

Address by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

13 March 2018, Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi

**At the Delhi End TB Summit, jointly organized by The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,
Government of India, Stop TB Partnership and WHO South-East Asia**

Health Minister of India,

Minister of State for Health,

Nigeria's Health Minister,

Indonesia's Health Minister,

Director General of World Health Organization,

Other dignitaries present on the forum,

Guests from all over the world,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All of you came to India to join 'End TB SUMMIT', I am very grateful to you and welcome you all from my heart.

Friends,

Tuberculosis- TB was declared Emergency by the World Health Organization nearly 25 years ago. Since then, various efforts have been made to prevent TB in different countries. Of course, we all have gone a long way, have done extensive work for prevention of TB, but there is also a Ground Reality that we still have not been successful in preventing TB.

Friends,

I believe that when a task is being done for ten years and twenty years, and its results do not come as expected, then we should see that our approach changes. The way the works are being done, the way the plans have been implemented, the way the work is done on the ground, it needs to be analysed in a very broad way. When you seriously analyse old processes, then the path of new approaches opens.

I am glad that with this thought, India's Health and Family Welfare Ministry, together with the WHO South East Asia Region and Stop TB Partnership, have brought representatives from many countries of Asia, Africa and the world to a stage today. A major meeting of the General Assembly is going to be held in the United Nations in September this year. Today's preparations for this meeting are very important for the entire humanity. I hope that the "Delhi End TB Summit" will be known as a landmark event to end TB permanently from the Earth.

Friends,

More recently, another initiative of India in this direction has completed one year. Last year, the proposal of "Delhi Call for Action to End TB in the WHO South East Asia Region by 2030" was accepted with consensus. Processes initiated after this proposal are coming out as a very positive initiative towards ending TB in the South East Asia region. Given the way TB affects people's lives,

health of society, impacts on country's economy and country's future, it is now very necessary to get rid of TB within the stipulated time. In India, TB has the highest impact of any communicable disease and most of its victims are also poor. Therefore, every step taken to eliminate TB is linked directly to the life of the poor.

Friends,

To eliminate TB across the world, it has been decided the year by which it should happen is 2030.

But today I am announcing from this forum that India has decided a target of ending TB five years ahead of 2030, i.e. by 2025. Our Government has begun a new approach, a mission of ending TB from India with a new strategy. A glimpse of the new strategic initiatives that have been initiated by the Government of India, you have also seen in the presentation presented here. All stakeholders are responsible for the elimination of TB, and our government is motivating them to work together.

Brothers and Sisters,

The National Strategic Plan, which was created to end TB in India by 2025, is now fully operational. The budget is being constantly increased by the government on schemes related to TB. In this year's budget, our government has made provision to spend an extra USD 100 million per year to provide nutritious support to the patients of this disease. So that patients are able to buy nutritional support without difficulty, a direct financial support is being transferred from the government into their bank account. TB patients are correctly identified, timely information is available about active cases, whether medicines being given are effective, to know whether drug-resistant TB is there; keeping in mind these issues, the government is working on a massive scale. With the principle of 'Treat every TB patient best at the very first opportunity', the government is also engaging the private sector in these schemes. Apart from this, our emphasis is on the maximum use of technology and new innovations. State-of-the-art, Information Communication Technology systems and related platforms are being developed based on Internet-of-Things. For the management of the program, modern technology is being used to provide mobile-health solutions for treatment monitoring, and for disease surveillance.

We also developed an indigenous molecular diagnostic machine and a reading of Digital X-Ray based on Artificial Intelligence. The molecular test is named True NAAT. These machine also emphasise the campaign of "Make in India". India TB Research Consortium has also been set up to further strengthen all these TB related subjects like vaccine, better medicines, diagnostics and implementation.

State governments also have a major role to eliminate TB from India. By strengthening the spirit of Cooperative Federalism, in order to take the State Governments along with us in this mission, I have written to all the Chief Ministers of the country myself to join the campaign. Here in this event the ministers from the states and related officers present in such a large number is an indication of how we are determined to get rid of TB from our country like one "Team India".

Friends,

Whether this mission of getting rid of TB is in India or in any country, frontline TB physicians and workers have a large role. In addition to this, every person who gets tuberculosis and takes his/her TB treatment regularly and defeats the disease, should also be praised. The patient of TB, who conquers this disease with his/her will, also works as inspiration for others. One such person spoke to us today in this event. I firmly believe that with the help of patients' willpower and our passionate TB workers, India and every country in the world will be successful in achieving its goal. Here I speak

to the people of the Health Sector from India, I will specifically ask you to put in your best efforts because the target of TB Free India for you is not 2030, but 2025. With the right strategy, if we will continue to implement policies on the ground in the right way, then no one can prevent us from achieving this goal.

