

# Newsletter

ISSUE 20 | Jan — Mar 2024

## Highlights:

- Regional Director of SEAR Saima Wazed met with Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh.
- RD officially inaugurated the WHO Bangladesh Country Office!
- RD, SEAR visited Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery
- RD met United Nation Country Team! National Medical Education Strategy in Bangladesh!
- Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct training for Cox's Bazar staff
- National Steering Committee (NSC) Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) containment
- Workshop on Aligning Bangladesh's One Health Initiatives with One Health Joint Plan of Action
- GWCC Meeting held on March 2024!
- WHO's Healthy City initiative in Khulna
- Integration of ICD-11 into Bangladesh Electronic health record.

## Regional Director officially inaugurate the WHO Bangladesh Country office!



RD of SEAR Ms Saima Wazed, officially inaugurated the new WHO country office. Photo: Reazwanul Haque/WHO

Regional Director of SEAR, Saima Wazed, officially inaugurated the new WHO country office on March 24, 2024. She was warmly welcomed by the WHO Representative to Bangladesh and staff. Following the inauguration ceremony, Ms. Wazed embarked on a tour of the office to acquaint herself with the facilities. The RD participated in a town hall meeting attended by all staff members of the country office and field staff offices, both in-person and virtually. During the meeting, staff had the opportunity to directly address Ms. Wazed with their requests and seek her advice on various matters. The Regional Director expressed her gratitude to the WHO Bangladesh Family for their warm welcome and assured them of her continued support to the WHO Country Office.

## The Regional Director met the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina, MP



RD of SEAR Ms Saima Wazed, officially met with the honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, Photo: MOH&FW

Regional Director of Southeast Asia, Saima Wazed, embarked on her mission in Bangladesh with a significant meeting with the honorable Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, on 22 March 2024, at Gonobhaban. In her capacity representing the World Health Organization (WHO), Ms Wazed committed to supporting Bangladesh in strengthening the capacity of physicians and healthcare professionals, with a particular emphasis on addressing diseases related to climate change and achieving universal health coverage. Prime Minister Hasina, during the meeting, lauded Bangladesh's commendable strides in the health sector, underscoring the ongoing initiatives to combat breast cancer and expand health infrastructure across the region. [Read more](#)



The King of Bhutan and RD, WHO SEAR visited Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, Photo: MOH&FW

## Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery visit!

His Excellency the King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk, and by WHO Regional Director Ms. Saima Wazed, visited the Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery. During the visit, Health Minister Dr. Samanta Lal Sen provided a briefing about the institute, detailing its functions and services.



## RD met UNCT members and development partners!



RD's meeting with UNCT. Photo: Reazwanul Haque/WHO



RD's meeting with partners. Photo: Reazwanul Haque/WHO

On March 27, 2024, the Regional Director of WHO SEAR Ms Saima Wazed attended two significant meetings. Initially, RD participated in a session with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), during which she received updates on the commendable work undertaken by various UN agencies in Bangladesh. Ms. Wazed commended their efforts and expressed her keenness to forge closer collaboration with the UNCT moving forward. Subsequently, she engaged in an informal consultation with partners, attentively listening to their insights and perspectives. As representatives shared their ideas on potential areas of collaboration, Ms. Wazed assured them of the full support of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the health sector in the coming days. This reaffirmed WHO's dedication to building robust partnerships and working collaboratively towards enhancing healthcare outcomes in Bangladesh.

## WHO implements large-scale Ivermectin-based MDA for one million Rohingya refugees

In collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh and Health Sector partners, WHO Bangladesh is spearheading a Mass Drug Administration (MDA) campaign aimed at addressing the prevalence of scabies among Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, targeting a staggering 1 million people across 33 camps, marking the world's largest MDA for scabies." [Read more](#)



Dr Jorge, Head of sub-office delivered his speech at the event. Photo Cox's Bazar staff/WHO

## 1st National Medical Education Strategy in Bangladesh!



Honorable Health Minister, WR and HOSO in a conversation. Photo: Mr Terence /Cox's Bazar

In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the MOHFW initiated the development of a comprehensive national medical education strategy, which will guide the transformation of medical education in the country. A key milestone of this process was the Medical College Principal's conference held on 16<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. [Read more](#)

## Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct training for Cox's Bazar staff



Ms Pudentienne facilitated the session. Photo Cox's Bazar staff/WHO

From March 19th to 21st, 2024, the WSO Cox's Bazar PRS Team organized capacity-building training at Hotel Sayeman in Cox's Bazar for WHO third-party contract staff. Divided into three batches, a total of 118 staff members participated, including 103 males and 15 females from various programs such as NCD, Health Care Waste Management, Tuberculosis (TB), Laboratory, Epidemiology, and IVD.

