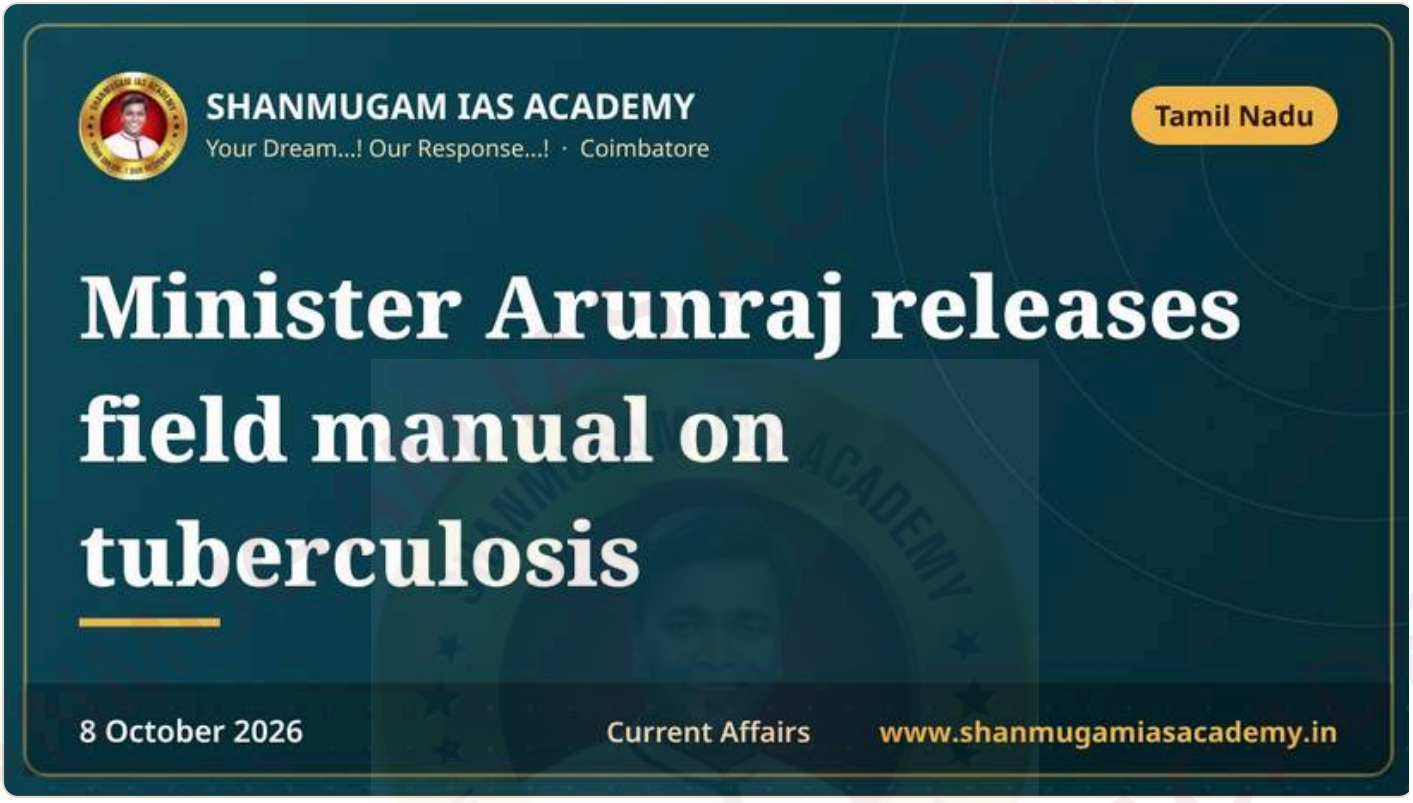
Minister Arunraj releases field manual on tuberculosis

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News

On 8 Oct 2026 Dr Arunraj, Minister for Medicine, Medical Education and Public Health, released a field manual on tuberculosis and launched the State-level 'TB-Free JOSH' (Joint Squad for Health) team. It uses young people for awareness, community mobilisation, and early identification and referral of people with TB symptoms.

Key facts

Team	TB-Free JOSH (Joint Squad for Health)
First-phase districts	Cuddalore, Dharmapuri, Tiruchi, Theni, Thoothukudi
TB-free panchayats	2,390 village panchayats – recognised after verification under national guidelines
Minister	Dr Arunraj
Goal	TB-free Tamil Nadu, TB-free India

Background

- Science: TB is caused by the bacterium Mycobacterium tuberculosis and spreads through the air. Robert Koch announced the bacterium on 24 March 1882 – now World TB Day. Vaccine: BCG.

- India's programme: the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP – RNTCP renamed in 2020); 'Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana' gives patients nutrition support (₹1,000 a month since Nov 2024); 'Pradhan Mantri TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan' (2022) with Ni-kshay Mitra volunteers.
- Target: the UN SDG goal is ending TB by 2030; India set an earlier target of 2025. India has the world's highest TB burden.
- 'TB Mukt Panchayat' recognises village panchayats that meet set criteria. Tamil Nadu has about 12,525 village panchayats.
- Tamil Nadu initiative: the 'Tamil Nadu Kasanoi Erappilla Thittam' (TN-KET, 2022) reduces deaths through differentiated care based on how sick each patient is.

Tamil Nadu link: ICMR's National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis (NIRT), Chennai, began in 1956 as the Tuberculosis Chemotherapy Centre; the famous 'Madras study', which proved home treatment works, was done here. The Tambaram TB sanatorium opened in 1928.

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