
PLACE: Cox's Bazar

DATE: 20/06/2020

Celebrating World Refugee Day 2020 with the inauguration of Cox's Bazar's first Intensive Care Unit for refugees and local communities

Today, World Refugee Day 2020, UNHCR and the Government of Bangladesh celebrate with the inauguration of the first Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in Sadar Hospital, Cox's Bazar. This 18-bed ICU will serve the needs of refugees and local community members with the most severe coronavirus symptoms. With 10 ICU beds with life-saving ventilators, and 8 high-dependency beds, this unit is the first of its kind in Cox's Bazar.

"This ICU will fulfil the dreams of the people of Cox's Bazar and provide the highest quality assistance and health care, so people will not need to travel elsewhere. We thank UNHCR for this support" said Mr Shaimum Sarwar Kamal, Honourable Member of Parliament and chief guest at the inauguration ceremony this morning.

"We began this work at the beginning of April, led by the RRRC and with the support of the DC and UNHCR. We are delighted to see it completed" added Dr. Mohammad Mohiuddin, Superintendent of Sadar Hospital in Cox's Bazar.

The entire humanitarian community is working hand in hand with the Government of Bangladesh to ensure the maximum response capacity for affected local Bangladeshi communities as well as Rohingya refugees, with the numbers of confirmed cases in the District continues to rise.

"The people of Cox's Bazar have been waiting for this, it adds a new response capacity for the health response. I am sincerely grateful to everyone involved in the construction and installation of this facility" said the Cox's Bazar Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Kamal Hossain.

Already, UNHCR has constructed and opened two Severe Acute Respiratory Infection Isolation and Treatment facilities (SARI ITCs) in Cox's Bazar, which are providing care to refugees and Bangladeshis alike. A total of 29 patients have been discharged so far after having recovered from the virus. UNHCR and humanitarian partners have also provided training, support, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontline health workers.

This year, the number of forcibly displaced persons globally is higher than ever before at 79.5 million people – that is approximately 1 per cent of the entire global population. Durable and long-term solutions remain challenging, as pervasive conflicts continue, making it impossible for refugees to return home in safety and in dignity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the emergency situation in Cox's Bazar. UNHCR continues to call on the international community for increased

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support and solidarity with Bangladesh to respond to this double crisis, as nobody is safe until everyone is safe, including the most vulnerable in society.

“On World Refugee Day, we are proud to celebrate the resilience of refugees globally and, in particular, the Rohingya refugee population in Bangladesh. Today, with the inauguration of this Intensive Care Unit in Cox’s Bazar we can clearly see that everyone can make a difference, and that every action counts,” said Hinako Toki, Senior Operations Coordinator for UNHCR in Cox’s Bazar.

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