

# BANGLADESH PREPAREDNESS PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

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## Stronger Together: A Whole-of-Society Approach to Disaster Preparedness in Bangladesh

Effective disaster management is not the work of one sector alone — it's a shared responsibility. The Bangladesh Preparedness Partnership (BPP), launched in 2018 and led by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) with technical assistance from the Asian Disaster Preparedness

Center (ADPC) and funding from the Gates Foundation, is putting this principle into action. By bringing together government, the private sector, academia, NGOs, civil society, and local communities, BPP is advancing a "Whole-of-Society" approach to disaster preparedness in Bangladesh.

## Translating Vision into Action: Voices Behind BPP's Approach



***BPP brought all sectors onto one platform, which is a true reflection of the Whole-of-Society approach.***

According to **Mr. K.M. Abdul Wadud**, Additional Secretary of MoDMR and Chair of the BPP Mobilization Desk at MoDMR

***BPP is the only platform in Bangladesh that brings all sectors together at one table, primarily to operationalize the Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD) 2019. This presents a great opportunity for all disaster management actors in the country***

said **Professor Dr. Mahbuba Nasreen**, Co-founder of the Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies, University of Dhaka.



***I thank the BPP of ADPC for their pivotal role in moving beyond relief-based approaches toward a 'Whole-of-Society' approach to build a more resilient nation.***

**Mr. Ahmadul Haque**, Additional Secretary at MoDMR and Director (Administration) of the Cyclone Preparedness Programme, spoke during a multi-sector coordination meeting on March 24, 2025.

## Frameworks That Shape Whole-of-Society Approach

BPP is firmly rooted in both global and national frameworks, drawing its direction and legitimacy from key policy instruments including the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) 2016, the Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda), the Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD) 2019, Bangladesh Delta Plan (BDP) 2100 and the National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM) 2021–2025. These frameworks collectively highlight the importance of inclusive, multi-sectoral engagement:



- **WHS:** Advocates stress localization as essential for disaster preparedness and response.
- **SDG:** Stress the importance of partnerships and the key philosophy is 'Leave No One Behind.'
- **BDP:** Outlined the geographically vulnerable location into six hotspots to address implementing NPDM.
- **NPDM:** Emphasizing inclusive, proactive disaster risk reduction through capacity building and integration into development planning.
- **SOD:** Outlines clear roles and responsibilities across sectors to ensure coordinated and inclusive disaster management.

Guided by the core principles embedded in these frameworks, BPP demonstrates how a “Whole-of-Society” approach can foster more resilient, inclusive, and effective disaster preparedness in Bangladesh. The following section highlights how this approach has been reflected in BPP’s recent activities during the current reporting period of March and April 2025.

## Strengthening Partnership Highlights

### Multi-Stakeholder Coordination in Practice



*Representatives from government, academia, the private sector, and NGOs unite in a Whole-of-Society approach, captured together in a group photo*

BPP has become a national platform of 15 key institutions, uniting 5 Government organizations, 2 top universities, the largest business federation in Bangladesh, and 7 NGOs and Civil Society organizations. To ensure smooth coordination among partners, a high-level Mobilization Desk has been established on 18 December 2023, within the MoDMR, convening regular

bimonthly meetings. As part of this effort, the ADPC organized an ‘All Partners Coordination Meeting’ on March 24, 2025. The meeting brought together 33 participants from government ministries, academia, NGOs, and the private sector to review the progress of sectoral partners, explore partnership strategies, and plan future disaster preparedness actions.

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## Supporting the National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM)

During the reporting period, BPP finalized a technical review report to support the Government of Bangladesh in revising the upcoming National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM) 2026–2030. Intended as a reference for MoDMR, the review focuses on enhancing the NPDM's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system through the BPP-supported PROMOTS platform. Key recommendations include linking activities to resource allocation, aligning projects with timelines, prioritizing actions like establishing the NEOC and DMIC, formalizing

communication via an SOP with key agencies, and conducting annual progress evaluations.

To prepare the report, ADPC under MoDMR convened brainstorming sessions with stakeholders from government, civil society, NGOs, academia, and the private sector. It also conducted face-to-face meetings with technical experts and literature analyses at both national and international levels. The final report was submitted to the MoDMR in April 2025 and is expected to significantly contribute to shaping the next phase of the national disaster policy.

### Capacity Building Highlights

## Building Capacities for Inclusive Disaster Preparedness in Bangladesh

If one principle stands out in disaster preparedness, it is this: resilience begins with inclusion.

BPP has pioneered innovative capacity-building initiatives across the disaster-prone districts of Kurigram, Cox's Bazar, and Bagerhat, equipping frontline responders, local institutions, and businesses with effective local-level response tools. Key milestones include Disability-inclusive Search, Rescue, and Evacuation (DiSRE) training; Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD) training for the women members of Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) practitioners across all three districts; and the first dedicated disaster preparedness training for the business community to safeguard operations during emergencies.

