



Union Health Minister Shri J.P. Nadda Launches JOSH Teams to Accelerate Youth-Led TB Elimination Efforts

JOSH Teams to Give Fresh Impetus to India's TB Elimination Mission Through Youth-Led Community Action: Shri J.P. Nadda

India Records 21% Decline in TB Incidence and Treatment Coverage Rises to 92%, Significantly Ahead of Global Trends: Union Health Minister

"India's TB Elimination Efforts Must Become a Stronger People's Movement with Youth at the Forefront"

JOSH Teams to Harness the Energy of India's Youth for TB Elimination Ahead of 2030: Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports

67,933 Panchayats Across 697 Districts Recognised as TB Mukta in 2026, Marking a Major Milestone in India's TB Elimination Journey

JOSH Teams Launched in 55 Districts Across 11 States and Union Territories in First Phase; Initiative to Expand Nationwide

New IEC materials and mobile application for real-time reporting by JOSH Teams launched

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Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda, today launched JOSH (Joint Squad for Health) Teams under the TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan at a national event held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, marking a significant step towards strengthening youth-led community participation in India's efforts to eliminate tuberculosis. The initiative seeks to harness the energy, outreach and commitment of young people to take the message of TB prevention, early diagnosis, timely treatment and stigma reduction to communities across the country.



Addressing the gathering, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Shri J.P. Nadda, described the launch of JOSH Teams as a significant milestone in India's collective fight against tuberculosis. He said that the country's efforts towards a TB Mukta Bharat have evolved from a conventional health programme into a people's movement, with Jan Bhagidari and community ownership emerging as the defining pillars of the national response. He emphasised that the goal of eliminating TB cannot be achieved by government interventions alone and requires the active participation of communities, citizens, elected representatives, frontline workers and, particularly, the youth of the country.

Highlighting the importance of youth-led action, Shri Nadda said that the energy, commitment and outreach of young people can give a new momentum to the TB elimination movement. He noted that while the Ministry has progressively involved elected representatives and community leadership in the campaign, the scale and complexity of the challenge demand a much wider network of committed volunteers working directly with communities. In this context, he expressed appreciation for the collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports and the Ministry of Defence in bringing the JOSH initiative to the grassroots.



Moreover, Shri Nadda said that JOSH Teams represent an effort to bring together the Government, communities and citizens in a coordinated and sustained manner. He emphasised that the initiative is intended not merely to disseminate information, but to create meaningful conversations within communities, build trust, address apprehensions and ensure that people are encouraged to come forward for timely testing and treatment.

The Union Health Minister stressed that India's TB elimination strategy must go beyond awareness and screening to encompass the entire continuum of care. "Awareness is important, screening is important, but our responsibility does not end there. We must ensure diagnosis, treatment and treatment completion," he said. He underlined the need to strengthen active case finding so that individuals who may be living with TB without recognising their symptoms can be identified early and connected to appropriate care. Early detection, he noted, is equally important for preventing further transmission and protecting the health of families and communities.

Underscoring the importance of active case finding, he noted that there are people who may be living with TB without being aware of their condition and may consequently remain outside the formal healthcare system. Identifying such individuals at the earliest possible stage is critical not only to ensuring timely treatment but also to interrupting transmission within families and communities. He called upon the JOSH Teams to play an important role in identifying vulnerable populations, facilitating community-level outreach and encouraging people with symptoms or concerns to come forward for testing.



Highlighting India's significant progress in the fight against TB, Shri Nadda referred to the latest World Health Organization report and noted that TB incidence in India has declined by 21 per cent, compared to a 12 per cent decline globally. He further highlighted that India's TB treatment coverage has risen to 92 per cent, significantly higher than the global treatment coverage of 78 per cent. He said that India's progress, which is ahead of the global trend both in reducing TB incidence and expanding access to treatment, reflects the sustained and intensified efforts undertaken under the national TB elimination programme. At the same time, he cautioned that these gains must not lead to complacency. India has made significant progress, he said, but the momentum must be sustained and efforts further intensified to ensure that every person with TB is diagnosed, provided timely treatment and supported through the course of care, thereby advancing the country's collective resolve towards a TB Mukta Bharat.

Furthermore, he highlighted the growing role of technology and innovation in strengthening the country's TB response. He said that India is increasingly leveraging technology to take screening and diagnosis closer to communities and make them faster and more accessible. He referred to the use of portable X-ray machines supported by Artificial Intelligence-based tools, which can help identify individuals showing signs suggestive of TB and determine whether further investigation is warranted. He also highlighted the use of rapid molecular diagnostic technologies to facilitate timely confirmation of TB and identification of drug resistance, thereby enabling patients to be placed on the appropriate treatment pathway without unnecessary delay.

