

1,300 firearms looted Increase party

FROM PAGE 3
Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said, "We have launched a special initiative to recover the lost weapons of law enforcement agencies. Those who provide information leading to recovery will be rewarded."

A committee will soon be formed for this purpose, with details to be announced later, he said while addressing reporters after the Law-and-Order Core Committee meeting at the ministry.

Tawhidul Haque, associate professor at Dhaka University's Institute of Social Welfare and Research, said, "The reward initiative is a good idea, but it may not be effective now since a year has passed since the looting."

"These firearms were looted by criminals and have been used or rented out for crimes. These may have been kept in reserve to create instability before the election." He suggested forming a special team from the army, rather than the police, to conduct drives to recover the firearms.

Meanwhile, police officials say many of the looted weapons are being used in criminal activities.

On the day of the uprising, police stations were attacked nationwide, with widespread incidents of vandalism, arson, and looting. Police operations ceased by midday, and Ansar members were later deployed to guard the stations. Normal activities resumed on August 13.

USE OF FIREARMS IN CRIMES

Since the recovery drive began, several incidents have linked recovered weapons to crimes.

In January and February,

police in Chattogram arrested six people in separate raids and seized firearms, which had been looted from Double Mooring Police Station.

On April 17, police arrested Arif Hossain near Double Mooring Police Station and recovered a pistol and bullets from his hideout. He later confessed that the weapons were looted from the police.

On July 21, a gunfight took place between two criminal groups in Chandgaon of Chattogram. Later, police conducted drives at the scene and discovered two bullets and bullet casings, which were actually looted from police stations.

On August 29 last year, businessman Md Anis was shot dead in Bayezid Bostami area of the port city. Police found five bullet casings marked "police" and a weapon bag at the scene.

In November, the Coast Guard arrested Ziaur Rahman in Maheshkhali with a pistol he admitted was looted from a Chattogram police facility.

An official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), requesting anonymity, said a portion of the looted firearms were sold to criminal gangs in Dhaka.

Residents of Mohammadpur alleged that firearms stolen from Mohammadpur and Adabor police stations are now in the hands of criminals.

Iftekhhar Hasan, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, said they suspect firearms used in Geneva Camp criminal activities came from looted police weapons.

"We are conducting drives to recover the firearms," he said.

FROM PAGE 3
its Chief of Party Catherine Cecil delivered the opening speech.

Sharmeen S Murshid, adviser to the women and children affairs ministry, said, "The 'women-excluded' commission (consensus commission) is deciding on women's issues. I feel extremely uncomfortable. I have not seen women being equally involved in the decision-making here."

"To increase women's participation in the polls, the commission's discussions should start again. Women must be brought into a more active and strong position in politics, made more capable, and included in the election process," she added.

On the public fund proposal, she said, "The spending limit for elections is never maintained. Establishing a public fund could help reduce corruption. Many qualified candidates cannot contest due to financial constraints, but such a fund could support women candidates."

Badiul Alam Majumdar, member of the National Consensus Commission, said everyone's demand this time was to increase the number of women's seats and hold direct elections for those seats.

"In reserved seats, nominations are given as a favour, with no accountability to the people. Unfortunately, direct elections in reserved seats have become just a slogan for rights organisations, as well as civil society. Politicians have also used this slogan."

BNP Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan said the government can increase women's nominations if it wants.

"However, it is the political parties that must

implement the decision. Women themselves need to be proactive in contesting elections. We must also see how many women actually seek nominations," he said.

"Female candidates must be able to compete against other parties and win. Only when a party wins does the issue of accountability and implementing decisions arise," he added.

He also welcomed the proposal to create a public fund for female candidates.

BNP Self-Reliance Affairs Secretary Shireen Sultana criticised the way the consensus commission's discussions with political parties ended, saying they had limited the scope for women's candidacy.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said, "Without consulting any women's organisations, the commission has made decisions on women's issues. We reject this decision. In 2025, they are showing the 'generosity' of giving only 5 percent nominations for general seats to women, and these will likely be in less prominent constituencies."

Tasnim Jara, senior joint member secretary of NCP, said during the uprising, women led from the front. "Yet no changes have been made regarding women's nominations to general seats. This is a failure. No process was visible at the commission to include women's voices," she said.

Election Commissioner Abul Fazal Md Saanullah, BNP Standing Committee member Selima Rahman, former lawmaker Nilufar Chowdhury Moni, Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Haque, and Sumaiya Islam, member of the Women's Affairs Reform Commission, also spoke.

Govt reform plans

FROM PAGE 3
Adivasi Forum, stressed the urgent need for an Indigenous Reform Commission.

"Even if elections are held in February, this commission can still be formed to prepare a report on the current status and position of indigenous peoples," he said.

