

2009 TO 2024

Govt orders full audit of Rajuk's financial records

BSS, Dhaka

The Ministry of Housing and Public Works has instructed the Directorate of Internal Audit to conduct a comprehensive audit of all income and expenditure of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), spanning from 2009 to 2024.

This includes transactions related to plot and flat allocations, transfers and associated financial operations, according to a press release issued by the ministry yesterday, signed by Md Alamgir Hossain, its public relations officer.

The directive follows a decision made by the Ministry's Budget Management Committee on April 23, it added.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

After a two-month hiatus, TCB trucks resumed nationwide operations yesterday, selling essential items like oil, sugar, and lentils at subsidised rates. The photo was taken in Dhaka's Khamarbari area.

Govt reform plans left out

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She stressed that the four founding principles of the state, envisioned during the independence struggle, must be realised.

Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh 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.

Siraji said after the interim government came to power, there were initial improvements in human rights, law and order, women's rights, reduction of discrimination against indigenous peoples,

security of minorities, land rights, and environmental protection.

However, these issues have now lost priority. Although reforms have been initiated in various areas over the past year, many recommendations remain unimplemented, he said.

Govt strips 40

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abscinding status of these officers. Of the 40 officials, nine are inspectors, one is an assistant superintendent of police, nine are additional SPs, eight are SPs, ten are additional DIGs, and three are DIGs.

Four officers – Biplob Kumar Sarker, SM Mehedi Hasan, Proloy Kumar Joarder, and Sudip Chakrabarty – were suspended, while the remaining 36 are listed as absconding from their posts in the notification.

On February 23 this year, the home ministry revoked medals from 103 police officers awarded in 2018, including former IGP Benazir Ahmed and former DMP commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia.

Will ensure

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reporter of Mymensingh-based daily Pratidin 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.

1,300 firearms looted from police stations

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Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retd) 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.

Speaking to The Daily Star, 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 said.

He suggested forming a special team from the army, rather than the police, to conduct drives to recover the firearms immediately.

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.

In December, police recovered the bullet-riddled body of 22-year-old Shahida Akhter from the Dogachi area of Munshiganj.

Police later arrested her friend Touhid Sheikh, alias Tanmoy, who confessed to

shooting her with a pistol stolen from Wari Police Station during the unrest. Police then recovered the weapon used in the murder.

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.

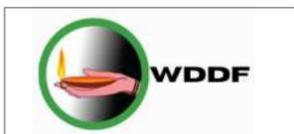
Iftexhar Hasan, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, said they suspect firearms used in Geneva Camp criminal activities came from looted police weapons.

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

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

with disabilities are often viewed as pleas for charity, not justice. This mindset must shift—special accommodations are basic rights. Infrastructure remains inaccessible, even in courts, and data on women with disabilities seeking justice is nonexistent. Misunderstandings, like confusing autism with mental illness, persist in the judiciary, with serious consequences.

No dedicated committees exist in key public institutions. Local bodies and private sectors like BGMEA and chambers of commerce must take responsibility as well. Real change needs inter-ministerial action. Following the July uprising, many became newly disabled, highlighting the urgent need for a rights-based, inclusive, and accountable system

Md. Saidur Rahman Khan
Director General, Department of Social Services



across sectors. The Department of Social Services is committed to improving the lives of persons

with disabilities. With a BDT 12,500 crore budget last year, we served 2 crore citizens. Acknowledging misuse and exclusion in stipend distribution, we are updating beneficiary lists via a transparent G2P (Government-to-Person) system with committee verification. Our interest-free microcredit program aids rehabilitation for persons with disabilities. Despite running special educational and care institutions, we face resource and staffing shortages—workload has increased 67 times since independence, while staff has halved. Fair recruitment is underway. Coordination between policymakers and implementers is crucial.

Currently, 3.6 million persons with disabilities are registered; 3.4 million receive stipends, and 100,000 get scholarships. We aim to extend support to all and develop an inclusive roadmap for education, health, and leadership for persons with disabilities.

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