PRESS RELEASE

PLACE
Cox's Bazar

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Rohingya team wins World Refugee Day solidarity football match in Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya refugee football team won the World Refugee Day Solidarity Football Tournament in Cox's Bazar. The event, organized by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and partners BRAC and Action Aid, brought together refugees, host community members, humanitarian workers, and government representatives for a day of football, friendship, and unity.

The thrilling final match ended in a 2-0 victory for the Rohingya footballers over a team of humanitarian and government representatives. The Rohingya team is part of the camp-based Arakan Rohingya Football Federation, which includes members from all 33 refugee camps.

In the end, the Rohingya team lifted the trophy, cheered by supporters from across the camps and host communities.

The tournament was organized to mark World Refugee Day, commemorated annually on 20 June, and show how sport can bring people together. It provided an opportunity for refugees and others to connect, build friendships, and enjoy a positive day together.

Emdad Ullah, coach of the Rohingya team, said sport gives refugees hope and a chance to escape the hardships of daily life. "It brings people together and helps us look forward," he said. Team captain Aptar Hossain said he was proud to represent the Rohingya community. "We hope one day we can return home safely and play football in our own country again," he said.

After the match, UNHCR Representative in Bangladesh Ivo Freijsen highlighted the resilience of refugees around the world and their determination to rebuild their lives despite immense challenges.

"At UNHCR, we witness this strength every day among the Rohingya refugees living here," he said.

Freijsen added that the event provided an opportunity to honour the perseverance of Rohingya refugees while also recognizing the remarkable generosity and solidarity of the Government of Bangladesh and the host community.

"Their continued support remains essential to the safety and survival of the refugees," he said. Beyond the result, the event highlighted the power of sport to promote inclusion, teamwork, and mental well-being. Against the backdrop of the World Cup, the tournament also gave refugee youth a chance to show their talent and determination — half a world away, in Cox's Bazar.

While the trophy went to one team, the day's biggest achievement was bringing people together through football. The tournament highlighted the talent and resilience of refugee youth while strengthening connections between refugees, host communities, humanitarian workers, and government representatives.

Held under the World Refugee Day theme, "Until Everyone is Safe," the event underscored the importance of solidarity, protection, and dignity for refugees.

As the final whistle blew, players from both teams celebrated together, reflecting the spirit of World Refugee Day: solidarity, respect, and hope.

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