Prof Robayet Ferdous of Mass Communication and Journalism at Dhaka University warned that indigenous peoples are facing an existential crisis.

This year's International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples focused on the impact of artificial intelligence on indigenous rights, identities, and cultural and linguistic heritage.

Speaking on the issue, Prof Ainun Nahar of Jahangirnagar University said attitudes of dominant groups towards indigenous peoples in Bangladesh are extremely alarming.

"Where AI can be used to create and spread misinformation, jeopardising the safety of indigenous communities, how can it possibly be used to establish indigenous rights in Bangladesh?" she questioned.

Prothom Alo Joint Editor Sohrab Hasan said the state signed the CHT Peace Accord but never implemented it.

The Land Commission in the CHT has not held a single meeting despite 22,000 pending applications, he said, adding that the core objective of the peace accord was to respect their distinct identity.

Pallab Chakma, executive director of the Kapeeng

Foundation, said, "This government is giving no importance to human rights in the hills. The Thai government recently passed a law to protect their indigenous communities. We hope Bangladesh will enact a similar law."

Shamsul Huda, executive director of ALRD, demanded that the government celebrate international indigenous day with the same dignity as other national days. The international conventions related to indigenous rights, such as ILO Convention Articles 141 and 169, must be ratified, he said.

The seminar made several other demands, including constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples, finalisation of the draft Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Rights Act into law, and the establishment of a separate ministry and land commission for plains indigenous peoples, with a full minister appointed from among them.

At the event, two papers were presented – one by Adivasi Forum's Ujjal Azim and another by ALRD's Rafique Ahmed Siraji.

Will ensure

FROM PAGE 3
reporter of Mymensingh-based daily Pratidiner Kagoj, with sharp weapons in front of a crowded market in the Chandana Chowrasta area of Gazipur.

Meanwhile, a court in Gazipur has granted two-day remand each to the seven accused arrested in the case, said Bason Police Station OC Shahin Khan.

Wedding plans

FROM PAGE 1
Ruplal Robidas, 45, was from Ghanirampur Dangapara village under Taraganj upazila, and his relative Pradip Chandra Robidas, 44, was from Shyampur area under Mithapukur upazila.

Eyewitness Majidul Islam said, "The two kept insisting they were not thieves and explained their professions, but the mob would not listen; they beat the men severely."

MA Faruk, officer-in-charge of Taraganj Police Station, said, "The policemen informed around 11:00pm. The victims were taken to Taraganj Upazila Health Complex, where Ruplal was declared dead on arrival. Pradip was transferred to Rangpur Medical College Hospital, where he died early yesterday."

"Ruplal's wife has filed a case against 500-700 unidentified individuals. Police are investigating the case. The culprits will be identified and arrested soon."

SHOCK AND GRIEF
Ruplal was a cobbler, and Pradip was a van driver. Both were single-earning members of their families.

Ruplal left behind his mother, wife, two daughters and a son, and Pradip left behind his wife, two sons and a daughter.

According to Ruplal's wife Maloti Robidas, their 19-year-old daughter, Nupur Rani Robidas, was engaged to Komol Robidas from Shyampur area in Mithapukur.

Pradip was the matchmaker, and he was supposed to stay at Ruplal's house on Saturday night. They were set to go to Komol's home yesterday to fix the wedding date.

Visiting Ruplal's house yesterday noon, this

correspondent saw the grieving family was still in disbelief. "Whom will I call baba now?" in a choked voice asked Ruplal's daughter Nupur, who has just passed her HSC examinations.

Apart from their small 10 decimal homestead, consisting of two tin-roofed houses and a single-shed kitchen, the family has no other possessions.

"What will I do with three children and an elderly mother-in-law. My daughter's wedding is now uncertain," cried Ruplal's wife Maloti.

Speaking on the matter, Kursha Union Parishad member Tuhinur Rahman said, "Ruplal supported his family by mending shoes in the market. He worked hard to educate his children. He and his relative were falsely accused and killed."

Meanwhile, Advocate Monilal Das, Rangpur divisional president of the Bangladesh Dalit Parishad, said both victims belonged to the Dalit community. He demanded immediate arrest of the perpetrators and called for assistance for the victims' families.

Contacted, Taraganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer Rubel Rana said, "The upazila administration will provide financial assistance to ensure Ruplal's daughter's wedding takes place. Police have been instructed to quickly identify and arrest the suspects."

Meanwhile, locals blocked the Rangpur-Dinajpur highway for an hour yesterday evening, demanding justice for the killings. Police and army members later arrived at the scene and assured the protesters that the culprits would be identified and arrested quickly, said UNO Rubel Rana.

ROUNDTABLE

Women with Disabilities Rights and Inclusive Services

Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF) organised a seminar titled "Women with Disabilities Rights and Inclusive Services" on July 24, 2025. Here is a summary of the discussion.



