

Lifeguard services in Cox's Bazar to shut down over fund crisis

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Dhaka: Lifeguard services by the beach provided by a private organization Sea-Safe Lifeguards in Cox's Bazar may shut down due to shortage of funds. This will increase the death risk of tourists bathing at the beach.

In 2012, with funding from the UK-based international organization Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI), the Sea-Safe Lifeguard service was launched in Cox's Bazar to save tourists bathing in the sea. Since then, the organization has been rescuing tourists swept away by sea currents. However, due to lack of funds, all activities will stop on September 30 this year.

Sea-Safe Lifeguards' regional manager Imtiaz Ahmed said that the project expired in December last year due to funding shortages. Considering tourist safety, with the intervention of the Cox's Bazar

district administration, the donor extended the project by six months until June.

Later, it was extended again for three months until September 30. Since no further funds are available, the lifeguard service will shut down this September. The donor organization used to provide around BDT 14 lakh per month to cover costs for 35 officials and employees, including 27 lifeguards.

Imtiaz Ahmed said that since the service began, lifeguards have rescued at least 807 tourists from strong currents at various points of Cox's Bazar beach. During the same time, they also recovered the bodies of 65 people who drowned. Once the service shuts down, 27 lifeguards and 35 employees in total will lose their jobs.

Cox's Bazar Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Salahuddin said the Tourism Ministry has been informed about the closure. He added that under hotel management policies, lifeguard operations must be ensured. For this reason, the ministry instructed that lifeguard services should continue through funding from local hotels.

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