Friends,

By connecting as many people as possible, we can achieve our goal by making people aware at the local level, on methods of TB investigation, TB treatment, and multi-sectoral engagement. For this, every level of government and administration, panchayat, municipality, district administration, state government, all must put their full strength to make 'TB Free Village, Panchayat, district or state at their own level.

Friends,

Though some people think the target to get rid of TB in India by 2025 difficult, but this is not impossible. The way our government is working in the past four years with new approach, this target is also achievable.

Brothers and Sisters,

We do not see problems, challenges in pieces. When attempts are made to deal with these challenges in a holistic manner, its results are also met. I do not want to go into criticism but want to tell you about our immunization program here. Immunization in India has been running for 30-35 years. Nevertheless, until 2014 we were unable to achieve the goal of complete coverage. If the speed at which the immunization coverage was increasing, if it continued, India would have taken 40 years to reach full coverage.

Friends,

Our immunization coverage was only growing at a speed of just one percent. Now, in just three to three-and-a-half years, this has become more than 6 percent per annum and in the next one year, we are going to achieve the goal of 90 percent immunization coverage. Our guests from other countries should be thinking that how was this possible?

Friends,

When I talk of a new approach, this is the reason behind it. We first marked those districts and areas of the country where immunisation was not happening or not good for years. By targeting these areas our government started Mission Rainbow, added new medicines for vaccination and started working on ground level. Today the result is in front of all of us.

Friends,

With such a new approach our government is also working for "Swach Bharat Mission" or Clean India Mission. The result of this is that in 2014, the coverage of cleanliness in the rural areas of the country was almost 40 percent and now it has increased to almost 80 percent. In such a short time we have achieved double coverage. We are moving very fast towards open defecation free India by October 2019. I am giving these two examples today on this international forum because I want to emphasize this again for all countries that big and difficult goals can be achieved. Yes, the first requirement for that is to set a goal. When the goal is not fixed, then you will not have speed, nor direction, and you will not be able to reach the destination.

Friends,

With the same enthusiasm, I am convinced that India will fulfil its resolve to get TB free by 2025 by moving on a set target and set strategies. Companions, all of you are Health Sector Experts. Every one understand well that multi-sectoral interventions are needed to eliminate any disease. Regarding TB, I told you about many interventions such as medicines, treatment monitoring, research, nutritious diet with financial assistance. But along with this, there are some other things happening in India which are very helpful in reducing the effect of TB. One of them is “Swachh Bharat Mission”, about which I told you in detail. Likewise, the “Ujwala mission” of the Government of India is also playing a big role in reducing TB. Under this scheme, the government is working to provide free cooking gas (LPG) connections to 80 million poor women. After getting LPG at home, women, their children, their families are getting rid of wood smoke and by it are also reducing the risk of TB for themselves. Four days back, on International Women's day, our government has started a national level nutrition mission. The purpose of this mission is not only to give nutritious food to the people; our goal is to create an Eco-system in which the probability of malnutrition is minimal.

Friends,

In this year's budget, India has announced to launch the world's largest health assurance scheme. This plan is “Ayushman India” meaning "Long Live India". Through this our government will work to strengthen the primary, secondary and tertiary care-system in the country. Government is setting up 150,000 health and wellness centers in the country. These wellness centers will serve as primary health care, where there will be diagnostic services and people will also be provided with inexpensive medicines. In addition to this, 100 million poor families will get health assurance of Rs 500,000 per annum for the treatment of serious diseases.

Brothers and Sisters,

Our Indian philosophy and Indian ancient science have always been very clear about health. We have been told here-

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः;

सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः

सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु, मा कश्चिद्दुःखभागभवेत् ।

That is

May All be Happy;

May All be Free from Illness;

May all see what is auspicious, May no one Suffer.

Due to this philosophy, scientific methods like Ayurveda and Yoga were born on India's land. For hundreds of years it has been built in the Indian mind. These methods of Curative, Promotive and Preventive Health Care are now getting international recognition. Our government is also carrying out ancient Indian practices and modern medical practices. I will also urge the Ministry of Health to increase the scope of research on the contribution of Ayurveda in the area of TB and whatever its results should be shared with our fellow countries. Our mantra of `Collective Efforts-Inclusive Growth` is not tied in regional boundaries. To create a TB Free World, India is happy to move

shoulders-to-shoulder with every country. In the fight against TB, whichever countries require first line drugs, commodities and technical support, we will cooperate with that country with full readiness.

Friends,

The Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi had said that for any plan to be successful or unsuccessful, it depends on how much benefit reaches the last needy person. Our government is committed to reach out in our plans to that last needy person and increase the person's ease of living.

Today, on this occasion, I urge every person, every government, every institution, every representative from the civil society to take up this resolution, to play an active role in reaching to that last person with TB and making India TB Free.

The resolution of TB Free India will also support the completion of TB Free World resolution.

For this big goal, I conclude with my best wishes. Thank you very much again for all of you for coming to this event.

Thank you
