

MEDIA FACT-FILE

POLIO ERADICATION



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Pakistan discusses polio eradication efforts with India



Mr Azad with Pakistan delegation led by Ms Ali.

A high-level delegation of Pakistan officials, led by Special Assistant to Prime Minister and Focal Person on Polio Eradication, Ms Shahnaz Wazir Ali, met Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad, and top officials of the Ministry, and discussed the key initiatives that helped India stop poliovirus transmission.

The nine-member delegation of Pakistan Government's health officials included

Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Member National Task Force for Polio, Mr Babar Muhammad and Dr Altaf Bosan, National Coordinator, Prime Minister's Polio Monitoring Cell.

During their three-day visit beginning 31 May, the delegation met representatives of the polio partner organizations – WHO-National Polio Surveillance Project, Rotary International, UNICEF and CORE group of NGOs – and discussed in detail how the key initiatives were rolled out. The Pakistan delegation made a day-long visit to Ghaziabad, one of the highest-risk districts for polio in India in view of the large number of migrant and mobile populations in peri-urban areas, constructions sites and brick kilns. The

delegation observed the programme at the grass root level in Ghaziabad, and the role the health department played at various levels coordinating, implementing and monitoring the programme.

Terming the India polio programme as extremely impressive, Ms Ali lauded the strong data-based planning, intense monitoring, surveillance and innovative communication strategy.

Outlining the key challenge in Pakistan, she said, "over 75 per cent of the polio cases in Pakistan are among the migrant Pashtun community. We are keen to learn from India's experience of tracking, mobilizing and immunizing the migrant population."

Polio expert advisory group recommends 'eternal vigilance'

THE India Expert Advisory Group on polio eradication has cautioned against the threat of poliovirus importation in view of the continuing polio transmission elsewhere in the world, and recommended 'eternal vigilance' in the period ahead.

The expert group recommended that the programme needs to continue its present momentum

which enabled the country come off the polio endemic list in February 2012. "The Government, partners and donors must maintain the human, material and financial infrastructure of polio eradication until global certification," the expert group said.

"It is not over until it is over everywhere. The price of

freedom is eternal vigilance", the IEAG said.

The expert group said the main challenges to the programme now were to maintain immunity of children against poliovirus, maintain surveillance for quick detection of polio and be in readiness to rapidly respond to polio anywhere in the country with robust Emergency Preparedness and

Response Plans, which should be updated and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

The programme should work on reducing risk of poliovirus importation and further build on polio by boosting routine immunization.

For full recommendations visit: <http://www.npsindia.org/Advisory.asp>

NYKS- UNICEF partner for polio eradication

THE Nehru Yuvak Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) has joined hands with UNICEF to support the intensified efforts for polio eradication in the country. As per a pilot beginning June 2012, the youth clubs of NYKS in polio high priority districts of Haryana, Punjab and Maharashtra, will help spread awareness among the community for continued support to the



Dr C S Pran, National Director NYKS, at the first polio workshop in Delhi on 11 June.

polio immunization campaigns, despite India completing over a year without any case of polio.

The districts being covered by the partnership are – Faridabad, Gurgaon, Sonapat and Panipat in Haryana; Ludhiana and Jalandhar in Punjab and Nasik, Thane, Mumbai and Bhiwandi in Maharashtra. All the districts have been flagged as high-risk for polio mainly on account of

GLOBAL POLIO UPDATE

In 2012, so far, 84 cases of polio have been reported from four countries – Nigeria (48), Pakistan (22), Afghanistan (10) and Chad (4). In the corresponding period in 2011, there were 241 cases of polio reported from 13 countries.

the large number of migrant populations in these areas. The NYKS will roll out the polio eradication initiatives from July 2012.

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