National Cancer Awareness Day – 7 November (Marie Curie's birth anniversary)

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News

National Cancer Awareness Day is observed in India every year on 7 November. Then Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan announced it in September 2014, and it has been observed since 2014. The day is the birth anniversary of Marie Curie (7 Nov 1867, Warsaw, Poland), who discovered polonium and radium and paved the way for radiotherapy. It aims to spread awareness of early signs, early detection and lifestyle change, and to encourage free screening at government hospitals.

Key facts

Date	7 November; since 2014
Announced by	Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Health Minister (Sept 2014)
Why 7 Nov	Marie Curie's birth anniversary (1867, Warsaw)
National programme	National Cancer Control Programme 1975; prevention and early detection stressed from 1984–85
World Cancer Day	4 February – led by the UICC (Union for International Cancer Control)

Background

- Marie Curie: Polish-born French scientist. Nobel Prize in Physics 1903 (with Pierre Curie and Henri Becquerel) and in Chemistry 1911 – the first person to win two Nobel Prizes. In 1898, with Pierre Curie, she discovered polonium (named after Poland) and radium.
- Science: types of cancer – carcinoma (skin and lining/epithelial tissue), sarcoma (connective tissue such as bone and muscle), leukaemia (blood-forming tissue such as bone marrow – blood cancer), lymphoma (lymphatic system), melanoma (pigment cells of the skin).
- World Cancer Day (4 Feb) is led by the Geneva-based UICC. In India, population-based screening for oral, breast and cervical cancers for people over 30 is done under the NP-NCD programme.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu's 2025–26 Budget (14 March 2025) said the Government Arignar Anna Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Institute in Kancheepuram district, the State-level nodal cancer centre, will be upgraded into an autonomous 800-bed institution with ₹120 crore over two years. The same Budget set aside ₹36 crore for HPV vaccination of 14-year-old girls to prevent cervical cancer.

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