

## India celebrates three years without Polio

16 January 2014 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

### India Celebrates three years without Polio



India in celebration as the nation defeats crippling disease Polio. India completed three consecutive years without a single case of wild Polio virus, today and hence achieving the three-year milestone necessary to achieve Polio-free certification from WHO.

Commemorating the day on January 13, 2014, Rotary International illuminated India's iconic monuments and buildings, all across the nation. In the capital city, the historic India Gate and Red Fort was lit up with 'Celebrating 3 Years of last Polio case in India' message. Other illumination sites in the country included the Air India in Mumbai, Hyderabad Public School in Hyderabad, Red Fort in Agra, Teeli Wali Masjid in Lucknow, Junagarh Fort in Bikaner, Sojati Gate in Jodhpour and other equally important sites in cities and towns across the country were lit-up with the message 'Celebrating 3 Years of last Polio case in India'. The three-year milestone was celebrated with much fanfare by countrymen across the country.

The country reported the last polio case in Howrah, West Bengal, on January 13, 2011. Members of Rotary International, one of the spearheading partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), have been working for years to sensitize and motivate people to get their children vaccinated against Polio. Rotary's India National PolioPlus Committee Chair Mr. Deepak Kapur observing the special day said "It is a huge victory for India and its people. From being one of the most Polio infested regions a couple of years ago to completely containing Polio toward becoming Polio-free, the campaign in India has come a long way". He said that the collective effort of Polio partners spearheaded by the Govt. of India, made the difference and "We are hopeful, the partnership will ensure India remains Polio-free forever".

India will be officially certified as a Polio Free nation with the certification by WHO for the entire Southeast Asia region (WHO SEAR) as a Polio free Zone. Rotary leader Mr. Ashok Mahajan the Chief Coordinator of this illumination project for Rotary

India said "By lighting these historic landmarks, we want to reinforce Rotary's pledge of a Polio-free India and a Polio-free world. We would continue our battle against Polio till the last wild Polio virus is defeated all across the world".

Globally only 3 countries are still endemic with polio, namely, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria. "There is a constant fear of polio virus importation from neighboring endemic countries. Therefore, we cannot afford to be relaxed till the time Polio is eradicated globally and will have to continue our efforts of protecting our children against Polio, till the world is certified Polio-free", observed Mr. Raja Saboo, Past President (global) of Rotary International.

Rotary Governor for District 3010 Mr. Vinod Bansal said, "Rotary members across the country are motivated and encouraged by the India success against Polio. They will endeavour, as has been Rotary's motto, 'service before self' and embark to achieve similar success against other ills in the society". According to Rotary National PolioPlus Committee member Mr. Raman Bhatia "It is a significant day for our countrymen and we are happy we reached this milestone today in ensuring a Polio-free life for country's children".

Rotary club members worldwide have contributed more than US\$1.2 billion and countless volunteer hours to the polio eradication effort. Rotary is a global humanitarian organization with more than 1.2 million members in 34,000 Rotary clubs in over 200 countries and geographical areas. Rotary members are men and women who are business, professional and community leaders with a shared commitment to make the world a better place through humanitarian service. Rotary's top priority is the global eradication of polio and is the leading partner of GPEI. The other spearheading partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative are the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.