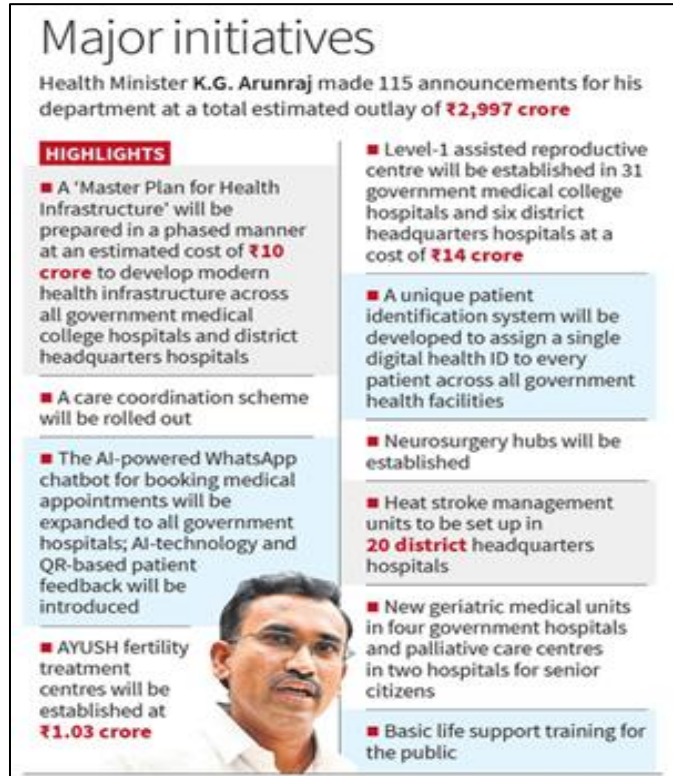


August - 20

TAMIL NADU NEWS

Tamil Nadu Budget 2026 – Health Department



Major initiatives

Health Minister K.G. Arunraj made 115 announcements for his department at a total estimated outlay of **₹2,997 crore**

HIGHLIGHTS

- A 'Master Plan for Health Infrastructure' will be prepared in a phased manner at an estimated cost of **₹10 crore** to develop modern health infrastructure across all government medical college hospitals and district headquarters hospitals
- A care coordination scheme will be rolled out
- The AI-powered WhatsApp chatbot for booking medical appointments will be expanded to all government hospitals; AI-technology and QR-based patient feedback will be introduced
- AYUSH fertility treatment centres will be established at **₹1.03 crore**
- Level-1 assisted reproductive centre will be established in 31 government medical college hospitals and six district headquarters hospitals at a cost of **₹14 crore**
- A unique patient identification system will be developed to assign a single digital health ID to every patient across all government health facilities
- Neurosurgery hubs will be established
- Heat stroke management units to be set up in **20 district** headquarters hospitals
- New geriatric medical units in four government hospitals and palliative care centres in two hospitals for senior citizens
- Basic life support training for the public

- ❖ Tamil Nadu will launch the Chief Minister's Elderly Health Insurance Scheme, covering nearly 38 lakh senior citizens aged 70 and above.
- ❖ The scheme will provide free medical treatment at empanelled government and private hospitals, including cancer care packages, advanced cardiac surgeries, organ transplants and high-end diagnostic services, with no income ceiling.
- ❖ The 87-year-old Tamil Nadu Public Health Act, 1939 will be replaced with a modern, comprehensive Act to address contemporary and future health challenges.
- ❖ A new provision will make unsupervised home births outside hospitals a punishable offence.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu, known as the country's health capital, will establish TN Medicity, a world-class integrated medical hub covering clinical services, research, medical tourism and AYUSH.



