

## A very busy and fruitful March for REACH



### Awards presented to journalists for best reporting on tuberculosis

In the run-up to World TB Day, the REACH Media Awards for 2017-18 were presented in New Delhi on 15 March, to recognize outstanding and responsible reporting on tuberculosis (TB) at an event co-hosted by REACH, USAID and Lilly Global Health and in partnership with the Lancet Commission on Tuberculosis.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Arun Kumar Jha, Economic Advisor, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India lauded REACH's efforts in amplifying media reportage on TB. "In India, where health-seeking behaviour is low, we need to encourage people to seek health care services through responsible journalism. We need to involve local newspapers more in these efforts", he said.

A new publication, 'Keeping TB in the News: a toolkit for health advocates', documenting REACH's work with the media over eight years, was released on the occasion. Also speaking on the

occasion, Mr Mark White, Mission Director, USAID/India, congratulated the journalists as they have stood for truth, accuracy, fairness and humanity. “TB is not an issue to be hidden and whispered about behind closed doors. It is not a taboo. It needs to be reported on and discussed in the mainstream media,” he said.

The awards was preceded by ‘Countdown 2025 – A TB Centrestage Discussion’ moderated by Dr Nalini Krishnan. The speakers included Dr Eric Goosby, UN Special Envoy on TB; Dr Lucica Ditiu , Executive Director, the Stop TB Partnership; Dr Salmaan Keshavjee, Director of Harvard Medical School Centre for Global Health Delivery – Dubai; Dr Cheri Vincent, Chief, TB Division, USAID and Mr Cedric Fernandes, TB Champion and advocate.

### ***Awards winners***

In the English category for Best Reporting on TB, the winners were Sakshi Kuchroo and Geetanjali Minhas for their long-form story, ‘How Caregivers are falling prey to TB’, published in Governance Now, and Shreya Shah of IndiaSpend for her story titled ‘New Model of Tracking TB Patients Holds Promise for India’. Nandita Venkatesan of The Times of India received a special citation for her story, ‘I lost my hearing to TB drugs, time we declare war on the disease’.

In the Local Language category, the winners were Anand Tiwari for his story ‘Government’s project to monitor TB marred by the disease, patients marginalized’, published in Prabhat Khabar, and Rakesh Malviya for his story ‘Said in the budget ... but is it easy to beat TB?’ published on NDTV.com.

In the English category for Consistent Reporting on TB, the winner was Tabassum Barnagarwala who highlighted a range of TB-related issues through her work published in The Indian Express between 2012 and 2017. In the Local Language category, the winner was Mr. Reji Joseph, who focused on how TB affects the lives of migrant workers, among other issues in stories published in Rashtra Deepika Daily and deepikaglobal.com.



### **Tamil Nadu Chief Minister launches REACH's 'Nakshatra centres**

Private sector engagement for TB received a boost in Chennai when Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami formally launched 35 Nakshatra centres. These centres, run by REACH, are located in private hospitals and function act as nodal centres for TB care, diagnosis and treatment services. This is part of the TB-free Chennai initiative spearheaded by the Corporation of Chennai in partnership with REACH and the National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis.

#### ***Photos attached***

*Caption: Dr Nalini Krishnan, Director, REACH, receives MOU for Nakshatra Centres from Tamil Nadu Chief Minister*



# World TB Day 2018 #50leaderstoendTB



## #50leaderstoendTB: World TB Day social media campaign

To commemorate World TB Day and in keeping with the global theme announced by the Stop TB Partnership and WHO, REACH curated a photo series of 50 individuals from across India, who are all leaders working to end TB in various capacities. This included several TB survivors and Champions, private providers, pharmacists, civil society advocates, members of the legislative assembly and elected representatives, journalists and industry leaders. The series of 50 images was posted through the day on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), between 8am and 7pm, at 10-15 minute intervals.