Calling upon volunteers to build meaningful conversations within communities, Shri Nadda urged JOSH Teams to listen to people, address their concerns and help dispel the fear and stigma associated with TB. He emphasised that TB is preventable and curable and that no

person affected by the disease should face discrimination or social isolation. He also urged volunteers to promote healthy behaviours, including hygiene, healthy lifestyles and awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco and substance use.

Emphasising that diagnosis is only the beginning of the treatment journey, Shri Nadda said that every person diagnosed with TB must be connected to appropriate treatment and supported until recovery. He highlighted the importance of medicines, nutritional support and treatment adherence, and noted that India has also strengthened its treatment options, including shorter regimens for drug-resistant TB.

Speaking about the rollout of JOSH Teams, Shri Nadda said that the initiative is being launched in the first phase across 11 States and will progressively expand its grassroots presence. The teams will work at district and block levels, supported by digital mechanisms for monitoring and implementation. He expressed confidence that this youth-led initiative will help identify gaps, strengthen outreach and ensure that TB-related services reach those who remain outside the formal healthcare system.

The Union Health Minister also congratulated the **67,933 Panchayats across 697 districts recognised as TB Mukta in 2026**, describing the achievement as a reflection of the power of community participation and local leadership. He commended elected representatives, health workers, volunteers and community members for translating the national TB elimination agenda into action at the grassroots.

Observing that India is now closer to its goal, Shri Nadda called for a determined and sustained final push to take the country across the finish line. Calling upon NCC Cadets and MY Bharat Volunteers to become ambassadors of the TB Mukta Bharat movement, he urged them to take the message of prevention, early testing, timely treatment and stigma reduction to every household and community.

Concluding his address, Shri Nadda called upon all stakeholders to work with determination, compassion and a shared sense of responsibility towards a TB Mukta Bharat. He congratulated the JOSH Teams on their launch and urged every volunteer, health worker, community member and stakeholder to contribute to the final push towards a TB-free India.



Speaking at the Occasion, Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, said that the vision of a “**Swasth Nagarik, Swasth Samaj, Swasth Desh**” can be realised when citizens actively contribute towards building a healthier society. He highlighted the importance of people’s involvement in national health missions, noting that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has consistently encouraged communities to spread awareness, support those in need and motivate people to seek timely treatment.

He also acknowledged the efforts of Union Health Minister Shri J.P. Nadda in translating the vision of a TB Mukta Bharat into action and bringing different youth networks together through the JOSH Teams initiative.

Referring to the World Health Organization’s goal of eliminating TB by 2030, Dr. Mandaviya said that India is spearheading efforts towards this objective and is determined to achieve the goal ahead of the global timeline. He emphasised that India, as one of the world’s youngest major nations, recognises the immense potential of its youth and the importance of providing them with the right mentorship, guidance and opportunities to contribute to nation-building.

Dr. Mandaviya said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has provided MY Bharat as a platform to guide, engage and empower young people in nation-building activities. He noted that lakhs of NCC cadets and NSS volunteers are being prepared to serve the nation and contribute to social causes. He said that bringing these young volunteers together with the national TB elimination programme, with the support and leadership of Shri J.P. Nadda, has made the JOSH Teams initiative possible.

Highlighting the potential of JOSH Teams at the grassroots, Dr. Mandaviya stated that the volunteers can play an important role in identifying people who may have TB, creating awareness about prevention and nutrition, counselling patients to adhere to treatment and medication, and helping reduce the stigma associated with the disease.

Dr. Mandaviya expressed confidence that with sustained efforts across all levels, India will realise its aspiration of becoming TB-free before 2030 and demonstrate to the world the strength of a youth-led movement against tuberculosis.

Welcoming the national launch of the JOSH (Joint Squad for Health) Teams, Smt. Rekha Gupta said that the initiative marks an important step towards strengthening India's efforts to eliminate tuberculosis by taking the campaign directly to communities. She appreciated the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for bringing together the Ministries of Youth Affairs & Sports and Defence for this purpose, noting that the convergence of their strengths can significantly expand the reach of the TB elimination campaign.

The Chief Minister emphasised that the energy, dedication and outreach of young people can make JOSH Teams a powerful force in the fight against TB. She said that young volunteers can help take awareness about prevention, early detection and treatment to communities and motivate people to seek timely care, while also helping address the stigma associated with the disease.

The Chief Minister expressed confidence that JOSH Teams will emerge as a strong youth-led force in the fight against TB and help take the message of prevention, early detection and treatment to communities across the country.

Addressing the gathering, Minister of State for Defence, Shri Sanjay Seth, said that the fight against TB must reach every village, settlement and household, particularly those where fear and stigma may prevent people from seeking timely care. He emphasised that TB is preventable and curable and urged JOSH Teams to build confidence among communities, encourage people to come forward for testing and support patients in completing their treatment. He said that no person should have to hide their symptoms or fight the disease alone.