- ❖ Nalam 360 – Annual Free Health Check-up for All will be rolled out, providing everyone aged 30 and above with 14 basic tests annually, free of cost, across 1,257 government health facilities.
- ❖ The tests will include blood pressure, ECG, haemoglobin, complete haemogram, random blood sugar, urea, creatinine, total cholesterol, serum bilirubin, urine albumin and VIA screening.
- ❖ For the first time in the State, Home-Based Diagnostic Services will provide sample collection and testing in metropolitan areas through a public-private partnership model.
- ❖ The Health Department will introduce a Positive Health Policy to promote holistic health and wellbeing at the community, family and individual levels, supported by the Nalam 360 mobile application.
- ❖ A new TN Institutions of State Importance in Health Care Act will be introduced to create institutions of state importance providing world-class medical services.
- ❖ For the first time, Tamil Nadu will formulate a Peri-Menopausal Care Policy for early identification of the physical and mental health needs of women in the peri-menopausal age group, along with screening, counselling and treatment services.
- ❖ Under the policy, weekly camps will be conducted on a specific day at all Primary Health Centres and Urban Primary Health Centres for symptomatic assessment, basic tests, counselling and referrals to district headquarters hospitals and government medical college hospitals.
- ❖ Bluetooth-enabled blood pressure monitors will be introduced to track BP in pregnant women, with real-time transmission of data to facilitate timely intervention.
- ❖ Children under 18 with Type 1 diabetes will receive a free year-round supply of insulin in government hospitals.
- ❖ Irumbu Kanmani – School Anaemia Prevention will be launched at a cost of ₹6.37 crore.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu will launch rare genetic disease screening for newborns, with nearly 4.5 lakh babies delivered in government hospitals screened for seven rare genetic diseases through a hub-and-spoke model.
- ❖ The newborn screening will include congenital hypothyroidism, congenital adrenal hyperplasia, galactosemia and biotinidase deficiency, along with three other rare genetic diseases.

New Maternity Leave Rule

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has announced 365 days of maternity leave for women government employees for their third child, replacing the earlier 12-week limit.

- ❖ The earlier rule limited maternity leave to 12 weeks for women government employees with two or more surviving children.
- ❖ The new decision restores 365 days of maternity leave for the third child.
- ❖ The earlier 12-week rule was introduced after an amendment to Fundamental Rule 101(A) in March 2026.
- ❖ The change follows Tamil Nadu's concern over its declining fertility rate and ageing population.



NATIONAL NEWS

Jal Jeevan Mission Progress



- ❖ The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) has completed seven years, with rural household tap-water coverage rising from 16.72% in 2019 to 82.24% in 2026.
- ❖ More than 15.91 crore rural households now have tap-water connections, including over 12.68 crore new connections since 2019.

- ❖ 2.04 lakh villages have been certified as Har Ghar Jal (HGJ), along with 1.01 lakh Gram Panchayats.
- ❖ The mission has also provided tap-water connections to 9.34 lakh schools and 9.73 lakh Anganwadi centres.
- ❖ Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 will focus on regular service delivery, water-source sustainability, community participation and long-term functionality.
- ❖ The Union Government has extended the Jal Jeevan Mission until December 2028.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

BRICS ICT Meeting 2026



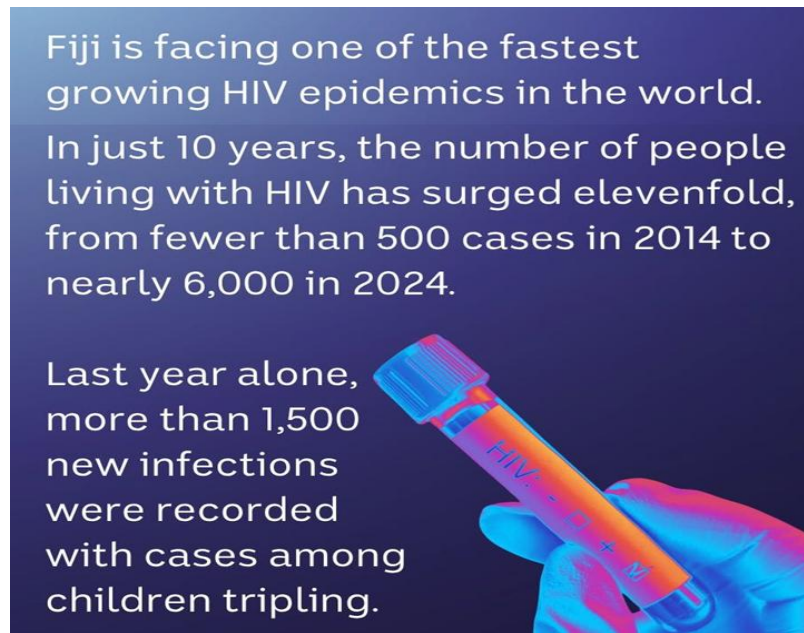
- ❖ Pune is hosting the 7th BRICS Working Group for Cooperation in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).
- ❖ The meeting is being held under India's 2026 BRICS Chairship and focuses on digital policy, telecommunications and emerging technologies.
- ❖ Discussions include Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), digital skills, ICT start-ups and inclusive digital environments.
- ❖ The BRICS Institute of Future Networks reviewed work on Artificial Intelligence (AI), next-generation communications and Industry 4.0 applications.
- ❖ The Digital BRICS Forum and Expo is scheduled for 20 August 2026, ahead of the 12th Communications Ministers Meeting.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Fiji HIV Outbreak

- ❖ Fiji is facing one of the fastest-growing Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) outbreaks in the world.

