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S&T Minister announces completion of 10,000 genome sequences of Mycobacterium tuberculosis

24 March 2025 | News

Whole-of-Nation approach and public participation key to TB eradication: Dr Jitendra Singh



In a significant breakthrough in the fight against tuberculosis (TB), Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh announced the completion of genome sequencing of 10,000 isolates of "*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*" at a summit organised on the occasion of "World TB Day" at Vigyan Bhawan on March 24.

The achievement marks a major stride in India's commitment to eradicating TB ahead of the World Health Organization's (WHO) 2030 targets.

The genome sequencing initiative is part of the Dare2eraD TB programme (Data Driven Research to Eradicate TB), launched on March 24, 2022, which focuses on data-driven research to eradicate TB.

A key component of this initiative is the Indian Tuberculosis Genomic Surveillance (InTGS) Consortium, spearheaded by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), in collaboration with major clinical institutions. The programme aims to sequence over 32,000 TB isolates to identify drug resistance mutations and improve treatment outcomes.

Dr Rajesh Gokhale, Secretary DBT, hailed the completion of 10,000 genome sequences as a milestone achievement, adding that the data will be instrumental in strengthening India's TB surveillance and diagnostic capabilities. He stressed the importance of translating this research into practical applications that can be scaled up for real-world impact.

With India accounting for a significant portion of the global TB burden, this breakthrough in genome sequencing is expected to bolster national and global efforts to combat the disease. The government's continued investment in cutting-edge research, coupled with policy interventions and community participation, could pave the way for a TB-free India well ahead of its 2025 target.