

India no longer on WHO's active polio list

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India has been removed from the list of countries with active endemic wild polio virus transmission by the World Health Organization (WHO). Polio free is certified for WHO regions by the Regional Certification Commission and not for individual country. The South-East Asia Regional Commission for Polio Eradication (SEA-RCCPE) has examined the data of 31 states/union territories of India and has accepted the report of the Indian National Certification Committee for Polio Eradication and has concluded that the wild polio virus is not circulating in these states.

Each region can consider certification only when all countries in the area demonstrate the absence of wild poliovirus transmission for at least three consecutive years in the presence of certification standard surveillance. In addition, all facilities holding wild poliovirus infectious and potentially infectious materials must have implemented bio-containment measures for laboratory containment of wild poliovirus.

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As per the information given by the Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Mr Abu Hasem Khan Choudhury, in the parliament on May 07, 2013, "A task force for laboratory containment of wild polioviruses has been constituted. The first phase of laboratory containment started by surveying laboratory to identify laboratory with wild poliovirus, infectious materials or potential wild poliovirus infectious materials and encourage them for destruction of all unneeded materials. All states/UTs have been communicated about the successful interruption of wild poliovirus transmission in India and the possible certification in 2014 and requested for political and administrative support required for completion of laboratory containment activities in their respective states."

"Support of WHO's National Polio Surveillance Project (NPSP) is also being obtained to survey all laboratories in their database and provide information of the Laboratories to the Task Force. An inventory of laboratories/Institutes of Department of Bio Technology (DBT) / Department of Science and Technology (DST), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs)/ National Institute of Information Technology (NIITs), databases of bio-

medical laboratories in Department of Health Research (DHR), biotech laboratories in Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) database has been prepared for information on storage of potentially infectious material," added the Minister.