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India's TB Report Card: 2025 Elimination Target Missed, but Mortality Down 38%



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Why in News

The World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Tuberculosis Report 2026 is out. It makes two big things clear - one, India could not achieve its target of eliminating TB by 2025, and two, deaths from TB in the country have fallen by 38% compared to 2015, better than the global average (35%). Also, this year's report does not include India's estimated TB incidence figure, which is being discussed.

Fresh Data: India's Position

- **Mortality rate:** Down 38% compared to 2015 - the global decline was 35%. Under 'End TB', India has achieved the milestone of a 35% reduction by 2020, five years late; the 2025 target was a 75% reduction.
- **Detected cases:** In 2025, 25.3 lakh TB patients were diagnosed under the national programme and 2.63 lakh deaths were recorded; in 2024 these figures were 26.18 lakh cases and over 3 lakh deaths.
- **Treatment success:** The treatment success rate for drug-susceptible TB is 94%.
- **Funding:** About 96% of the TB programme's funding requirement is being met through domestic resources.

Why the Estimated Incidence Figure is Missing

India's estimated incidence figure is marked 'under review' in the report. The reason - data from a district-level TB survey (sentinel surveillance) conducted in 2025 in 50 representative districts is being analysed; revised estimates are expected in early 2027. Earlier, India conducted two national prevalence surveys - 1955-58 and 2020-21 - which served as the basis for estimated incidence. The gap between estimated and actually reported cases shows how many patients remain undiagnosed and keep spreading the infection, which is why this figure matters.

What is TB (Basic Information)

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium Mycobacterium tuberculosis, which mainly affects the lungs and spreads through the air. BCG is its vaccine. Incomplete or delayed treatment can lead to serious conditions such as multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB).

What the Targets Were and What Happened

- **India's target:** Under the National Strategic Plan (2017-25) and the declaration at the 2018 'End TB Summit', India had set a target of eliminating TB by 2025 - five years ahead of the 2030 deadline of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 3.3). This target remains unmet.
- **Global picture (2025):** An estimated 1.06 crore people worldwide fell ill with TB (57 lakh men, 37 lakh women, 12 lakh children) and 11.3 lakh died. TB remains the world's leading cause of death from a single infectious agent.
- **India's burden:** The South-East Asia region accounts for 35% of new cases; 30 high-burden countries hold 88% of cases. India alone accounts for about a quarter of global cases, followed by Indonesia (10%), the Philippines (6.8%), China (6.5%) and Pakistan (6.4%); the top five countries together hold 55%.

The Government's Machinery: NTEP's Tools

Under the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP), active case-finding uses AI-enabled X-rays, rapid molecular diagnostics, prompt treatment initiation and differentiated TB care. The Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana gives patients Rs 1,000 per month as direct cash support for nutrition, and the Ni-kshay Mitra initiative lets members of the community adopt and support patients.

The Way Forward

The revised incidence estimates due in early 2027 will show the real picture. Meeting the target requires diagnosing missed cases, nutritional support, managing drug-resistant TB and sustaining funding. India not releasing its own annual TB report this year (which earlier came out on World TB Day) also raises a question of transparency.

Mains Practice Question

"India's target of eliminating TB by 2025 remains unmet, yet the decline in mortality is notable." Evaluate the achievements and the challenges. (250 words, 15 marks)

Answer outline:

Introduction: The WHO Global TB Report 2026 and India's 2025 target versus SDG 2030.

Main body: Achievements - 38% mortality decline since 2015 (global 35%), 94% treatment success, 96% domestic funding, innovations such as AI-enabled X-rays and the Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana; challenges - elimination target unmet, estimated incidence figure unavailable, the gap between reported and estimated cases (undiagnosed infection), drug resistance, a quarter of the global burden in India.

Conclusion: The pace is in the right direction, but without closing the diagnosis gap and deepening nutritional-social security, even the 2030 SDG target will remain under pressure.

Prelims Practice Questions

Question 1. Consider the following statements:

Statement-I: According to the Global TB Report 2026, TB mortality in India has declined by 38% compared to 2015

Statement-II: This report does not include India's estimated TB incidence figure

Choose the correct option with reference to the above statements:

(a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct

(b) Statement-I is correct, but Statement-II is incorrect

(c) Statement-I is incorrect, but Statement-II is correct

(d) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are incorrect

Answer and explanation

Answer: (a)

Both statements are correct - a 38% decline in mortality has been recorded, and India's estimated incidence figure has been kept out of the report pending analysis of the district-level survey (revised estimates expected in early 2027).

Question 2. With reference to TB and India's target, consider the following statements:

Statement 1: TB is a disease caused by the bacterium Mycobacterium tuberculosis

Statement 2: India's target of eliminating TB by 2025 was five years ahead of the SDG's 2030 deadline

Statement 3: The Global TB Report is published by the United Nations General Assembly

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

(c) All three

(d) None

Answer and explanation

Answer: (b)

Statements 1 and 2 are correct; Statement 3 is incorrect - this report is published annually by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Sources

- The Hindu (12 November 2026): www.thehindu.com
- Indian Express (13 November 2026): indianexpress.com
- WHO Global TB Reports page: www.who.int

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Short answer: According to the WHO's Global TB Report 2026, India could not achieve its target of eliminating TB by 2025, but TB deaths have fallen by 38% compared to 2015 - better than the global average of 35%.

Question: What was India's TB elimination target?

India had set a target of eliminating TB by 2025 - five years ahead of the 2030 global deadline under SDG 3.3. According to the report, this target was not met.

Question: How many TB cases and deaths were recorded in India in 2025?

Under the national programme, 25.3 lakh cases were diagnosed and 2.63 lakh deaths were recorded; in 2024 there were 26.18 lakh cases and over 3 lakh deaths.

Question: Why is India's incidence figure missing from this year's report?

Data from a TB survey conducted in 2025 in 50 representative districts is being analysed; revised estimates are expected to be released in early 2027.

- PIB: current nutritional assistance, 24 March 2026

Related reading

- National Health Accounts 2023-24: government health spending triples, out-of-pocket share falls to 42.7%