Ashrafun Nahar Misti
Executive Director, Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF)



We urgently need greater awareness around disability issues, especially as climate change and man-made disasters increase. Events

like the July uprising and the Milestone plane crash have left many with permanent disability, facing immense physical and mental trauma. Rebuilding a normal and affordable life becomes extremely difficult for them. We must address discrimination against people with disabilities, particularly those requiring assistive devices and different care during daily life.

The Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2013 must be reviewed and strengthened to ensure access to justice, protection from sexual violence, and targeted poverty reduction—especially for women with disabilities. These steps are essential to building an inclusive and just society for all.

The Department of Social Services needs to take further initiatives for the empowerment of persons with disabilities and to ensure a barrier-free environment—especially accessible transport, housing, schools, and recreational facilities on an equal basis with others.

Albert Mollah Haque
Executive Director, Access Bangladesh Foundation (ABF) (Keynote Speaker)



Women with disabilities in Bangladesh face major barriers due to social prejudice, poor accessibility,

limited awareness, weak law enforcement, and lack of coordination among service providers. They experience higher illiteracy, limited



education, and very low participation in vocational training (0.13%) and formal employment (3.13%). Their overall labour force participation is just 11.34%, with 93% excluded from employment versus 59% of men (National Survey of Persons with Disabilities 2021).

To protect their rights, recommendations include law reforms, inclusive education, skills training, accessible healthcare, gender- and disability-sensitive budgeting, violence protection, awareness campaigns, political inclusion, improved accessibility, better coordination, and strong monitoring to ensure dignity

Salma Mahbub
Founder & General Secretary, Bangladesh Society for the Change and Advocacy Nexus (BSCAN)



and equality. It is crucial to meaningfully recognise the unique challenges faced by women with

disabilities, who are often overlooked even within disability laws. Their needs—particularly regarding SRHR (Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights), WASH, and accessibility—require focused attention.

A recent incident involving an acquaintance hospitalised during labour highlights this reality. As a wheelchair user, she lacked access to a high-commode toilet and had

Recommendations

- Revise the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2013 to address the specific needs of women with disabilities.
- Accurately count women with disabilities to guide effective planning.
- Expand inclusive, ICT-based, and job-oriented vocational training.
- Ensure disability-friendly infrastructure in services and transport.
- Collect and publish gender- and disability-disaggregated data.
- Reserve two parliamentary seats for women with disabilities and ensure inclusive electoral processes.
- Strengthen monitoring of inclusive services in education, employment, and health.

to return home after two days just to use one. Such cases reveal the severe hardships women with disabilities face due to structural negligence.

Despite their numbers, women with disabilities remain underrepresented in leadership and policymaking. Clause 39 under the National Women's Development

responsibilities are deeply linked. Children with disabilities often face rejection at home, especially affecting mothers. A counseling system is needed to help parents support their children. Yet, family care is often overlooked, harming overall development. Bangladesh also lacks research-based, need-driven policy.

Women with disabilities are not a homogenous group—their needs vary by age, location, and context. Education systems must be rethought—curriculum, teacher training, and inclusive classrooms. Beyond transport and entertainment, legal support remains inaccessible. A market-driven assessment is also essential to identify suitable employment for women with

Ghulam Faruq Hamim

Bangladesh Program Team Lead, ADD International Bangladesh



disabilities, using rational and scientific methods. Despite recognising twelve types

of disabilities, accurate diagnosis and classification remain weak due to a lack of proper training for doctors, especially for conditions like Down syndrome, deafness, or speech impairments. Misdiagnosis and underreporting persist, further marginalising the community.

Though people with disabilities are occasionally consulted in national planning, their input is rarely reflected, revealing tokenism. Mental health and disability need stronger policy focus. Despite some NGO-led progress in workplace inclusion, government commitment is still lacking. As one person with disability said, he often feels invisible in society—a feeling that must be acknowledged

Barrister Sara Hossain

Executive Director, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)



if we are to ensure true inclusion. Demands by the community of people

Rejaul Karim

Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh



Policy must be urgently implemented. Persons with disabilities face significant barriers across legal, public, and private service delivery systems.

Those with psychosocial or sensory disabilities (such as deafness or blindness), women with disabilities, and individuals with Down syndrome experience the highest levels of exclusion, with near-zero participation.

Access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) remains particularly limited for women with disabilities due to a lack of inclusivity. With persons with disabilities constituting 15% of the population, policies and action plans must address their needs. The wide spectrum of disabilities demands adaptability in services and education—because a one-size-fits-all

Dr. Tania Haque

Professor, Department of Women and Gender Studies, University of Dhaka



approach is not only inadequate but deeply exclusionary. Disability and family