

# Cipla deploys drones to fly in critical drugs



**Medicines are placed inside the drones like the one pictured above. Cardiac, respiratory and other essential chronic therapies will be delivered to hospitals and pharmacies across Himachal Pradesh**

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Mumbai, 26 September

Drug major Cipla on Tuesday said it has launched drone-powered deliveries of critical medicines – cardiac, respiratory and other essential chronic therapies – to hospitals and pharmacies across Himachal Pradesh in partnership with Skype Air Mobility, a Gurugram-based drone delivery company.

Cipla is the first among large Indian pharmaceutical companies to adopt drone-based deliveries to facilitate expedited supply to stockists in remote areas, it claimed.

The Mumbai-based firm said the use of drones will support the on-time delivery of its medicines to chemists and clinics in remote areas, and minimise risks of affecting cold chain products due to temperature excursions.

The company said it has already completed several drone deliveries in Himachal Pradesh, covering a distance of approximately 50 km in less than 25 minutes.

“This has been vital amid adverse and prevailing weather conditions that have impacted conventional transportation routes in the state,” it said in a statement.

It also aims to scale the service in the future through distribution to hospitals and expand market coverage to inaccessible and hilly terrains such as Uttarakhand and the Northeast, the company said.

“As we accelerate our digital agenda across all functions, implementing drone-powered distribution enhances our supply chain resilience, strengthens connections with channel partners, helps us stay future-ready and maintain reliable, prompt delivery of our trusted high-quality drugs to stockists and patients in the

## SKY'S NO LIMIT

► **Tata 1mg started drone delivery** of diagnostic samples and medication in Dehradun in 2022

► **Agilus Diagnostics** (formerly SRL Diagnostics) also tied up with Skye Air Mobility to collect samples in Gurugram and Mumbai

► **TechEagle partnered with state governments** to deliver medicines and vaccines in hard-to-access areas, especially during winters

■ **ICMR released guidelines for drone delivery of pharmaceutical products last year**

region,” Cipla’s Global Supply Chain Head, Swapn Malpani, said.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) released guidelines for the drone delivery of pharmaceutical products last year.

ICMR conducted a pilot to deliver Covid-19 vaccines in Manipur and Nagaland through drones in October 2021.

Diagnostic players and tech startups have been trying to use drone technology to deliver medicines and samples to remote areas.

Digital healthcare firm Tata 1mg started drone delivery of diagnostic samples and medication in Dehradun around the end of 2022.