- ❖ Adult HIV prevalence has reached 1.6%, with only about one-third of people living with HIV knowing their status.
- ❖ New HIV infections are projected to triple by 2030, while substance use, needle sharing and stigma are major factors linked to the outbreak.
- ❖ Fiji declared an official outbreak in January 2025 and formed a National HIV Outbreak Cluster Response Task Force.
- ❖ Fiji is expanding Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and is set to receive Lenacapavir, a long-acting injectable HIV prevention drug, through the Global Fund.



Unusual Black Hole Discovery

- ❖ An international team of astronomers found an unusual black hole from when the universe was about 660 million years old, using the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST).
- ❖ The object is one of the Little Red Dots (LRDs) and appears to be a rapidly growing black hole surrounded by a huge cocoon of hydrogen gas.
- ❖ The observations suggest that the red colour may be caused by dense gas, rather than dust as previously thought.
- ❖ The gas cocoon may help explain how some black holes grew very rapidly in the early universe.
- ❖ The black hole is estimated to be surrounded by hydrogen gas with about 100 billion particles per cubic centimetre, extending several million kilometres around it.



ENVIRONMENT NEWS

UNCCD COP17 – Mongolia



- ❖ The 17th Conference of Parties (COP17) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) began in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
- ❖ Countries are discussing a global drought framework after failing to agree on a legally binding deal at COP16 in Riyadh.
- ❖ Countries have pledged to restore about 1 billion hectares of degraded land, while 1.5–2 billion hectares are estimated to be degraded globally.
- ❖ The conference is focusing on finance, technology and action to tackle drought and land degradation.

- ❖ Mongolia said 77% of its land is affected by desertification and land degradation.

REPORTS AND INDICES

NITI Aayog Report on Professional Services

- ❖ NITI Aayog released a report on India's regulatory framework for professional services.
- ❖ The report covers legal, accounting, architectural, engineering and healthcare services.
- ❖ It highlights regulatory fragmentation and restrictions that affect professional mobility and global competitiveness.
- ❖ India is the 7th-largest services exporter, with a 4.3% share of global services exports in 2024.
- ❖ NITI Aayog recommends regulatory harmonisation, wider Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs), Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and modern business structures.
- ❖ It also recommends using Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation and global best practices to improve high-value services exports.



STATE NEWS

Ayushman Bharat Scheme - West Bengal

- ❖ West Bengal became the 36th and final State/Union Territory to implement the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), completing nationwide coverage.

- ❖ The scheme provides health cover of up to ₹5 lakh per family per year for eligible beneficiaries.
- ❖ The National Health Authority (NHA) and the West Bengal Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for implementation.
- ❖ More than 36,000 government and private hospitals are empanelled under the scheme.
- ❖ More than 44 crore Ayushman cards have been issued across the country.
- ❖ Since its launch, beneficiaries have received over 12 crore treatments, worth more than ₹1.82 lakh crore.



Eri Silk Weaving Centre



- ❖ Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma inaugurated a Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Eri silk weaving at Nongpoh, Ri-Bhoi district, Meghalaya.

- ❖ The centre will help preserve and pass on the traditional skill of Eri silk weaving to future generations.
- ❖ Eri silk, also called Ryndia, is a traditional handwoven textile of Meghalaya.
- ❖ Eri silk is known for its handwoven colours, patterns and designs, which reflect Meghalaya's cultural identity and heritage.
- ❖ The Centre of Excellence will promote skill development and innovation in weaving and handloom activities.

SPORTS NEWS

National Sports Awards 2025



- ❖ The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced the National Sports Awards 2025.
- ❖ No athlete was selected for the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award for 2025.
- ❖ The Arjuna Award was given to 17 athletes, including Vidit Gujarathi and Divya Deshmukh (chess), Tejaswin Shankar (athletics), and Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly (badminton).
- ❖ I. Arumainayagam, a former football player and coach, received the Arjuna Award (Lifetime).



- ❖ The Dronacharya Award was given to Parveer Singh (athletics), Chhote Lal Yadav (boxing), Neha Nandkumar Chavan (shooting), Dharmendra Singh Yadav (boxing), and Virender Kumar (wrestling).
- ❖ The Army Paralympic Node, Pune, received the Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar for promoting sports.

