

Highlights

- ▶ WHO and Japan launch \$3.2 million project to support health services in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char.
- ▶ GoB-WHO monitoring meeting (GWMM) held.
- ▶ MoHFW and WHO discuss health collaboration in high-level meeting.
- ▶ Oral Cholera Vaccine Campaign: protecting Lives, One Dose at a Time!
- ▶ Turning the Tide: WHO boosts hepatitis C efforts for vulnerable Rohingya communities.
- ▶ Launching of the Bangladesh Health Workforce Strategy 2024!
- ▶ SPAR 2024: A new chapter in Bangladesh's commitment to global health security.
- ▶ WHO's CDS unit on-site evaluation of VRC!
- ▶ Initiatives taken to strengthen mental health sentinel surveillance in Bangladesh.
- ▶ WHO-BMSS observership program empowers future health leaders.

GoB-WHO Monitoring Meeting (Reviews Progress on Programme Budget 2024–2025)



GWCC participants.
Photo: Salma Sultana / WHO

The Government of Bangladesh–WHO monitoring meeting (GWMM) on the programme budget 2024–2025 was held on 21–22 January 2025 in Dhaka. This regular review meeting serves as a vital platform for collaboration between the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and WHO Bangladesh to assess progress and address implementation challenges. Mr. Md. Saidur Rahman, Secretary of the Health Service Division, attended as the Chief Guest, while Ms. Sheikh Momena Moni, Additional Secretary of the World Health Wing, presided over the session. Programme Directors, Managers, and WHO technical teams presented updates on the physical and financial progress of ongoing projects. The meeting emphasized identifying key challenges and recommending actionable solutions to further strengthen programme implementation and impact.

Japan and WHO partner to strengthen health services for over 1 million in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char.



Japan's Ambassador to Bangladesh, H.E. Mr. Saida Shinichi and Dr. Ahmed Jamsheed Mohamed, WHO Representative a.i. signed and exchanged the agreement.
Photo Credit: Salma Sultana, WHO

On 20 February 2025, the Government of Japan and the World Health Organization (WHO) signed a landmark agreement to enhance access to essential health services for more than one million people in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char, Bangladesh. This vital collaboration focuses on improving healthcare delivery and reducing preventable illness and death among Rohingya refugees and host communities. The initiative marks a significant step forward in the pursuit of Health for All, reinforcing health security and ensuring that critical healthcare reaches the most vulnerable populations. [Read more](#)

MoHFW and WHO discuss Health Collaboration in High-Level Meeting



On 26 January 2025, a high-level meeting was held between Professor Dr. Sayedur Rahman, Special Assistant to the Advisor at the MoHFW, and Dr. Ahmed Jamsheed Mohamed, WHO Representative a.i. along with Dr Rajesh Narwal, Dy WR and WHO senior management. [Read more](#)

WHO expands Hepatitis C Care for Rohingya Refugees One Year After Program Launch.



A confirmed hepatitis C patient receives life-saving medication at a WHO-supported treatment centre. Photo: Terence Ngwabe Che, WHO

One year after launching its “Hepatitis C Surveillance Linked to Treatment Services” initiative in March 2024, the World Health Organization (WHO) continues to scale up hepatitis B and C testing and treatment among Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Despite the challenges of humanitarian settings, the program offers renewed hope to tens of thousands at risk of liver cancer due to chronic hepatitis C infection. While national hepatitis C prevalence ranges between 0.2% and 1%, studies since 2019 indicate rates as high as 20% among Rohingya adults. In collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh, SEARO, and implementation partners, WHO is leading a comprehensive effort integrating screening, diagnosis, and treatment. A major milestone was achieved in February 2025, when WHO and the Government of Japan signed a new agreement supporting essential health services, with hepatitis C care as a key focus. This complements ongoing efforts by ECHO and highlights the global commitment to supporting one of the world’s most vulnerable populations. [Read more](#)

WHO and DGHS train over 160 Health Professionals in Mental Health Care across Bangladesh



Trainers and supervisors of mhGAP training, Photo: Ms Fariha Mim, WHO Bangladesh

With support from WHO Bangladesh and the NCDC Program of DGHS, a series of mhGAP training sessions were held across Bangladesh to build the capacity of healthcare providers in mental health care. Sessions in Sylhet, Khulna, Chapainawabganj,

Jashore, and Noakhali trained 122 professionals, while two Training of Trainers (ToTs) in Dhaka prepared 43 providers to deliver local trainings. The initiative strengthens early detection, treatment, and referral of mental health conditions, improving access to quality care nationwide.