A significant number of women participated in these trainings conducted by NAHAB, an NGO sector partner of BPP, along with the Centre for Disability in Development (CDD),



**Women's voices matter—especially at the local level. BPP ensures meaningful participation of women in every step, with strong emphasis on inclusion in trainings and community events.**

demonstrating a substantial improvement in knowledge based on the results of pre- and post-training assessments. These initiatives align strongly with key global and national frameworks, including the World Humanitarian Summit's call for locally-led action, the SDGs' principle of "leaving no one behind," and the SOD's emphasis on inclusive disaster response.



## Activating Disaster Management Information Centers

BPP conducted an in-depth study to support the revival of Disaster Management Information Centres (DMICs) in Cox's Bazar, Kurigram, and Bagerhat. Designed as key hubs for collecting, storing, analyzing, and sharing disaster-related information, DMICs are vital for ensuring timely communication, coordinated response, and community resilience before, during, and after disasters.

Since 2018, 65 three-storied DMIC buildings have been constructed, but most remain unutilized. To address this, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) tasked ADPC with conducting a comprehensive study. The study identified key operational and

structural challenges and outlined 32 actionable recommendations to restore and strengthen the DMICs. These include establishing a legal and policy framework, deploying trained personnel, upgrading IT infrastructure, and launching a centralized National Disaster Dashboard. The roadmap further highlights the importance of public-private partnerships for sustainable funding, collaboration with telecom providers for SMS-based alert systems, the creation of a DMIC Training Academy in partnership with academic and international institutions, and the regular implementation of simulation exercises.

The report was finalized during the reporting period.

## Cox's Bazar Hosts First-Ever Stakeholder DRR Coordination Meeting

On March 18, the District Relief and Rehabilitation Office (DRRO) of Cox's Bazar hosted its first stakeholder coordination meeting at the newly operational Disaster Management Information Center (DMIC).

With active participation from 16 organizations, the meeting focused on enhancing district-level collaboration and coordination in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Cox's Bazar is one of three districts—along with Bagerhat and Kurigram—where BPP is actively working to revive the Disaster Management Information Centers (DMICs) out of a total of 65 centers across the country.

## Knowledge and Research Highlights

### Baseline Assessment for Enhanced Disaster Resilience

Between March and April, BPP completed development of a robust baseline assessment report conducted across three high-risk districts—Bagerhat, Kurigram, and Cox's Bazar—covering both rural and urban areas. This study, conducted by the Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies at the University of Dhaka under BPP, engaged a diverse range of stakeholders, including local communities, government representatives, disaster management committees, and at-risk groups. It identifies priority areas for intervention, enabling the development of targeted strategies to



*Data Analysis of Baseline Survey*

enhance disaster resilience and response capacity. The findings will lay the groundwork for a more resilient and adaptive disaster management framework, aimed at mitigating the impact of future hazards and protecting vulnerable communities. The final report will be available soon

## Locally Led Action Research

ADPC launched a locally-led Joint Action Research initiative in Cox's Bazar, Kurigram, and Bagerhat, aimed at developing community-driven disaster solutions. This research involves local communities and universities to develop scalable, evidence-based solutions that can strengthen disaster preparedness at the grassroots level. In preparation for the initiative's commemoration, two online workshops were held on April 10 and April 16 with selected local researchers to define research strategies and finalize communication protocols. Here is the list of researchers and their research topics.

- 1) Dr. Abu Reza Md. Towfiqul Islam, Exploring vetiver grass as a zero-waste Nature-based solution for flood resilience in Kurigram
- 2) M M Abdullah Al Mamun Sony, Disaster Café: Empowering Youth for Cyclone Preparedness and Resilience in Bagerhat
- 3) Prof. Dr. Engr. Md. Abul Hasan, Development of a novel framework to enhance the post-disaster resilience of bridge infrastructure in Cox's Bazar
- 4) Md. Arif Chowdhury, Enhancing Coastal Resilience: Community-Led Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies for Storm Surge Risk Reduction in Bagerhat, Bangladesh

## Everyone Has a Role to Play

For the BPP, the Whole-of-Society approach is no longer just a theory — it's a lived reality. Through strong horizontal (cross-sectoral) and vertical (local-to-national) partnerships, BPP is actively putting this approach into practice, ensuring disaster preparedness efforts are inclusive, collaborative, and responsive. By working across sectors and scales, BPP aims to build a disaster management system that truly reflects and

serves the diverse needs of all people. At the heart of this effort is a strong commitment to Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI). BPP integrates these principles across all levels of engagement, ensuring preparedness efforts are inclusive, participatory, and community-centered. BPP aims to build a disaster management system that truly reflects and serves the diverse needs of all people.



*During Bengali New Year: Former and current ADPC Bangladesh team members joined ADPC Executive Director Mr. Aslam Perwaiz in a heartfelt gathering, celebrating unity, legacy, and shared commitment to resilience*

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