

**Press Information Bureau  
Government of India  
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**

22-January-2011 15:40 IST

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**President Launches the 2011 Pulse Polio Campaign**

The Hon'ble President of India Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil today administered Polio vaccine drops to seven children at Rashtrapati Bhawan. The President was launching the National Pulse Polio Programme for 2011 today. Hon'ble President had introduced the Bivalent Oral Polio Vaccine in the National Immunization Programme for the first time in January 2010.

Speaking on the occasion, the Union Health Minister Sh. Ghulam Nabi Azad stated that 'Polio Free India' is now an achievable goal. The last 6 months have seen the lowest number of polio cases during the high transmission season of any year since polio eradication efforts were started in India. Only 42 polio cases have been detected in 2010 (as on 3 January 2011) compared to 741 cases of polio in 2009. The number of affected districts has declined to 17 in 2010 from 56 in 2009 and 90 in 2008. Uttar Pradesh has reported 10 polio cases in 2010 as compared to 602 cases last year. UP has not reported any polio case since April 2010.

The Minister informed that during this countrywide Polio Campaign starting tomorrow, around hundred seventy four million children of less than 5 years of age, will be given polio drops as a part of Government of India's drive to eradicate Polio. Shri Azad elaborated that six polio campaigns will be conducted in the high risk states/areas between March and November 2011. The high risk areas that will be covered include parts of UP, Bihar, Delhi, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Gujarat. "A rapid response task force is being constituted to plan and conduct aggressive mopping up vaccination in response to any poliovirus that is detected anywhere in the country henceforth so that all chains of polio transmission are finally broken", he said.

The Minister of State Sh. S.Gandhiselvan, Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Shri K.Chandramouli and other senior officers of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and stakeholders from development agencies were present on the occasion.

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