AKHS launches Emergency Response Centre for COVID-19 patients in Mastuj (Chitral)

Mastuj, Pakistan, 4 July 2020 - A 20-bed emergency response centre for COVID-19 patients, established by the Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan (AKHS,P), was inaugurated in Mastuj, Upper Chitral.

The Centre follows similar emergency response centres recently established at Booni and Garamchashma that respond to the rising number of infections in the districts of Upper and Lower Chitral. Construction for the purpose-built facility has been carried out by the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat.

Twenty-three (23) staff, including 6 doctors, 6 nurses and 2 nursing assistants will dedicate their time to the facility. The Centre will provide care to COVID-19 patients with mild and moderate symptoms, and 10 of the 20 beds have been reserved for female patients.

The Centre was inaugurated by Mr Moazzam Khan Bangash, Assistant Commissioner (AC), Mastuj. Also present at the event was Dr Shahzada Haider-ul-Mulk, District Health Officer, Lower Chitral.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Chief Guest, Mr Moazzam Khan Bangash, AC, Mastuj, said: “In case someone contracts COVID-19, it is their civic responsibility to step forward and seek treatment. This way timely treatment can be provided to the patient and the disease is not spread to others. We welcome this facility established by Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan, which is the need of the hour.” He also urged those present to practice physical distancing and proper hygiene.

Dr Shahzada Haidar-ul-Mulk, District Health Officer, Lower Chitral, said: “The COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis like no other for which the private sector and the government need to work together to respond to. Every intervention makes a difference, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan, to improve the situation in Chitral.”

Mr Miraj Uddin, Regional Head for Chitral, Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan said: “We value the service rendered by the dedicated health personnel staffing the Emergency Response Centre for COVID-19 Patients. Healthcare workers have been equipped with essential equipment and supplies, including medicines and personal protective equipment.” He went on to say: “Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan, is committed to work shoulder to shoulder with the government to respond to this pandemic.”

In June, a 20-bed Emergency Response Centre was inaugurated in Garamchashma, and in May, a 28-bed Emergency Response Centre for COVID-19 Patients was inaugurated in Booni. Special arrangements have also been made to accommodate COVID-19 patients in a quarantine centre in Booni.
Additionally, to supplement existing services in Upper and Lower Chitral, Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan (AKHS-P)’s facilities have been further strengthened to facilitate COVID-19 patients at both the primary and the secondary levels. The Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) and global health experts have also provided training to AKHS-P clinical personnel on various aspects of COVID-19 related treatment, including managing critical patients, waste management, handling PPE kits, screening strategies, and collecting, as well as storing and transporting specimen. In collaboration with AKUH, AKHS-P has also extended support for testing patients for COVID-19 locally to the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The COVID-19 response has taken place without any interruption to the primary and secondary healthcare services that AKHS-P offers through its broad network of 30 basic health centres, three comprehensive health centres and one medical centre across Chitral.

Similarly, all clinical units continue to offer secondary care services, with the Aga Khan Medical Centre, Booni, offering several specialised services, including doctor consultations and telemedicine facilities.

AKHS-P, working with the Government and private institutions has also worked to raise awareness about COVID-19 through their staff, including health workers. Various activities at different forums and at the grass roots level have been conducted to ensure that communities, including those in remote and far-to-reach areas, are equipped with essential information to take appropriate preventive measures for COVID-19.

For more information and interview requests, please contact:

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NOTE

Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan (AKHS-P), an ISO 9001:2015 certified organisation, provides equitable, service oriented, innovative and community-based health services through four strategic objectives: supporting government health policies and plans; supporting health needs of catchment and target populations; increasing sustainability of operations; and contributing to global standards in health and health care. For more information visit https://www.akdn.org/our-agencies/aga-khan-health-services.