

BANGLADESH, DROWNING

Over 14,000 children die of drowning in Bangladesh each year: WHO, UNICEF



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Drowning has become the second leading cause of death for children under the age of five in Bangladesh as over 14,000 children in the South Asian country die due to drowning each year, reported Xinhua, Tuesday, July 26, 2022.

In a joint press statement issued on the World Drowning Prevention Day which falls on Monday, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) called on the government, development partners, communities and individuals to do their part to raise awareness and work to prevent the untimely deaths of thousands of children across Bangladesh.

"It is heart-breaking that so many lives are lost each year in this country. We know that these deaths are preventable," said Sheldon Yett, UNICEF representative to Bangladesh. "We urge individuals, communities and the government to join us in raising awareness and doing all we can to ensure every child's right to survive and thrive."

Globally, some 230,000 people drown each year

Globally, drowning claims the lives of over 230,000 people every year. Nine in 10 drowning cases occur in low- and middle-income countries, with children under the age of five being at the highest risk.

In Bangladesh, where large areas of land remain submerged due to yearly floods, the absence of awareness and swimming skills can prove to be life-threatening. Children in rural areas who grow up near bodies of water are also exposed to the risk of drowning daily.

"Drowning is a significant public health concern and the third leading cause of unintentional death worldwide. Drowning is one of the leading causes of death among children in Bangladesh," said WHO Representative to Bangladesh Bardan Jung Rana.

"By enhancing multisectoral collaboration, promoting strong leadership on drowning prevention, and implementing necessary actions, we can prevent the tragedy of drowning and achieve a safer, healthier future for all."

Evidence shows that drowning is preventable through low-cost solutions. Increased awareness among families and communities, providing safety and swimming skills for children and adolescents, ensuring childcare facilities for pre-school children, and national policies and investments for prevention can make a significant difference.

In 2021, the United Nations General Assembly declared July 25 as World Drowning Prevention Day to acknowledge drowning as a leading cause of death around the world and highlight that every drowning death is preventable. – **Malaysian National News Agency (Bernama), Dhaka, July 26, 2022**