The primary objective of the training was to raise awareness and enhance knowledge among the workforce regarding Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct (PRSM) and other abusive behaviors. Through engaging discussions, the sessions emphasized the importance of preventing and addressing such behaviors within the workplace.

Facilitators guided participants through key elements of the newly launched policy on preventing and addressing sexual misconduct (PASM) and informed them about existing reporting mechanisms and channels for sexual misconduct.



### National Steering Committee (NSC) Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Containment



Participants of the meeting. Photo: WHO/HS

The Communicable Disease Control (CDC) division of DGHS, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, with support from WHO, organized the meeting of the National Steering Committee on AMR containment on 18th February 2024 at the Bangladesh Secretariat. The agenda for the NSC meeting was to approve the National Strategic Plan for the Antimicrobial Resistance Containment Program (ARC) (2023-2028) in Bangladesh. Dr Shamonto Lal Sen Honorable Minister, MOH&FW & President of the Steering Committee, Mr Abdur Rahman, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and Co-chair of the committee. Md Jahangir Alam, Secretary, HSD, DG of DGHS, DGDA and DLS, and representatives of other development partners attended the meeting including WHO. Prof. Dr. Md. Nazmul Islam, Line Director of CDC presented the AMR situation in Bangladesh, activities done by the ARC programme of CDC, and a detailed overview of the National Strategic Plan. The Honorable Health Minister recommended strengthening existing ARC activities with a focus on countrywide awareness and enforcement of the drug and cosmetics law to restrict OTC antibiotics selling without the registered practitioner's prescription.

### WHO Bangladesh celebrated International Women's Day 2024

WHO Bangladesh staff association took the initiative to celebrate International Women's Day internally on March 7, 2024. By aligning with the UN's broader theme of "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress," WHO staff not only embraced an important global message but also showcased their dedication to fostering an environment that prioritizes gender equality and women's empowerment.



As part of celebration, WR cut the Cake.  
Photo: Salma Sultana/WHO

### Workshop on Aligning Bangladesh's One Health Initiatives with One Health Joint Plan of Action



Group Photo from the event. Photo: WHO/AMR

A three days' workshop was organized by Bangladesh One Health Secretariat with technical support from World Health Organization (WHO) with aims to align the Bangladesh's One Health Initiatives with One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA) at Hotel Le Meridien in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 27 - 29 February 2024. The overall objective of the workshop was to support the ongoing One Health initiatives of Bangladesh led by the One Health Secretariat and update the current One Health Strategy Framework 2017-2021 (its life span expired now) to One Health Strategy Framework 2024-2030, aligning and harmonizing it with the global OH JPA comprising Six Action Tracks and Three Pathways of Change, and lessons learned from COVID-19 pandemic. This was done in close consultation and involvement of the key stakeholders of One Health that include the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, the Ministry of the Environment and Forests, the Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant ministries and agencies.

The workshop brought together a total of 80 participants from human health, animal health, and wildlife and environment health officials, Quadripartite organizations (regional and country offices), and international partner organizations such as USAID, UNICEF, US CDC etc. The workshop took an interactive and adult learning approach, where presentations were interspersed with interactive group work sessions. A partners' meeting was also organized between quadripartite and international partner organizations (World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), USAID) to improve coordination and collaboration in implementing One Health activities in Bangladesh.



Participants are contributing their inputs in the advocacy event.  
Photo: WHO/AMR



## GWCC Meeting held on March 2024!

The Government of Bangladesh and the WHO Coordination Committee (GWCC) meeting was held on March 5, 2024, at the Bangladesh Secretariat in Dhaka. This significant gathering aimed to revisit the minutes and decisions of previous sessions, deliberate on the successes of the WHO collaborative programs for the biennium 2022-2023, and unveil the Biennial Workplan for 2024-2025. The meeting was jointly presided over by the Honorable Secretary of the Health Services Division and the WHO Representative to Bangladesh, symbolizing a strong partnership between Bangladesh and the World Health Organization.

Key discussions highlighted major strides in health system strengthening, disease management, and emergency preparedness and response. The meeting concluded with a forward-looking perspective, setting the next session for September 2024.



