



President launches countrywide Pulse Polio Programme for 2017

Shri J P Nadda: Have strengthened immunization programme through introduction of several new vaccines

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The President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee launched the Pulse Polio programme for 2017 by administering polio drops to children less than five years old, at the Rashtrapati Bhawan, in the presence of the Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare Shri J P Nadda and Ministers of State (Health) Shri Fagga Singh Kulaste and Smt. Anupriya Patel, here today. Tomorrow is the National Immunization Day. Around 17 crore 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 stated that polio-free certification of the entire South-East Asia Region of WHO including India on 27th March 2014 is a huge accomplishment in the history of public health. He added that as the risk of importation still persists from remaining three countries (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria) where poliovirus is still circulating, the need still persists for the country to maintain the population immunity and sensitive surveillance till global polio eradication happens. This is maintained through National and Sub National Polio rounds along with sustained high quality polio surveillance.

The Health Minister added that 'We are conducting continuous polio vaccination at the international borders with India. A travel advisory has also been issued to vaccinate all travelers who are travelling between India and eight other countries. Also, an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) is in place under which Rapid Response Teams (RRT) have been formed in all States/UTs to respond urgently to any importations of poliovirus'. Shri Nadda said that to provide double protection to our children, Government of India has also introduced the injectable Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) into its routine immunization program.

Shri Nadda pointed out that India has reduced under-5 mortality rate from 75 per 1000 live births in 2005 to 45 per 1000 in 2014 as per recent SRS estimates. Noting that immunization is one of the key interventions in reducing child deaths in country, he said that to expand the scope of immunization in country, Rotavirus virus vaccine has been introduced as part of the UIP last year and the Ministry is soon to introduce Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine that will help to reduce the burden of diarrhea, pneumonia and meningitis, and a countrywide campaign with Measles-Rubella vaccine in phased manner. Shri Nadda said that the innovative initiative of the Government, Mission Indradhanush, launched in 2014 has strengthened our immunization coverage and ensured that all vaccines reach our targeted beneficiaries even in remotest areas.

The Union Health Minister applauded the efforts of the thousands of volunteers, frontline workers, health officials across the states and development partners for their tireless efforts in keeping the country polio-free.

Also present at the function were Shri C K Mishra, Secretary (HFW), senior officers of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and representatives of development partners.

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