



## BEYOND RECYCLING HOW A PLASTIC FACILITY BECAME A PILLAR OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

**634**

Community members, including waste workers, women, children, and the elderly, supported with essential healthcare services.

In the quiet village of Mithaichory in Cox's Bazar, a remarkable transformation has been unfolding, not just of plastic waste, but of lives.

Where mountains of discarded waste once stood, a new symbol of resilience now rises: the Plastic Recycling Facility, established by BRAC under the PLEASE Project, with crucial support from Cox's Bazar Municipality. While the facility's primary mission is environmental, recycling single-use and multi-layer plastics to curb marine pollution, it has grown into something far greater. It has become a place of hope and healing for the people who live nearby.

On February 27 and again on June 28, 2025, the facility took on a new role as a bridge between sustainability and human dignity. The nearby Mithaichory school transformed into a free medical camp, welcoming community members from all walks of life. From waste workers and marginalised families to women, children, and the elderly, 634 people sought care at the camp. The medical camp ensured all these individuals received essential treatment without financial burden.

The camps, organized with the help of local healthcare professionals, featured an array of vital services:

- Free glaucoma tests help detect early warning signs of vision loss.
- Blood tests to diagnose unseen health issues.
- Dermatology consultations, offering care and dignity to those who've lived with untreated skin conditions.
- Pediatric advice, especially cherished by mothers who had never seen a child specialist before.
- Gynaecological care, bringing essential reproductive health services to local women.
- General medical consultations for a wide range of ailments.
- And most critically, free medicines, ensuring participants had essential over-the-counter medicines

Behind every test and prescription was a story of perseverance, community, and relief. One mother, cradling her baby while waiting to see a paediatrician, mentioned, “This is the first time I’ve seen a child doctor so close to our home.” Her words reflect a truth shared by many: these health camps weren’t just about physical health. They were about being seen, heard, and cared for.

In February, 329 individuals (135 male, 194 female) received care. In June, another 305 people (119 male, 186 female) came through the doors. All were welcomed with open arms, regardless of background or means.

These two events are part of nine medical camps conducted under the PLEASE Grant by BRAC. While seven were held within Cox’s Bazar Municipality, the Mithaichory camps hold a special place. They reflect the Plastic Recycling Facility’s deep-rooted commitment to its community, proving that environmental interventions must also prioritise human well-being.





The June camp marked a milestone in collaboration. For the first time, BRAC partnered with the Centre for Development Innovation and Practices (CDIP), one of the Bangladesh Petrochemical Company Limited (BPCL)'s partners under the PLEASE Project's Regional Block Grant. This union brought in new expertise, extended the camp's reach, and underscored the power of partnership in creating meaningful change.

Supported by Mr. Mizanur Rahman, Member of the Dokkhin Mithaichory Union Parishad, and a dedicated team of doctors, health workers, and volunteers, the camps succeeded not just in providing care but in building trust. Trust between the project and the people it serves. Trust in a shared future where both people and planet can heal together.

As BRAC and the PLEASE Project continue their work to intercept plastic before it reaches the ocean, the team carries forward a powerful lesson: true sustainability begins when communities are not only included but uplifted.



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