



until
No Leprosy Remains

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JOURNEY TOWARDS ZERO LEPROSY

Vol. 04; Issue 14: April – June 2026

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27 Years
Advancing Health,
Inclusion
& Dignity

Leprosy, Skin
NTDs,
Tuberculosis &
Disability





Message from the Chief Executive Officer, NLR India

Dear Readers,

It gives me great pleasure to share NLR India's quarterly update for April–June 2026. This quarter has been marked by continued efforts to strengthen prevention, care, rehabilitation and inclusion for people affected by leprosy and disabilities.

Our 27th Foundation Day, held under the theme “Transforming Life through Prevention, Care & Compassion,” brought together government representatives, development partners, experts and people affected by leprosy. It was a valuable opportunity to reflect on our collective progress and renew our commitment to ending the challenges associated with leprosy.

During the quarter, we reached the very important milestone of completing our multi-year global trial of PEP++ (an enhanced regimen for leprosy prevention). We also expanded our work in health and rehabilitation, supported livelihoods, strengthened community groups, trained more than 500 health and frontline workers, and helped people access disability certificates, government schemes and other essential services.

We remain grateful to our government partners, communities, donors and fellow organisations for their trust and continued support. Together, we can build a future where every person affected by leprosy and disability can live with dignity, opportunity and hope.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Ashok Agarwal

Chief Executive Officer, NLR India

Key Meetings & Highlights (National/State Level)

NLR India Foundation celebrated its 27th Foundation Day on 24th April 2026, at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi with the theme “Transforming Life through Prevention, Care & Compassion”. The Chief Guest of this one-day event was the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to India, Nepal and Bhutan, Her Excellency Ms. Marisa Gerards. The meeting was attended by officials of Central Leprosy Division (CLD), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India (GoI); representatives of World Health Organization (WHO), International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP) agencies, Global Programme for Zero Leprosy (GPZL), Indian Association of Leprologists (IAL) and Association of People Affected by Leprosy (APAL); State Leprosy Officers (SLOs) of four states (Delhi, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh), State Leprosy Consultants (SLCs) from three states (Assam, Delhi & West Bengal); representatives of partner agencies and experts from leprosy, tuberculosis (TB), public health, mental health & environmental health; and staff of NLR India. During the meeting, sessions were conducted on:

- Compassion Study Dissemination;
- Apps for prevention and access to govt schemes;
- Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP++) Study – Update;
- Strategic consultation on LPEP App, service accessing App and Compassion study; and
- Accelerating prevention of leprosy by participation of persons affected by leprosy.

The report of the “Compassion Study” was released during the event.



Scan the QR code
to download the
Compassion Study report

During this event, NLR India felicitated Dr. Rup Narayan Bhattacharya, Professor and Head of Department (HoD), Plastic Surgery, R G Kar Medical College, Kolkata, West Bengal, as the “NLR India Champion”. Dr. Bhattacharya has conducted hundreds of reconstructive surgeries for people affected by leprosy. The meeting report may be downloaded from our website.



In April, in collaboration with Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya National Institute for Persons With Physical Disabilities, New Delhi, a 19-year-old girl was supported for getting a programmable hearing aid free of cost. The beneficiary belongs to an economically weaker family affected by leprosy. The beneficiary's mother expressed deep gratitude for the support extended and acknowledged the efforts of the team and NLR India in facilitating this intervention.



To empower women and young girls on livelihood, NLR India inaugurated a tailoring training programme on 13 May 2026 in Haspura Block of Aurangabad district, Bihar. The primary objective of this initiative was to provide vocational training to women with disabilities and economically disadvantaged girls, enabling them to become self-reliant and financially independent.



In June 2026, NLR India started an ambitious intervention called the Health & Rehabilitation (HealR) Project in five Gram Panchayats across four states. In addition to services for leprosy and all 21 types of disabilities, the project is also providing services related to lymphatic filariasis, tuberculosis, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), hypertension, and linkages to government schemes.

