

29 October 2018 – World Polio Day (24 October) was marked with a myriad of events across Pakistan, all paying tribute to the efforts of frontline health workers. Events recognized the contributions of polio workers, caregivers, civil society and donors to ending polio in Pakistan.

Pakistan, along with Afghanistan, is one of the two remaining countries in the world with ongoing wild poliovirus type 1 transmission. Despite an increase in the number of children paralysed by polio in Pakistan this year, the polio eradication programme and partners affirmed that they will not be deterred and urged all to get behind the national cause.

“The rise in cases and continued detection of polio in environmental samples this year has been disappointing. But our frontline health workforce has not let this or any of the other challenges they face in the field deter them,” WHO Representative to Pakistan, Dr Palitha Mahipala said.

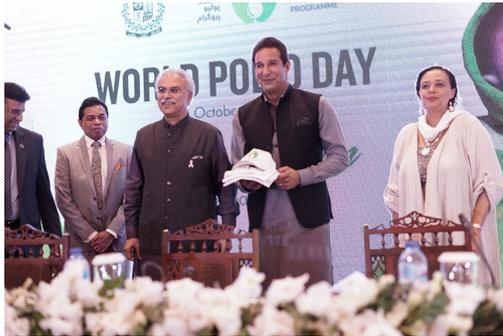
“They are truly the heroes of this effort, and with our continued support, they will prevail.”

WHO, UNICEF and other key partners of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative remain committed to supporting the Government of Pakistan in the drive to eradicate all types of the poliovirus.

WHO also announced that the second strain of wild poliovirus – type 3 – has been certified as globally eradicated by an independent commission of experts. Global wild poliovirus type 3 eradication is a tremendous achievement and an important milestone on the road to eradicate all poliovirus strains.

In Pictures: World Polio Day was celebrated with zeal and zest throughout the country. Have a quick glance through these pictures and videos for a glimpse of different events taking place in Pakistan.

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Islamabad

A new polio ambassador for Pakistan

Well-known Pakistani skipper and 1992 World Cup bowler for Pakistan, Wasim Akram, was announced as a polio ambassador for the Pakistan programme. Wasim Akram will help raise awareness of the importance of polio vaccination at public events. He will also conduct events with polio workers to encourage them to continue their contributions to the fight against polio.

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Islamabad

Polio eradication, a national cause

“We need to commit ourselves to ensure vaccination of all children under the age of five. All children of Pakistan deserve a life free from vaccine-preventable diseases” said Waseem Akram.

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Sindh: Karachi
Ride to end polio in Pakistan

The Emergency Operations Centre in Sindh, in collaboration with Rotary Pakistan and the Cyclogists cycling group, held a cycle rally to raise awareness on World Polio Day. 200 participants from different walks of life cycled for 15 km and then attended an information session on polio. The event was widely covered by the national media, and awareness-raising messages by the cyclists were aired on various TV channels and in print media.

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Sindh: Karachi
Polio awareness and sensitization walk

Provincial Minister of Health and Population Welfare, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, led a walk to highlight the importance of World Polio Day for Pakistan and called upon parents to support polio vaccinators in their work to protect all children from the virus.

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**Sindh: DHQ Hospital, Hyderabad
Doctors on the frontline**

The Pakistan Pediatrics Association in Hyderabad held an awareness and advocacy seminar at the Liaqat University of Medical and Health Sciences to mark World Polio Day and the role of doctors in educating parents about polio and the importance of vaccination. The seminar called on doctors to commit to supporting vaccination and routine immunization activities and eliminating misconceptions.

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**Sindh: Hyderabad
Working together for success**

With the support of Rotary and Polio Eradication Initiative partners in Hyderabad District, a cycling rally, awareness walk and seminar were held by the District Council, frontline workers and students of Mehran University to raise awareness about the need to unite to end polio.

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Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Bannu Division Rewarding commitment

On World Polio Day, prizes, shields and certificates were awarded to the most effective frontline workers by local government officials and polio partners.

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Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Peshawar Strong government support

A walk held to mark World Polio Day was led by Mushtaq Ghani, the Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly, and other parliamentarians, to express their strong commitment to ending polio.

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Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Union Council Sholam, Tehsil Birmel, South Waziristan

Religious scholars unite to end polio

Religious scholars took part in the community engagement programme for reducing religious misconceptions about polio vaccination. Notable members of the community, religious scholars and teachers attended the session and expressed their resolve to mitigate negative perceptions of the safe and effective polio vaccine.

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Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Union Council Urmar Bala Baghbanan Camp, Peshawar

Moment of pride

Qari Zahoor Khan, a polio survivor and advocate, led a walk for polio eradication along with religious representatives and the local community.

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**Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: GGPS Ghulam Banda, District Kohat
A strong message**

"Two drops of vaccine to eradicate polio from Pakistan" was the message from students pledging to end polio in their country.

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**Balochistan: Quetta
Encouraging those on the frontlines of eradication**

To commemorate World Polio Day, a certificate ceremony was held to recognize the contributions of the frontline workers who are the real heroes in the battle against polio.

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Balochistan: Quetta
Painting to raise awareness

Students took part in a poster competition to highlight the difficulties faced by children affected by the poliovirus.

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Punjab
Together we can end polio in Pakistan

In Punjab, WHO collaborated with Rawalpindi Medical University and the University of Health Sciences to hold a seminar on the united effort needed to finally end polio in Pakistan.

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