

DROWNING PREVENTION



Nirapode Bhasa project is launched to build resilience in drowning prevention amid climate challenges

The Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh (CIPRB) has launched a new project, “Nirapode Bhasa” (Floatsafe), aimed at strengthening drowning prevention efforts to withstand emerging risks and challenges—particularly in the context of climate change. Implemented in collaboration with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and the Princess Charlene of Monaco Foundation, the Nirapode Bhasa Project will run between 2025 and 2026 in Bakerganj upazila of Barishal district and Taltoli upazila of Barguna district.

Drawing on eight years of experience, learnings, and challenges from the “Project Bhasa” initiative, this new project seeks to make drowning prevention programs more adaptable and resilient. The project officially began in January 2025 with the project planning workshops at field and head office level. The head office level planning workshop was attended by RNLI representatives, CIPRB’s Deputy Executive Director Dr. Aminur Rahman, the head office team, and area coordinators from both implementation sites. RNLI Bangladesh representative Shakina Ismail facilitated several sessions. A follow-up session took place on 26 February 2025 at the CIPRB office, where final decisions were made on key project management issues, including partnership coordination and financial management. As the previously worked area, Taltoli field is continuing the project activities with adaptation. project initiation and preparatory work are in progress at Bakerganj as the newly selected field area.

With a focus on enhancing the resilience of drowning prevention interventions against the backdrop of climate change, Nirapode Bhasa marks a significant step forward in safeguarding vulnerable communities from water-related hazards in southern Bangladesh.

What we want to achieve?

- ▶ Identifying effective ways to protect children from drowning risk in the context of environmental and societal changes.
- ▶ Strengthening the adaptability, resilience, and inclusiveness of drowning prevention efforts.
- ▶ Engaging policymakers and other stakeholders to foster awareness, collaboration, and exchanging knowledge to prevent child drowning.

Broader activities of Nirapode Bhasa

- ▶ Operate childcare centers and lifesaving swimming training (SwimSafe) as the effective models for child drowning prevention.
- ▶ Take proactive measures to secure the availability of trained staff, childcare workers, and swimming instructors for the effective and uninterrupted delivery of interventions.
- ▶ Developing capacity and adaptability in the local perspective to cope with extreme weather and shifting seasonal patterns.
- ▶ To develop a quality, safe, inclusive and integrated 'SwimSafe' model for the government and other implementers and provide technical support to amplifying nationwide.

Exchange of innovative design solutions ideas between CIPRB and Design without Border

As a part of collaborative project aiming knowledge sharing and advancing design practices to support drowning prevention efforts in both Bangladesh and Uganda, Notan Chandra Dutta, Research Manager and Mirza Shibat Rowshan, Human Centered Design Specialist of Sonamoni Project were invited to visit at office of Desing without Borders Africa (DwB), Uganda. The objective of their visit was to foster knowledge sharing on development of Human Centered Design (HCD) technique and exchange best practices of drowning prevention from both countries.

During the visit, Notan and Shibat participated a four-day ideation workshop with the fisher community near Lake Victoria, organized by DwB. In the workshop, different Human Centered Design (HCD) tools were used along with other group

activities to generate and refine ideas for the solutions. Utilizing human-centered design (HCD) techniques, the Sonamoni Project is working to identify and prioritize potential solutions, develop prototypes, and assess the acceptability of the interventions to reduce drowning deaths among U-2 years old children.

Bournemouth University is coordinated the project in collaboration with the Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh (CIPRB), University of the West of England, Bristol, Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), Southampton University, and Design without Borders Africa (DwB) from Uganda. This research project is granted by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) through their Research and Innovation for Global Health Transformation programme.



GPH Ispat Onboarded as new partner in Lifesaving

SeaSafe is proud to announce a landmark partnership that marks a new chapter in community-driven coastal safety—GPH Ispat, one of Bangladesh's leading steel manufacturers, has stepped forward to support lifeguard services across three key beaches in Cox's Bazar for a period of six months. This commitment positions GPH Ispat as the first local corporate partner to be officially onboarded into the SeaSafe initiative, aligning their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts with a life-saving mission.