Participants at the meeting. Photo: MOHFW staff

## WHO's Healthy City initiative in Khulna!

In continuation of the efforts of Khulna City Corporation (KCC) and the Noncommunicable Disease Control Programme (NCDC) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) to make Khulna City ACTIVE and cleaner, a public Open Gym (OG) has been established with support from WHO in Solar park of Khulna city. The new open gym was inaugurated on 31 January 2024 at Solar Park in Khulna city. The Mayor of KCC, WR, WHO representative to Bangladesh, and Programme Manager of NCDC, DGHS jointly inaugurated the OG. Various senior government officials both from health and non-health sectors, nongovernment organizations, media, and local community members were present during the Inauguration.



Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque of Khulna City Corporation is using open GYM equipment after inauguration.

## Training for WHO SIMO network!



Group photo. Photo: IVD/WHO

From March 17 to 22, 2024, the WCO Bangladesh IVD Unit organized a measles outbreak training and Simulation Exercise (SimEx) for Surveillance and Immunization Medical Officers (SIMOs) and Divisional Coordinators (DCs) in Dhaka. The primary objective of this training was to equip SIMOs and DCs with the necessary skills to effectively respond to measles outbreaks in a timely manner. Notably, the training also included tabletop exercises simulating measles and polio outbreaks.

The training arranged in two batches to make more interactive sessions where total 65 participants from all the districts including Cox's Bazar emergency immunization team participated. Dr. Sudhir Khanal, Regional Adviser- Accelerated Disease Control, SEARO acted as the main facilitator of the training program.

## Integration of ICD-11 into Bangladesh Electronic health record.

With technical assistance from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Government of Bangladesh has initiated a pilot program integrating ICD-11 into the hospital automation system (OpenMRS) across three district hospitals. A joint team comprising government officials, representatives from the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office, and the WHO country office visited Cumilla General Hospital to assess the implementation status and challenges associated with the utilization of ICD-11.



Discussion with physicians while reporting morbidity using the ICD-11 classification system



# Knowledge Management & Capacity Building Update

## WHO Bangladesh Participated in Global Meeting of ATACH



Group photo of SEARO ATACH team. Photo: Environmental Health Unit

Representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in Bangladesh participated in the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH) Global Meeting, held in Madrid, Spain, from March 4 to 7, 2024. This gathering was pivotal for ATACH's broader objectives, focusing on the exchange of experiences and knowledge, enhancing coordination and collaboration, and addressing the specific needs of countries in implementing key global climate and health commitments.

The meeting saw participation from representatives of 80 ATACH member countries, alongside various stakeholders from voluntary organizations, international corporate groups, philanthropic foundations, academic institutions, WHO regional and country offices, and specialists in climate change and health. These participants shared their experiences and insights on developing climate-resilient and low-carbon health systems.

## Promotional materials on My health, my right!



## Follow WHO/BAN Social Media Platforms

[Website](#)  
[Facebook](#)  
[You Tube](#)  
[Twitter \(X\)](#)  
[Instagram](#)  
[LinkedIn](#)

Follow WHO on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#), [Pinterest](#), [Snapchat](#), [YouTube](#), [Twitch](#)

## Enhancing Research through Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Journal



The New Editorial Board Members brainstorming on Journal Improvement with External Editors. Photo: External Photographer

The World Health Organization (WHO) Bangladesh has been supporting the capacity building of academia on research to encourage good quality ethical research stimulating a positive research culture in Bangladesh. The WHO has conducted training of teachers of post-graduate medical courses in Government institutes, medical colleges, and universities.

Recently, the Research and Publication unit of WHO Bangladesh was represented in the meeting held on 20 March 2024 at BSMMU. The BSMMU Journal has progressed considerably since 2023, in terms of enhancing the quality of publications and indexing. Its current submission-to-acceptance time is forty days reduced from about three hundred days. It has achieved indexing by several authorities.

The editorial board expressed their heartfelt gratitude towards WHO for its support in research capacity building of teachers and enhancing the quality of the Journal in 2023.

It is mentionable that, the WHO has been supporting BSMMU including BSMMU Journal for capacity building, quality improvement, and indexing since 2023 respectively. Further support to improve the journal management platform, journal function, and indexing is planned.

## Spotlight!

[Dengue Situation Report](#)

[Bangladesh COVID 19 Situation Report](#)

[Early Warning, Alert and Response System \(EWARS\)](#)

# UPCOMING

**Social Media Campaign on My health, my right!**

**Social media campaign on Immunization week!**