

Beat: Politics

## INDIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS AND JOURNALISTS ARE PLAYING TOGETHER

### IN SUPPORT OF HEALTH PROGRAMMES

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**USPA NEWS** - Members of Parliament and journalists faced off at the third edition of the 'Batting 4 Life' Twenty20 cricket match, dedicated to raising awareness around preventable childhood diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhoea...

Members of Parliament and journalists faced off at the third edition of the 'Batting 4 Life' Twenty20 cricket match, dedicated to raising awareness around preventable childhood diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhoea. Organized under the aegis of the recently formed political coalition Political Leaders Coalition for Child and Adolescent Health (PLCCAH), the event is one of the first steps of the Trust to bring together parliamentarians and journalists to create a positive environment and provide policy direction for addressing issues related to child and adolescent health and raise awareness around cost saving methods of preventing them, such as through immunization.

The team of parliamentarians registered their first win against the journalists at Batting 4 Life, by defeating the media 82 runs. The game had the chance to have the presence of Shri Arun Jaitley, Union Finance Minister; he was joined by his cabinet colleague and Union Minister for Science, Technology and Earth Sciences Dr. Harsh Vardhan.

Some of the dignitaries who joined the session to express their support for child survival included former cricketer and BCCI selector Saba Karim, former cricketer Mohd. Kaif, Dr Rakesh Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal, Member of Parliament and Managing Trustee, PLCCAH and Shri PD Rai, MP and Member of the Governing Council.

While the journalists' team was led by Rahul Kanwal, Executive Editor, India Today Television, players on the MPs side included Babul Supriyo, Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, Manoj Tiwari, Kamlesh Paswan and Dushyant Singh among others.

As per a recently released report by John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, India tops a list of 15 countries with the highest burden of child deaths due to pneumonia and diarrhoea.

While the Indian government has shown commitment to immunize every child in the next five years, the slow rollout of the pentavalent vaccine in high-burden states and low Hib vaccine coverage nationally, coupled with the low levels of access to appropriate pneumonia and diarrhoea treatments are being pegged as the biggest challenges to lowering mortality rates.

In September, world leaders adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which strongly emphasise the need to intensify efforts to address child mortality. The SDGs aim to end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births by 2030.

However, the situation in India is quite grim; with one in every five global child deaths from diarrhoea or pneumonia occurring here, the need for an equitable, comprehensive approach to preventing and treating these diseases is critical.

Source : Political Coalition for Child and Adolescent Health

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