Kochon Prize 2026 goes to Chennai's REACH for TB work

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News

REACH (Resource group for Education and Advocacy for Community Health), a Chennai-based not-for-profit, has won the Kochon Prize 2026, described as the largest award dedicated exclusively to tuberculosis. It is the first civil-society or non-profit organisation from India to receive the prize. Given by the Chong Kun Dang Kochon Foundation of South Korea, in partnership with the Stop TB Partnership, the prize was reportedly presented on 5 November 2026 at the Stop TB Partnership Board meeting in Bali, Indonesia (theme: early TB diagnosis and integrated care); the postponed 19th Kochon Prize went at the same ceremony to Pakistan's DOPASI Foundation and the Nigeria country team. Kenya's Centre for Health Solutions and the Marshall Islands TB Control Program were the other 2026 winners. REACH was recognised for 'person-centred' TB care that addresses clinical, social and economic needs together; it works with the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP), private providers and TB Champions. It was nominated by Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Chairperson of MSSRF and former WHO Chief Scientist. Co-founder and Chairperson Dr Nalini Krishnan said its approach is to 'treat the person, not the disease'.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Prize	Kochon Prize 2026 – dedicated to TB
Winner	REACH, Chennai – first Indian civil-society group

Point	Details
Given by	Kochon Foundation (South Korea) + Stop TB Partnership
Presented	5 Nov 2026 – Stop TB Board meeting, Indonesia
Co-winners	Centre for Health Solutions (Kenya); Marshall Islands TB Control Program
Nominated by	Dr Soumya Swaminathan, MSSRF
REACH leaders	Dr Nalini Krishnan (co-founder); Dr Ramya Ananthakrishnan (Director)
Earlier Indian winners	Dr L.S. Chauhan (2006), ICMR (2017), Molbio (2024)

Background

- Kochon Prize: set up in 2005 by the Kochon Foundation of South Korea with the Stop TB Partnership, it honours Lee Jong-keun (pen-name 'Kochon'), who founded the pharmaceutical firm Chong Kun Dang in 1941; it recognises outstanding work against TB. The 2026 award is the 20th Kochon Prize.
- Stop TB Partnership: the Stop TB Initiative arose after a London meeting in March 1998; on 24 March 2000 ministers of 20 high-burden countries issued the Amsterdam Declaration to Stop TB, and the World Health Assembly endorsed a global partnership. Since 2015 it has been hosted by the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in Geneva.
- Sci-tech: 2024 winner Molbio Diagnostics of Goa developed Truenat – a portable, battery-run, chip-based molecular (RT-PCR) test, endorsed by WHO in 2020 after ICMR validation. It detects TB and rifampicin resistance even at primary health centres.
- Soumya Swaminathan: a Chennai-born paediatrician and TB researcher; ICMR Director-General (2015–17), WHO's first Chief Scientist (2019–22); now Chairperson of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF).

Tamil Nadu link: the winner, REACH, is based in Chennai and has worked for over 27 years; it supports patients together with community health workers, 'TB Nanbans' (friends) and TB Champions. Its nominator Dr Soumya Swaminathan heads MSSRF, which is also in Taramani, Chennai.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

REACH (Resource group for Education and Advocacy for Community Health), a Chennai-based not-for-profit, has won the Kochon Prize 2026, described as the largest award dedicated exclusively to tuberculosis.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Prize: Kochon Prize 2026 – dedicated to TB; Winner: REACH, Chennai – first Indian civil-society group; Given by: Kochon Foundation (South Korea) + Stop TB Partnership; Presented: 5 Nov 2026 – Stop TB Board meeting, Indonesia.

What is the background to this news?

Kochon Prize: set up in 2005 by the Kochon Foundation of South Korea with the Stop TB Partnership, it honours Lee Jong-keun (pen-name 'Kochon'), who founded the pharmaceutical firm Chong Kun Dang in 1941; it recognises outstanding work against TB. The 2026 award is the 20th Kochon Prize.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Which Chennai NGO became the first Indian civil-society organisation to win the Kochon Prize (2026)?

A) REACH

B) The Banyan

C) SNEHA

D) Pratham

Answer: A – Explanation: REACH – for person-centred TB care. Earlier Indian winners: Dr L.S. Chauhan (2006), ICMR (2017) and Molbio (2024).

2. Which UN entity has hosted the Stop TB Partnership, co-presenter of the Kochon Prize, since 2015?

A) UNDP

B) WHO

C) UNICEF

D) UNOPS

Answer: D – Explanation: UNOPS – the UN Office for Project Services; the Partnership is based in Geneva. The Kochon Foundation is South Korean.

3. Which 2000 declaration by ministers of 20 high-burden countries paved the way for the global Stop TB Partnership?

A) Alma-Ata Declaration

B) Ottawa Charter

C) Amsterdam Declaration

D) Doha Declaration

Answer: C – Explanation: Amsterdam Declaration (24.3.2000). Alma-Ata (1978) – primary health care; Ottawa (1986) – health promotion; Doha (2001) – TRIPS and public health.

4. Which chip-based molecular TB test was developed by Goa's Molbio Diagnostics, the 2024 Kochon winner?

A) GeneXpert

B) Truenat

C) Mantoux test

D) Widal test

Answer: B – Explanation: Truenat – a portable, battery-run RT-PCR test endorsed by WHO in 2020. GeneXpert is a US platform; Widal tests for typhoid.

5. Chennai-born Dr Soumya Swaminathan, who nominated the 2026 winner, became the first holder of which WHO post in 2019?

A) Director-General

B) SEARO Director

C) Chief Medical Officer

D) Chief Scientist

Answer: D – Explanation: WHO's first Chief Scientist (2019–22); earlier ICMR Director-General. She now chairs MSSRF, Chennai.

Sources: Stop TB Partnership – stoptb.org (Kochon Prize); Rising Kashmir (6 Nov 2026); ICMR – icmr.gov.in. © Shanmugam IAS Academy.