

NATIONAL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE FOR POLIO ERADICATION

PROGRAMMATIC UPDATE FOR 14 MARCH TO 27 MARCH, 2023



A delegation of AFD and BMGF met with Federal Minister for Health Abdul Qadir Patel to discuss collaboration on health programs. (Photo Courtesy: Ministry of Health)

• AFD visit

A delegation of the French Development Agency (AFD) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation visited the National Emergency Operations Centre for Polio Eradication on 17 March. The AFD delegation was visiting Pakistan to explore avenues of cooperation in health and social protection, and met the federal health minister and federal health secretary. As an outcome of these meetings, there was alignment between the Government of Pakistan and AFD to move forward a potential US\$55M agreement to support polio eradication in Pakistan. If finalized, this agreement would be an important new partnership for polio and provide much needed funds to fill a portion of the Pakistan Polio Program's 2022-2026 funding gap.

• March campaign

The first phase of the March subnational polio campaign was held from 13 March to

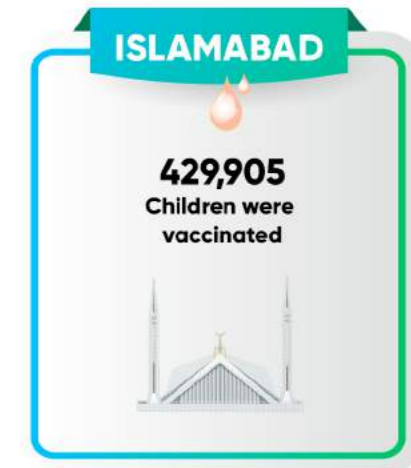
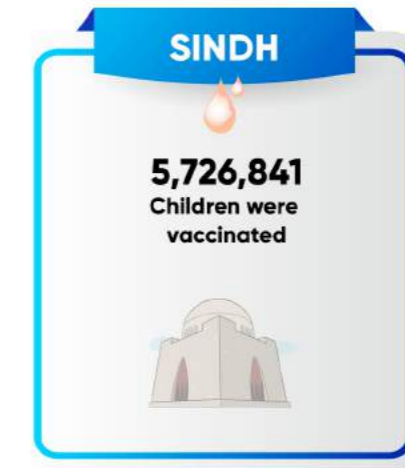
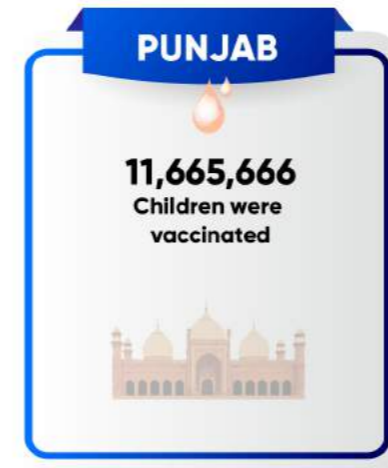
17 March in 30 districts of Sindh, Punjab and Islamabad. More than 17.8 million children under the age of five were vaccinated against paralytic poliovirus. The second phase of the campaign will begin on 10 April in 38 districts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan to immunize more than 4.12 million children.

• Renewed partnerships

Senior officials of medical associations and renowned pediatricians, including doctors from the southern districts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, attended a roundtable discussion at the NEOC and pledged their full support to the Polio Eradication Program. Partnerships were renewed with the Pakistan Medical Association, Pakistan Islamic Medical Association and Pakistan Pediatric Association to continue working on polio eradication.

Sub-National Immunization Days

Children vaccinated in March SNID Phase 1: **17,822,412**



BANNU POLIO CASE

The first child paralyzed by wild polio in 2023 is a three-year-old boy from Bannu, one of the seven polio endemic districts in southern Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

The child belongs to Bakakhel union council which borders Mir Ali tehsil of North Waziristan district – where 17 of the 20 cases last year were reported. The virus detected is genetically linked to the first case of North Waziristan in April 2022, indicating that there is ongoing transmission between North Waziristan and Bannu, and pockets of populations that have missed vaccination or only been finger-marked and not vaccinated.

As an immediate response, a house-to-house campaign was conducted in six UCs of Bannu – in Bakakhel and adjoining areas – on 21 and 22 March, while a vaccination campaign, part of the March subnational drive, is also due from 10 April to 14 April.

Monitoring of transit vaccination teams at bus terminals, railway stations and toll plazas has been strengthened this month as the number of people travelling sharply rises during Ramadan.

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Child has been paralyzed by wild poliovirus this year in Pakistan. The onset of paralysis in the three-year-old, who belongs to Bakakhel, Bannu, occurred on 20 February.

2,948

Stool samples taken from children with acute flaccid paralysis have been tested for wild poliovirus.

376

Environmental samples have been collected so far this year, of which four have tested positive for poliovirus, including one type-3 variant poliovirus sample.

293,860

Children were missed during the first phase of the March SNID, mainly due to refusals and unavailability.