aim to reduce dependence on imported raw materials while strengthening the country's pharmaceutical supply chain.

Building a robust domestic API ecosystem is essential not only for economic growth but also for national healthcare security. Recent global disruptions have demonstrated the importance of resilient pharmaceutical supply chains.

With the right policy support and continued industry investment, India can further accelerate its transition toward advanced pharmaceutical manufacturing.

Expanding opportunities in contract development and manufacturing

Another significant opportunity lies in contract development and manufacturing services (CDMO).

Many global pharmaceutical companies prefer to outsource the development and manufacturing of high-potency molecules to specialized partners rather than investing in expensive internal facilities. This creates opportunities for Indian firms with the right capabilities and infrastructure.

Indian companies are increasingly evolving from contract manufacturers to strategic partners in drug development, offering services that include process development, scale-up, and commercial manufacturing.

This shift enhances India's role in the global pharmaceutical ecosystem from being a supplier of generics to becoming a collaborative partner in pharmaceutical innovation.

Challenges that must be addressed

While the HPAPI opportunity is promising, several challenges must be addressed to fully realize its potential.

Capital-intensive infrastructure

Establishing high-containment facilities requires substantial investment in specialized equipment and safety systems.

Strict safety protocols

Handling highly potent compounds demands rigorous safety measures to protect workers and prevent environmental exposure.

Regulatory complexity

HPAPI manufacturing involves more stringent regulatory oversight due to the nature of the molecules and their therapeutic applications.

Talent development

The industry will require more professionals trained in high-potency chemistry, containment engineering, and regulatory compliance.

Addressing these challenges will require collaboration between industry, government, and academic institutions.

The future of Indian pharma

India's pharmaceutical industry stands at a pivotal moment in its evolution. For decades, the country has excelled at producing affordable medicines for the world. The next phase, however, will be defined by innovation, technological capability, and specialization.

High-potency APIs represent a critical pathway for this transformation.

By leveraging its strengths in chemistry, manufacturing scale, and scientific talent, India can emerge as a global leader in the production of complex pharmaceutical ingredients and specialty therapies.

The goal should not only be to remain the world's pharmacy but to become a trusted global partner in advanced healthcare solutions.

HPAPIs symbolize more than a new market opportunity; they represent India's transition from a generic drug powerhouse to a high-value pharmaceutical innovator.

And in that transformation lies the future of Indian pharma.

(The author is Leading Pharmaceutical Consultant and Editor- in-Chief of IJMToday. Email Id- www.drsanjayagrawal.in)