Launching of the Bangladesh Health Workforce Strategy 2024!



Guests are on the dais with the Health Workforce Strategy. Photo: staff, WHO

The Bangladesh Health Workforce Strategy 2024 was officially launched on 13 January 2024 at the CIRDAP International Conference Hall in Dhaka. The event marked a significant step toward strengthening the country’s health workforce to support improved service delivery and progress toward universal health coverage.

Mrs. Nurjahan Begum, Honorable Health Advisor at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), attended the event as Chief Guest. Professor Dr. Md. Sayedur Rahman, Special Assistant to the Health Advisor, MoHFW, and Dr. Ahmed Jamsheed Mohamed, Acting WHO Representative to Bangladesh, participated as Special Guests, alongside other dignitaries and health sector stakeholders. The 2024 strategy is an updated version of the original 2015 Health Workforce Strategy, reflecting current priorities and challenges in Bangladesh’s health system. It sets a clear direction for building a resilient, well distributed, and adequately trained health workforce across the country.

Oral Cholera Vaccine Campaign: Protecting Lives, One Dose at a Time.



The Additional Secretary (Public Health Wing), supported by the Director (MIS), DGHS, administers the first OCV dose to an infant in Camp 04. Photo: Mehnaz Manzur, WHO

The landmark Oral Cholera Vaccination (OCV) campaign in Bangladesh has successfully reached over 1 million individuals in the Rohingya refugee camps and surrounding host communities.

Held from January 12-16, 2025, in Ukhiya and Teknaf, and from January 27-30, 2025, in Bhasanchar, the campaign achieved an impressive 103.4% overall coverage. This collaborative effort, led by the Government of Bangladesh in partnership with WHO, UNHCR, and health sector partners, marks a significant milestone in cholera prevention and outbreak control. [Read more](#)

Assessment of Blood Transfusion Services in Bangladesh



Participants from the meeting. Photo: Staff, WHO

On March 24, 2023, WHO organized a dissemination program to present the findings of the first comprehensive assessment of Bangladesh's blood transfusion services since 2011. The study highlighted significant achievements, including strengthened screening practices and improved policy frameworks. However, it also identified persistent challenges such as an overreliance on family donors, blood wastage, and limited services at the sub-district level.

The assessment, conducted in collaboration with the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and various stakeholders, focused on eight core areas ranging from infrastructure to voluntary blood donation. Key recommendations include strengthening regulatory oversight, promoting voluntary donations, enhancing workforce training, and expanding service availability at lower administrative levels. As Bangladesh moves toward achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030, the assessment offers critical guidance for enhancing the accessibility, safety, and quality of blood transfusion services nationwide.

Capacity Building on Suicide Prevention for Filmmakers and Stage Professionals in Bangladesh.



A confirmed hepatitis C patient receives life-saving medication at a WHO-supported treatment centre. Photo: Terence Ngwabe Che, WHO

As part of the "Capacity Building on Suicide Prevention for Filmmakers and Others Working on Stage and Screen in Bangladesh" initiative, a successful workshop was held on 6 March 2025 at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Over thirty experts from mental health, media, and cultural sectors finalized resource materials and a poster on suicide prevention. The workshop, moderated by Dr. Mahbubur Rahman and Dr. Muntasir Maruf, also focused on enhancing the portrayal of suicides in media and theatre.

SPAR 2024: A New Chapter in Bangladesh's Commitment to Global Health Security



In alignment with the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005), Bangladesh successfully completed and submitted its 2024 State Party Self Assessment Annual Reporting (SPAR) tool in February 2025. This collaborative exercise, which followed the country's second Joint External Evaluation (JEE) conducted in July 2024, brought together stakeholders from health and non-health sectors to assess national core capacities in public health preparedness and response. Notably, the process was enhanced using the SPAR Support Tool, ensuring greater objectivity and evidence-based reporting. Bangladesh achieved an all-capacity average score of 69% above both regional and global averages demonstrating strong commitment to health security despite a slight dip from the previous year. This initiative underscores the nation's continued efforts to strengthen multisectoral collaboration and align with global benchmarks in health emergency preparedness & response.