Shri Seth said that the energy, dedication and outreach of NCC Cadets and MY Bharat Volunteers can provide fresh momentum to the TB elimination campaign. Calling upon the youth to embody the spirit of **service, courage and resolve**, he urged them to spread awareness,

encourage testing, promote healthy practices and stand by patients and their families. He said that when young people take the message of TB prevention and treatment to communities, the campaign can truly become a people's movement.

Concluding his address, He expressed confidence that this spirit will contribute significantly to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of a **Viksit Bharat** and a TB-free India.

Welcoming the large gathering of MY Bharat Volunteers, NCC Cadets, Panchayati Raj Institution representatives, Sarpanches, District Magistrates, business associations, academic and technical institutions, laboratories, development partners and citizens joining the programme online, Union Health Secretary Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava said that the launch of JOSH Teams marks an important step in strengthening the people's movement for a TB-Mukt Bharat.

Recalling the Hon'ble Prime Minister's Pragati meeting on TB elimination, she said that the need to harness the energy and outreach of youth had been emphasised, leading to the coming together of the Ministries of Health & Family Welfare, Youth Affairs & Sports and Defence to conceptualise the JOSH initiative.

Smt. Srivastava said that 6,347 JOSH Squads have been constituted, bringing together 31,429 MY Bharat Volunteers and 26,794 NCC Cadets to strengthen grassroots-level TB awareness and community engagement. She called upon all stakeholders, including local leadership, institutions and communities, to work together to promote early detection, treatment and awareness, combat stigma and strengthen community participation in TB elimination, concluding with the message, "TB Haarega, Desh Jeetega."

The event also witnessed the launch of a range of new digital and IEC initiatives to strengthen community engagement and support TB-affected persons. The JOSH Flipbook and JOSH Brochure were launched to support awareness and outreach activities by the teams.



Khushi Avatar, an e-Sangini initiative, was also launched to provide information on TB symptoms and treatment options, address common doubts and queries related to TB, and remind patients to take their medicines on time. The service is available in 12 Indian languages, facilitating wider and more accessible dissemination of information.

A dedicated JOSH Teams feature on the TB Mukta Bharat App was also launched during the event to further support and enable the activities of the youth-led teams.

The national launch witnessed the virtual participation of all 804 districts across the country, reflecting the broad-based reach of the initiative. In the first phase, JOSH Teams have been deployed in 55 districts across 11 States and Union Territories. The remaining districts will subsequently undertake orientation and mobilisation of JOSH Teams, paving the way for the expansion of the initiative across the country.



The event also witnessed the felicitation of district-level TB Mukta Panchayat, recognising 67,933 Panchayats across 697 districts that have been declared TB Mukta in 2026. The achievement reflects the collective efforts of health workers, elected representatives, Panchayati Raj Institutions, community members and volunteers who have contributed to strengthening TB awareness, prevention, diagnosis and treatment at the local level.

About JOSH Initiative

The JOSH initiative is being implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports and the Ministry of Defence, with the participation of the Government of NCT of Delhi. The initiative reflects a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to TB elimination, bringing together the institutional strength of government, the outreach of youth networks and the participation of communities to strengthen action against TB at the grassroots.

Each JOSH Team comprises five MY Bharat Volunteers and five NCC Cadets and is led by a designated Class-I officer at the Block/Ward level.

The teams are envisaged to function as an important community-level interface for the TB elimination programme, undertaking regular outreach and field-level activities to improve public understanding of TB, promote early diagnosis and treatment, address myths and misconceptions and encourage greater community participation.

Through household and community interactions, the teams will focus on strengthening awareness of common TB symptoms, preventive measures, the benefits of early diagnosis and the importance of completing the prescribed treatment. They will also engage with families and communities to counter stigma and discrimination associated with TB and encourage people affected by the disease to seek care and remain connected with the treatment system.

The launch of JOSH Teams builds on this spirit of collective action by creating a dedicated platform for youth to become active partners in the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan. Through the combined participation of government functionaries, MY Bharat Volunteers, NCC Cadets, health workers, Panchayati Raj Institutions and communities, the initiative seeks to deepen Jan Bhagidari and strengthen the last-mile response to TB, reaffirming the collective resolve to build a healthier and TB Mukht Bharat.

Shri Pankaj Singh, Minister of Health, Government of NCT of Delhi; Shri Manoj Tiwari, Shri Harsh Malhotra, Shri Yogendra Chandolia and Shri Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha); Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; Smt. Aradhana Patnaik, AS & MD, NHM and Representatives from the Government of NCT of Delhi, MY Bharat, National Cadet Corps (NCC) were present at the event.

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