

## Health camp helps kick off India immunization drive

By Dan Nixon

Lakshmi Mittal immunizes a child against polio at a health camp in New Delhi. Also pictured are his wife, Usha (in turquoise); Deepak Kapur, chair of the India PolioPlus Committee (gold tie); and RI President-nominee Kalyan Banerjee. Helping to hold the child is Past RI President Rajendra K. Saboo (brown jacket). Photo courtesy of the India PolioPlus Committee Rotary International on Facebook. A free health camp in New Delhi helped set the stage for India's 10 January National Immunization Day (NID).

Organized on 7 January by the Rotary Club of Delhi South Metropolitan, Delhi, with support from the India PolioPlus Committee, the camp provided underprivileged residents with checkups, consultations, and information on a wide range of health issues.

Health camps are often held before NIDs in India to encourage people to participate in polio immunization activities. Rajashree Birla, an honorary member of the Rotary clubs of Bombay and Mulund, Maharashtra, joined Lakshmi Mittal, who leads ArcelorMittal, the world's largest steelmaker, and his wife, Usha, in inaugurating the New Delhi camp. Birla and the Mittals are major contributors to Rotary's US\$200 Million Challenge.

"It is the conscience of corporate families like them who inspire people to give so that the vulnerable and underserved can fare better in their lives," said Past RI President Rajendra K. Saboo.

"The global fight against polio is being fought mainly in four countries, which include India," said RI President-nominee Kalyan Banerjee. "It is a responsibility that we all share and at this stage must be addressed with urgency and utmost sincerity, so that children in India, mainly in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, are saved from falling prey to polio."

Rotary Foundation Trustee Ashok M. Mahajan, a member of the International PolioPlus Committee, expressed his admiration for the dedication that Birla and the Mittals demonstrated in visiting the camp.

Birla -- whose late husband, Aditya Birla, founded the Aditya Birla Group, a Fortune 500 company -- has contributed \$2 million to Rotary's challenge. She thanked Rotary for working to address the health care needs of the disadvantaged. "The disparity in the ratio of medical doctors to patients is very high in India, and there are many who remain unattended [when it comes to] medical care," she said.

Birla also called Rotary's effort to eradicate polio inspiring. She urged all people to spread the end polio message in their area of influence, including to co-workers and business associates, and leverage their connections to reach out to parents in the slums.

"Children in the age group of one to five years must be immunized against polio lest they be crippled for life," said Usha Mittal, who has made a \$1 million gift to Rotary's challenge. "My family and I feel privileged to be able to contribute to Rotary for making India polio-free."