WHO's on-site evaluation of Venom Research Centre (VRC)



A team from WHO-BAN CDS unit conducted an on-site evaluation of the Venom Research Centre (VRC) to monitor the use of 97 items of equipment provided by WHO for strengthening VRC's capacity to produce country-specific anti-snake venom, following WHO guidelines. While the equipment was delivered and found to be

functional, the team identified several operational challenges. The VRC faces delays in equipment setup due to limited space, though Chittagong Medical College has promised a new lab area without a set date. Operations will continue in the current facility, with improved coordination and a well-maintained inventory. With right support, VRC is able to grow into a vital contributor to healthcare and research in Bangladesh under WHO guideline.

Strengthening Mental Health Sentinel Surveillance in Bangladesh.



Training to strengthen mental health sentinel surveillance at Dakshin Surma Upazila Health Complex (UHC), Sylhet. Photo: Staff, WHO

A series of orientation sessions were held to enhance capacity for mental health sentinel surveillance in Bangladesh. Sessions took place at the Bholahat Upazila Health Complex (UHC) in Chapainawabganj on 3 February, Dakshin Surma UHC in Sylhet on 5 February, and Manirampur UHC in Jessore on 13 February. Attendees included Dr. Mahbubur Rahman, Director (In Charge) of NIMH, Dr. Muntasir Maruf, Associate Professor at NIMH, along with Civil Surgeons and Upazila Health and Family Planning Officers from Chapainawabganj, Sylhet, and Jashore. The sessions focused on evaluating clinical outcomes of mental health services and promoting the use of mhGAP (Mental Health Gap Action Programme) for better monitoring and data collection in routine care. This initiative aims to improve mental health surveillance and inform mental healthcare needs more effectively.

Celebration of International Women's Day with enthusiasm and commitment



World Health Day group photo at WHO office. Photo: Salma Sultana/WHO

With the theme "Empower Her, Empower the World," WHO Bangladesh staff celebrated International Women's Day 2025.

session was held on this occasion, during which all staff participated in an informative discussion, actively listening to others and learning from their experiences. The staff collectively committed to celebrating the rights, equality, and empowerment of all women and girls.

WHO-BMSS observership program empowers future health leaders.



Participants are with WHO Representative at WHO office. Photo: Salma Sultana, WHO

Dhaka, February 2025 – The WHO Country Office for Bangladesh, in collaboration with the Bangladesh Medical Students' Society (BMSS), successfully completed the second round of its Observership Program from 9–20 February 2025. Five selected medical students gained hands-on experience in WHO's technical operations, including work in Non-Communicable Diseases, Mental Health, Health Systems, Immunization, and Emergency Preparedness. BMSS remains the only medical student organization in Bangladesh formally partnered with WHO on youth capacity-building initiatives. Through technical placements, field visits, and strategic dialogues, participants engaged in real-time public health planning and policy implementation.

Field visits included the National Institute of Mental Health, BADAS, and the National Heart Foundation, where students observed WHO-supported health programs and interacted with professionals. A highlight was a dialogue session with global health leaders Dr. Thomas R. Frieden and Dr. Ahmed Jamsheed Mohamed, focusing on leadership, data-driven policy, and youth engagement.

The program concluded with a certificate ceremony recognizing participants' contributions. WHO Bangladesh and BMSS reaffirmed their commitment to nurturing the next generation of health leaders through expanded collaboration in future cycles.

Spotlight!

- ▶ Early Warning, Alert and Response System (EWARS)
- ▶ WHO Cox's Bazar: Rohingya emergency crisis situation report
- ▶ Health Sector Bulletin
- ▶ Bangladesh COVID 19 Situation Report
- ▶ WR's sound bites

Upcoming

World Health day 2025 Celebration
National Nutrition Week
Immunization Week

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