## MLA launches campaign for TB-free constituency in Jharkhand

Taking forward the World TB Day theme “Wanted: Leaders for a TB Free World”, Mr. Kunal Sarangi, Member of the Legislative Assembly from Baharagora, East Singhbhum in Jharkhand, launched his campaign to make his constituency TB-free.



Speaking at the event, Mr. Sarangi said, “We all speak of improved infrastructure - better roads, water etc. But, without a healthy society, we will not be able to use this infrastructure and we cannot be ‘developed’.” The programme was organised by Mr Sarangi in association with REACH, as part of the TB Call to Action project supported by the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

The TB-Free campaign will adopt a multi-pronged approach, working with several stakeholders, including Panchayat and Ward representatives, and the Health, Education and Social Welfare departments. “TB is not limited by class, creed, race or any other indicator. It can happen to anyone. Given that Baharagora has a high rural population, TB isn’t often detected on time. It is important to bring all stakeholders together towards TB awareness and I am delighted that USAID and REACH have given

Baharagora the opportunity to be one of the first TB-Free constituencies in India,” Mr. Sarangi said.

Dr OP Choudhary, Medical Officer In-Charge, Baharagora said, “This event is vital in making people aware that TB is curable. Such events and the campaign are necessary to break stigma on TB”. Senior Treatment Supervisor at the Baharagora Community Health Center, Mr Dhananjay Mahato said, “The Baharagora CHC is working under the leadership of the DTO to identify and screen TB patients at their homes, and initiate their treatment. This initiative is unique to the area”.

Over the next year, REACH will work with Mr Sarangi to synergise the efforts of all stakeholders to strengthen community participation, and improve access to diagnostic and treatment services. Two bi-annual review meetings will be held to evaluate the efforts and identify gaps in consultation with District TB officials.

## TB Survivors Issue World TB Day Statement

A representative group of TB survivors and advocates came together to issue a World TB Day Statement, following a meeting held on 12 March and their subsequent participation in the Delhi End TB Summit. The meeting was facilitated by REACH, in association with Touched by TB (a national coalition of people affected by TB), the Global Coalition of TB Activists, TB Alert India and Ek Pahal (Bihar).

### ***Excerpts from the statement:***

We had the opportunity to attend the Delhi End TB Summit on 13 March 2018 and were witness to India's unparalleled political commitment to end TB, and the participation of the Honourable Prime Minister of India in the inaugural session. The Prime Minister's address underlined the crucial role of the affected community in dispelling myths, reducing stigma around TB and in supporting the government to address gaps within the health system for improved access to TB services.

There is no doubting India's ambition to end TB by 2025, five years ahead of the global target. Now is the time for us to address **all** the issues that need to be tackled if we are to win the fight against TB. We therefore want to bring to the attention of key decision-makers and stakeholders the following issues that we feel require *immediate* attention:

- The urgent need for TB counsellors at all healthcare settings, to provide TB patients and families with the right information and support
- Uniform and enhanced access to nutrition support for all those affected by TB. We call on state governments to support and supplement the Government of India's commitment of Rs. 500 per month per person through the treatment period
- Access to new technologies and treatment regimens for all those affected by TB
- Timely disbursement of all promised benefits and a proactive drive for better awareness of available social support mechanisms for people affected by TB
- The introduction of effective community monitoring mechanisms to pre-empt any issues that may delay diagnosis and treatment, such as drug stock-outs or the non-availability of diagnostic supplies and other consumables
- Increased investment in research on TB to identify better tools for TB diagnosis and treatment
- The adoption of non-stigmatising language, behaviour and practices by all stakeholders including public and private healthcare providers
- Overall, a people-centred approach to TB care and prevention in India, with survivors and affected communities at the forefront.

We are committed to working towards a TB-free India with the National TB programme and our respective state and local governments.

We see ourselves playing a crucial role as ambassadors who can work towards reducing the stigma and discrimination associated with this disease.

We – over twenty five lakh individuals like us every year - are the country's best resource to win the fight against TB.