Infant Protection Day – 7 November 2026: awareness on infant safety and cutting infant deaths

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News

Infant Protection Day is observed every year on 7 November to raise awareness about the safety, health and well-being of infants (children under one year) and to reduce infant deaths. It is not an official UN or Government of India day; it is an awareness day observed by hospitals, health groups and the media. Media reports say European countries started it; no firm record of the founding year or body is available. India's Health Ministry officially observes National Newborn Week from 15 to 21 November. As per the Sample Registration System (SRS) 2023 report, India's Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) was 25 per 1,000 live births (40 in 2013); the SRS 2024 report released in May 2026 puts it at 24 (Tamil Nadu: 11). In SRS 2023, Tamil Nadu's IMR was 12; Keralam 5; Manipur 3 (lowest); Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh 37 each (highest).

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Date	7 November (annual)
Status	Awareness day; not an official UN / GoI day
Official Indian observance	National Newborn Week – 15–21 Nov (Health Ministry)
IMR definition	Deaths under 1 year per 1,000 live births

Point	Details
India's IMR	SRS 2023 – 25; SRS 2024 – 24
Tamil Nadu IMR	11 (SRS 2024); 12 in SRS 2023; 15 in 2018
SRS run by	Office of the Registrar General of India (Home Ministry)
Mission Indradhanush	25 Dec 2014 – 7 vaccine-preventable diseases
Special Newborn Care Unit	SNCU – at district / sub-district hospitals

Background

- Measures: the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is deaths within the first year per 1,000 live births. Deaths within 28 days of birth give the Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR); under five years, the U5MR. The Office of the Registrar General of India estimates these through the Sample Registration System (SRS); the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) is run by IIPS, Mumbai for the Health Ministry. India's IMR was 129 in 1971 and 25 in 2023.
- Facility-based care (National Health Mission): a Newborn Care Corner (NBCC) at every delivery point; a Newborn Stabilisation Unit (NBSU) at Community Health Centres and First Referral Units; and a Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) with 12 or more beds at district/sub-district hospitals with over 3,000 deliveries a year.
- Immunisation: Mission Indradhanush was launched on 25 December 2014 against seven diseases – diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis, measles and hepatitis B – aiming at full immunisation of at least 90% of children in five years. BCG (Bacillus Calmette–Guérin) is given at birth against tuberculosis.
- Global goal: SDG target 3.2 – end preventable deaths of newborns and children under five by 2030. Breastfeeding, kangaroo mother care, institutional delivery, immunisation and safe sleep are the basics of infant survival.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu: in SRS 2023 TN's IMR was 12 (15 in 2018) – less than half the national average. The Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Benefit Scheme (begun in the late 1980s) gives pregnant women ₹18,000, linked to antenatal check-ups, iron tablets and vaccination. The Cradle Baby Scheme was started in the 1990s against female infanticide. The BCG Vaccine Laboratory at Guindy, Chennai, working since 1 May 1948, supplies BCG vaccine to the national immunisation programme. By 2013 every TN district already had an SNCU.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

Infant Protection Day is observed every year on 7 November to raise awareness about the safety, health and well-being of infants (children under one year) and to reduce infant deaths.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Date: 7 November (annual); Status: Awareness day; not an official UN / GoI day; Official Indian observance: National Newborn Week – 15–21 Nov (Health Ministry); IMR definition: Deaths under 1 year per 1,000 live births.

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Practice questions (with answers)

1. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) counts deaths of children below what age per 1,000 live births?

A) One year

B) 28 days

C) Five years

D) Seven days

Answer: A – Explanation: One year. Within 28 days – Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR); under five – U5MR. India's IMR was 24 in SRS 2024.

2. Under the National Health Mission, Special Newborn Care Units (SNCUs) are set up at which level of health facility?

A) Sub-centre

B) Primary Health Centre

C) District hospital

D) Anganwadi centre

Answer: C – Explanation: District/sub-district hospitals (3,000+ deliveries a year). CHCs have NBSUs; every delivery point has a Newborn Care Corner (NBCC).

3. Which body runs the Sample Registration System (SRS) that publishes India's infant mortality rate?

A) National Statistics Office

B) Registrar General of India

C) IIPS, Mumbai

D) ICMR

Answer: B – Explanation: The Office of the Registrar General of India under the Home Ministry. IIPS, Mumbai runs the NFHS for the Health Ministry.

4. Tamil Nadu's maternity benefit scheme that gives pregnant women ₹18,000 is named after whom?

A) Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy

B) Moovalur Ramamirtham

C) Sathyavani Muthu

D) Dharmambal

Answer: A – Explanation: Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy – doctor, social reformer and founder of the Adyar Cancer Institute. A marriage-assistance scheme carried Moovalur Ramamirtham's name.

5. Which vaccine, made at Guindy, Chennai since 1948 and given at birth, protects against tuberculosis?

A) OPV

B) Hepatitis B

C) BCG

D) Pentavalent

Answer: C – Explanation: BCG (Bacillus Calmette–Guérin) – a live vaccine from weakened Mycobacterium bovis; it prevents childhood TB meningitis.

Sources: ETV Bharat; Free Press Journal; Millennium Post; The South First; The Policy Edge; NHM SNCU report; NHM Newborn Week note; PIB via Business Standard; DT Next; BCGVL. © Shanmugam IAS Academy.