This partnership not only brings vital resources to sustain professional lifeguard services but also sets a powerful example of how the private sector can play a transformative role in protecting lives along

Bangladesh's vulnerable coastlines. The support from GPH Ispat will directly contribute to the deployment of trained lifeguards, maintenance of safety equipment, and the continued delivery of drowning prevention interventions—ensuring the safety of thousands of locals and tourists who visit these popular beaches every day.

This collaboration underscores a growing recognition within the business community of the importance of investing in public safety and sustainable development. We thank GPH Ispat for their visionary support and hope this milestone inspires more local partners to join the cause of saving lives and building a safer coastal future for Bangladesh.



RNLI Team visited Nirapode Bhasa project to strengthen local engagement and SeaSafe project to strengthen lifeguard services



A three-member delegation from the RNLI, Darren Williams, Zrinka Delic, and Nick Ayers, visited 'Nirapode Bhasa' project aimed to strengthen collaboration and explore strategies for inclusive drowning prevention interventions, particularly for children with disabilities. RNLI and CIPRB met with CBM Global-Bangladesh to discuss on integrating disability-inclusive approaches into the project, especially for survival swimming programme. CBM contributed valuable insights from rights-based and technical perspectives and identified potential areas of support.

During the field visit, the RNLI team visited multiple project sites in Taltali Upazila and the newly established project area- Bakerganj Upazila. Planning meetings were held, offering opportunities for direct guidance and feedback. The delegation noted the innovative approaches, improved coordination, and strengthened team spirit among CIPRB staff.

Further discussions and engagements included meetings with local government officials, such as the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), reinforcing collaboration and highlighting the importance of administrative support in ensuring project success. The visit also included a meeting with a local NGO CODEC in Barishal. This meeting focused on identifying and including children with disabilities in survival swimming lessons through targeted outreach and tailored support.



RNLI team visited the SeaSafe project in Cox's Bazar to conduct a comprehensive assessment of lifeguard service operations and jointly plan the 2025 programme.

The team carried out an in-depth review of daily lifeguard routines, including equipment setup, leadership briefings, documentation, communication, and hazard response across shifts. Detailed observations were followed by structured sessions on monitoring tools, budgeting, performance evaluation, and leadership training for lifeguard supervisors and senior team members. The visit culminated in the collaborative development of the 2025 SeaSafe workplan, marking a strengthened commitment to enhancing coastal safety and lifesaving capacity in Bangladesh through local-global partnerships.

Wärtsilä Bangladesh equips SeaSafe lifeguard service with 2 world-class rescue boards

Wärtsilä Bangladesh Ltd. has donated two professional grade rescue boards from the UK to the SeaSafe Lifeguard service. This initiative marks a vital contribution to enhancing the lifesaving capacity of one of the country's busiest tourist destinations. It will expand the operational effectiveness and increase the efficiency of rescue missions in challenging surf conditions. This contribution underlines Wärtsilä Bangladesh's broader commitment to supporting Bangladesh's development through tangible investments in safety, resilience, and social impact.

"These boards are more than just equipment, they're a sustainable investment into the millions of visitors' safety who frequent Cox's Bazar every year," "Designed to last over decades, they will significantly aid lifeguards in rapid water rescues and critical emergency responses along the beaches of Cox's Bazar." - said a Wärtsilä representative.





National Advisory Group's enormous contribution and guidance from the commencement of Sonamoni Project

The third meeting of the National Advisory Group (NAG) for the Sonamoni Project was held on 25 March 2025 at the DGHS conference room, Mohakhali, Dhaka. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Dr. Syed Zakir Hossain, Line Director, NCDC, DGHS, with active participation from all group members.

Dr. Aminur Rahman, Deputy Executive Director of CIPRB, presented a review of key points from the second meeting and shared project updates. Members engaged in a productive discussion, offering valuable feedback on the proposed interventions for childhood drowning prevention and reached a consensus on progressing to the next phase.

