

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

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**President launches Pulse Polio Programme for 2015**

**Shri J P Nadda credits sustained hard work and support of volunteers and partners for ‘Polio Free India’**

The President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee launched the Pulse Polio programme for 2015 by administering polio drops to children less than five years old, at the Rahstrapati Bhawan, here today. Tomorrow is the National Immunization Day. Around 174 million children of less than five years across the country will be given polio drops as part of the drive of Government of India to sustain polio eradication from the country.

Speaking at the function on the eve of the National Immunization Day, the Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare Shri J P Nadda applauded the sustained hard work of nearly 23 lakh volunteers and 1.5 lakh supervisors, along with donor partners for eradicating polio from India. The Health Minister stated that there has been no case of wild polio since 13 January 2011. India was certified Polio Free last year, and is part of the 11 countries of South-East Asia Region of WHO (along with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste) which are polio free.

Affirming that India is looking forward to playing a major role in the implementation of “Polio endgame strategy”, the Minister informed about introduction of inactivated polio vaccine in routine immunization program and a switch from trivalent OPV to bivalent OPV six months later in a synchronized manner globally.

The Health Minister stated that efforts to keep the country polio free are being sustained. Being mindful of the risk of importation from other countries including the neighbourhood, immunity against polio infection is maintained through National and Sub National Polio rounds along with sustained high quality polio surveillance. A travel advisory has also been issued as per WHO guidelines to vaccinate all travellers who are travelling between India and eight polio-infected countries comprising Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Cameroon, Syria, Ethiopia, Somalia & Kenya. Moreover, Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) has been put in place under which Rapid Response Teams (RRT) have been formed in all States/UTs to respond urgently to any importations.

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