After prolonged advocacy efforts, a letter was issued by the State Leprosy Officer in Bihar to conduct monthly Disability Prevention and Medical Rehabilitation (DPMR) camps at all 543 Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs) across 38 districts of the state.

RESEARCH

► The Basic Psychological Support for Neglected Tropical Diseases (BPS-N) Project made strong progress across Palamu and Garhwa districts of Jharkhand during Q2 2026, focusing on mental well-being, stigma reduction, and social participation among people affected by leprosy and lymphatic filariasis (LF) through community-based peer support.

Field teams accelerated baseline data collection and began endline assessments for participants who had completed four months. By June, 687 baseline surveys had been completed, identifying 402 eligible participants, along with 22 endline surveys. Data collection progressed across intervention and control blocks for both diseases.

Interventions were implemented across six blocks, with peer supporters recruited, trained, mentored, and supervised by project psychologists. Project management also improved through regular dashboard reviews, standardized monitoring tools, structured reporting, and systematic peer-supporter follow-up.

These achievements strengthen evidence for integrating mental health and psychosocial support into NTD programmes and promoting inclusive, person-centered healthcare in Jharkhand.



► The data collection of multi-country, multi-year PEP++ study was completed. The study conducted a randomized controlled trial to test the effectiveness of PEP++ (combination of rifampicin and clarithromycin in three doses) compared to single dose of rifampicin for prevention of leprosy transmission. During the next quarter, the data will be analyzed and the results will be disseminated in the last quarter.

HEALTH

Capacity building (CB):

In the second quarter of 2026, more than 500 health staff from different cadres (Medical Officers, Community Health Officers, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), Paramedical Workers, Non-Medical Supervisors/Assistants, Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), physiotherapists, and other frontline workers) participated in technical training sessions across Bihar, Delhi, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Key technical areas included early diagnosis of leprosy, disability prevention and management, leprosy reactions and neuritis, contact tracing and single-dose rifampicin post-exposure prophylaxis (SDR-PEP), record maintenance and reporting, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), mental health, and community-based rehabilitation.

Helpline

The helpline is a unique NLR India project through which counsellors call patients on treatment fortnightly and those who have been Released from Treatment (RFT) quarterly. Lists of patients are received from various districts of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Feedback received from patients is shared with the concerned districts for follow-up. During April–June 2026, a total of 73 index cases were registered at the helpline centre, which is operational from Jaipur, Rajasthan. A total of 591 follow-up calls were made to these clients to understand their health status and identify any other problems. The helpline is being automated through AI for reaching out the service to a larger number of persons through a cost-effective mechanism. Results of the pilot are encouraging. In the first phase, the follow-up calls will be automated.

LIVELIHOOD

Self-Help Group (SHG) meetings and livelihood discussions were conducted in Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. More than 100 persons with disabilities participated in SHG meetings, advocacy sessions, and empowerment discussions. Persons affected by leprosy and persons with disabilities were sensitized regarding disability rights, government schemes, stigma reduction, and rehabilitation opportunities. SHG strengthening discussions focused on livelihood planning, revolving funds, inter-loaning, and sustainability of community-based groups.

In the second quarter of 2026, NLR India, with support from members of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), helped persons with disabilities (PWDs) access the following benefits:

BENEFIT	NUMBER
Disability Certificates	105
UDID Cards	73
Disability Pensions	24
Ration Cards	5
MGNREGA Job Cards	2
Railway Passes	3
Bus Passes	1
Motorized Rickshaws	12
Grade II Pension Benefits	11

These benefits were made available through active coordination with district government officials, stakeholders, and the Disability Inclusive Development (DID) Coordinators.

Challenges

- Pending State Strategic Plans (SSPs) and District Action Plans
- Shortage of health workers in some districts

Upcoming Priorities

- Supporting districts in developing their District Action Plans and their implementation
- Roll-out of the Sarkari Yojna App for access of government schemes
- Roll-out of AI based automation of leprosy helpline
- Dissemination of PEP++ study results
- Launch of Tuberculosis project in Haryana

DONATE



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