Nirapode Bhasa project is fostering team learning and leadership development

In Nirapode Bhasa project, innovative and collaborative staff development approaches will be emphasized. All project staff stationed in the old project area Taltoli to went through a unique group learning process at project inception. After each day field visits, one staff led a discussion session on specific programmatic topics such as Parents' Meetings, UIPC/VIPC Meetings, Social Autopsy, Swimming Baseline Survey, or Learning Sessions. These peer-led discussions helped build a shared understanding across components, which was especially valuable in the new project structure. Staff also participated in a Capacity Building Workshop that served as a vital platform for clarifying the vision, structure, and goals of Project.

Furthermore, Area Coordinator and ECCD Officer took part in a 'Bridging Leadership' training organized by Synergos, a key partner of the ICBC project, further enhancing their leadership and strategic thinking skills. During this training, they visited childcare centres operated by other NGOs under the ICBC project, which provided valuable cross-learning experiences.

Nirapode Bhasa provided first response training to Jago Nari Foundation to build local resilience

In response to a request from Jago Nari Foundation, a local NGO in Barishal division, the Nirapode Bhasa project staff facilitated First Response Training for their volunteers in Barguna District, Barishal. The training took place from 3 to 18 February 2025, conducted in six batches. A total of 150 volunteers were trained in basic First Aid, equipping them to act as rapid responders during disasters. The sessions were facilitated by Ms. Shamsun Nahar, Master Trainer, First Response Training programme, CIPRB. Mr. Jahangir Ahmed, Deputy Assistant Director of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, Barguna, along with all officers from Jago Nari Foundation, also participated and observed the training.

Looking ahead, CIPRB aim to formalize this partnership through an agreement and explore future collaboration on emergency response initiatives under the Nirapode Bhasa project, especially in the context of climate change to cover one of the objectives of the project.





Anchal (Childcare) Centres: Where Child Safety Meets Women's Economic Empowerment

In the remote coastal area, Taltoli, life is a daily struggle for many families. For Mahinur Begum, mother of three-year-old Rifat, that struggle once felt unbearable. Her husband's income was barely enough to cover basic needs, leaving her torn between son's safety and finding work. Being offered a well-paid job, Mahinur faced new challenge that who would care for Rifat! Sampa's Anchal provided the answer, giving Rifat a safe and quality nurturing place while Mahinur worked. With peace of mind, she overcame their financial struggles.

Jasmine Begum's journey tells a similar story. A skilled craftswoman and mother of young Alifa, she found the support she needed at Hanufa's Anchal Centre, which enabled her to focus on her craft and improve her family's well-being.

Both mothers express deep gratitude for the Nirapode Bhasa project's Anchal initiative, which has not only transformed their lives but also earned the appreciation of their families and communities.

For countless families in Taltoli, Anchal is far more than childcare- it is a safety net for children, a springboard for women's empowerment, and a pathway to brighter futures.

Nirapode Bhasa project is expanded in Bakerganj with 50 childcare and 09 swimming centres



Risk mapping

The Bakerganj field team completed risk mapping to identify the most vulnerable areas for the project. Engaging local stakeholders and using criteria focused on drowning and disaster

risks, they selected three unions- Rangashri, Padri Shibpur, and Garuria as the project sites.

VIPC formation

A total of 27 Village Injury Prevention Committees (VIPC) were established with support from local administration and leaders. The committees, comprising community leaders, teachers, and religious figures, will play a key role in implementing project activities.



Field staff selection

To operate 50 centres in Bakerganj, 100 child caregivers and assistants were recruited. They received basic training on Anchal management and Early Childhood Development (ECD).

In addition, they actively participated in the child enrollment process, ensuring community engagement with the initiative.

UIPC formation

Three Union Injury Prevention Committees were established for Bakerganj. Meetings were held with the respective members- chairmen, members, and secretaries. The Area Coordinator outlined the project's objectives and committee roles, while UP leaders pledged regular communication and cooperation for future activities.



Anyone can drown, no one should



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