

PLACE

Cox's Bazar

DATE

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## Kite Festival in Cox's Bazar sends message of solidarity with Rohingya refugees



UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency together with Cox's Bazar authorities, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and Artolution, organized a Kite Festival at Cox's Bazar sea beach, to bring people together and celebrate the solidarity shown to Rohingya refugees generously hosted in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh, which saw its own people becoming refugees 52 years ago this month, has showed solidarity with Rohingya refugees who were forced to flee their homes in Myanmar, amidst terrible violence and persecution. Building on the generosity of the Cox's Bazar residents, the event echoed messages of friendship and empathy, as families elevated their kites with inspirational messages.

"Today we want to raise and fly our kites to remind ourselves that we were all children once and we all had hopes and dreams. We look forward to building capacities of refugee children to help them to return home safely and contribute to the long-term recovery and reconstruction of their communities in Myanmar, when it is safe to do so," said Yoko Akasaka, the Principal Situation Coordinator of UNHCR in Cox's Bazar. "We reiterate our commitment to continue working with the government of Bangladesh as well as for the people of Cox's Bazar," she added.

Inspired by Bangladeshi tradition, the festival reflects the culture of unity and friendship. Hundreds of guests flew kites carrying messages of solidarity with refugees. The program became more vibrant with murals painted live by participants, a music performance by Rohingya refugees, and local food made by Bangladeshi entrepreneurs, showing how art and culture can inspire peace.

"This kite festival reminds me of my childhood. I am so happy to see this. The joy I see on people's face is incredible and I think such programs need to be organised frequently. This builds friendship and solidarity", said Md. Zillur Rahman, the Superintendent of Tourist Police in Cox's Bazar after flying a kite.

The kites with messages of friendship from Cox's Bazar will soon reach the Rohingya refugees sheltered in the camps.

Md. Shahinul Haque Marshal, the Chairman of Cox's Bazar District Council said, "I am delighted to see this kite festival taking place in our city where we cherish diversity and solidarity. I request the organizers to organize such events more frequently and help us move forward with our tradition and culture".

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