

## Competitive Exams: Current Affairs 2012: March 24 is World TB Day

- TB is one of India's oldest and perhaps most neglected public health challenges.
- India's Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP) is widely appreciated for having made a big contribution by expanding basic diagnostic and treatment services to cover 100 per cent of the Indian population. A laudable but insufficient achievement in a country of 1.2 billion people. Why? Because despite these achievements, India has over two million new TB cases every year and TB kills nearly 1, 000 people every day.
- The emergence of drug resistant TB has made things worse. Three months ago, a team from the Hinduja hospital in Mumbai reported a few cases of 'totally drug-resistant tuberculosis' — suggesting that this form of TB was incurable because of resistance to all the TB drugs tested.
- The RNTCP has been consistently under-funded for many years.
- What about India's large private sector, which manages over half of all tuberculosis cases? Unfortunately, tuberculosis management practices in the unregulated private sector vary widely, often deviating from established standards.
- Also, there is virtually no reporting or notification of confirmed TB cases to the RNTCP by the Indian private sector.
- efforts are now underway to make TB reporting mandatory.
- Ultimately, the typical tuberculosis patient in India is caught between two suboptimal options—an under-funded public programme with limited capacity to deal with drug-resistant tuberculosis, and an unregulated private sector where mismanagement is likely

Courtesy: The Hindu

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