

**Press Information Bureau
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PM to Inaugurate 2-Day Polio Summit 2012

The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, will inaugurate the two-day 'Polio summit 2012' on 25th February 2012 at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. India completed a year without reporting any case of polio in January 2012, a major achievement and unprecedented progress which needs to be sustained with continued intensive efforts until polio is eradicated. To commemorate India's trailblazing effort and focus on the risks and way forward, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Rotary International are organizing the 'Polio Summit 2012'. The Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad will preside while the Ministers of State for Health and Family Welfare, Shri Sudip Bandyopadhyay and Shri S Gandhiselvan; Rotary International President Mr. Kalyan Banerjee and The Rotary Foundation Chairman Mr. William Boyd will be the guests of honour at the Summit.

The Health Ministers of polio endemic countries Pakistan and Nigeria and neighbouring Sri Lanka and Nepal, and Rotarians from across the world are expected to attend the global summit. Senior health officials from various States, Principal Secretaries, Mission Directors NRHM and State Immunization Officers, heads and representatives of key partner organisations - Rotary International, the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization- National Polio Surveillance Project and UNICEF will participate in the Summit. Representatives of the huge polio workforce are among the nearly 1,200 participants expected at the Summit.

Over the two days, the Summit will deliberate on how to build synergies to ensure that the present momentum against polio is maintained until the disease is eradicated. The last bastions of polio in India – Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal – are expected to present their efforts and challenges. The Summit is expected to provide a platform for sharing and learning lessons. The World Health Organizations' Assistant Director-General for Polio, Emergencies, Dr Bruce Aylward, will present the global scenario and China's response to the recent poliovirus importation as a case study of emergency response, which would be a key strategy for India in the years ahead. WHO's South East Asia Regional Office will lead the discussions around the challenges and way forward for polio free certification of the region.

Polio Summit 2012 will be a platform for all the key players in the end game strategy for polio eradication – government, partners, donors and frontline workers – to renew and reinforce their commitment to eradicate polio in India.

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