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489 new posts approved for SC Secretariat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court’s Post Creation Committee, at its first meeting yesterday afternoon, decided to create 489 new posts to run the SC Secretariat.

Among the total posts, 107 for officers and 382 for supporting staff members.

Out of 107 officers’ posts, 105 will be appointed for administrative positions from judicial service, one post for chief accounting officer, and one post for system analyst, according to the decision.

The meeting was chaired by Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam, senior judge of the Appellate Division of the SC and head of the committee.

The Post Creation Committee was formed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed on December 1, under Section 17 of the Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance, 2025.

The committee is

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Speakers at a roundtable, titled “Violence Against Women and Children in Bangladesh: A Call for Strategic Action”, jointly organised by Unicef, Plan International, and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Country failing to shield children from abuse and violence

Speakers tell discussion; warn of weak protection at family, community levels

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh still lacks an effective protective shield for children at the family and community levels, leaving them highly vulnerable to violence and abuse, speakers warned at a roundtable yesterday.

They said despite multiple laws, enforcement remains weak. Social services often fail to function properly, and many children cannot access justice due to systemic inequalities. These gaps continue to put countless children at risk.

The event, titled “Violence Against Women and Children in Bangladesh: A Call for Strategic Action”, was organised jointly by Unicef, Plan International and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre.

Shabnaaz Zahreen, child protection specialist at Unicef Bangladesh, said 5,600 cases of sexual violence against children were reported from 2013 to 2024, but only 2 percent resulted in convictions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Proper functioning of child protection committees
- » Train social workers, especially at union level
- » Coordination among police, admin, social services
- » Specialised tribunals for child sexual abuse cases
- » Speed up DNA, forensic, medical report processes

In 2024 alone, 1,151 incidents of violence against women and children were recorded.

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Democracy, growth and justice must advance together

Wahiduddin Mahmud outlines 3 priorities for a democratic future

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following the July political transition, Planning Adviser Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud has outlined three priorities for Bangladesh – establishing representative democracy, ensuring economic growth, and promoting development that reduces inequality and supports social justice.

Speaking at the opening session of the Annual Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies conference yesterday at Parjatan Bhaban in Agargaon, Mahmud

The problem isn’t just corruption in the traditional sense. Over time, vested interests become deeply embedded in institutions, influencing not only outcomes but policies themselves.



described the theme “Democracy and Development” as timely and essential to the country’s future.

“At this moment, three questions seem most relevant,” he said. “First, how do we ensure a transition to an effective, representative democracy?”

Democracy should not be measured merely by the presence of elections, he noted, but by how well institutions ensure accountability through a functioning

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Energy crisis a ‘failure of governance’

Says study of Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite legal indemnities, digital censorship and corporate pressure, the media in Bangladesh have gradually built a counter-narrative that exposed the fragility of the energy sector’s development model, according to a study by the Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network.

Analysing 16,278 news contents published in newspapers and online platforms on power and energy issues over the last decade, the study said the media have established that the energy crisis was not an accident of nature but a failure of governance.

“The past decade of energy journalism in Bangladesh is a story of resilience,” reads the study titled “Narrative Arc of Energy: A Decade of Media Discourse in Bangladesh (2015-2025)”, which was presented yesterday at a session of the ongoing Bangladesh Energy Conference at Bangladesh Military Museum.

The three-day conference ends today, with leaders of different political parties, government

stakeholders, energy experts and non-government organisations expected at the closing ceremony.

The study said media coverage of energy issues was dominated by state-driven “announcement journalism” between 2015 and 2019. The global energy crisis of 2022, however, marked a turning point, shifting narratives from technical supply issues to political debates on affordability, accountability and corruption.

Presenting the findings, CLEAN Communications Coordinator Kaniz Rabeya said the volume of news on energy issues increased by 484 percent in 2025 compared to 2015.

The organisation also compiled energy stories from 2024 in various outlets under the title “Energy Sector in Bangladesh: In the View of Journalists”, which was unveiled at the session.

Kamal Ahmed, consulting editor of The Daily Star, said the findings reflected only a partial picture as they did not include television coverage, where energy issues received minimal attention.

“Until the vested interest groups’ presence in media ownership is dismantled, the situation will not improve,” he said.

Kamal Ahmed, also former chief of the Media Reform Commission, said the commission submitted recommendations with “immediate action plans” in March, but no major initiatives have been taken by the government.

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- Study analysed 16,278 news contents on energy over 10yrs
- Media narratives shifted from ‘announcement journalism’ to accountability
- Energy crisis not natural accident
- Cronyism, corruption, elite capture repeatedly identified in coverage

Thalassaemia takes heavy mental toll on mothers: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mothers of children with thalassaemia experience depression at twice the rate of the urban Bangladeshi adult population, along with significantly higher levels of anxiety and stress, according to a cross-sectional study.

The study found that 22 percent of these mothers reported an unpleasant relationship with their husbands, while 47 percent said their social life had been affected.

The findings were presented by Fahrin Islam, research associate at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), at the Annual BIDS Conference on Development 2025 held at Parjatan Bhaban in Agargaon yesterday.

The Biomedical Research Foundation, in collaboration with BIDS, conducted the study on 156 mothers of children with thalassaemia between December 2021 and April 2022.

Fahrin said thalassaemia, a preventable hereditary disorder that disrupts normal haemoglobin production, is becoming a major public health concern in Bangladesh, which lies within the Global Thalassaemia Belt.

She said studies estimate the prevalence of

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Among the 156 mothers surveyed, 63% experienced depression, compared to 32% of urban adults. Meanwhile, 62% experienced stress and 58% anxiety.

Coalition formed to push women, children’s rights in poll manifestos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven national and international organisations have formed a coalition to advance equality and justice, creating a countrywide platform aimed at ensuring the rights, protection and well-being of women and children feature prominently in election manifestos of political parties.

The coalition includes Breaking the Silence, JAAGO Foundation, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Oxfam in Bangladesh, Plan International Bangladesh, Save the Children in Bangladesh and WaterAid Bangladesh.

It is currently conducting regional consultations, evidence reviews and community-level listening sessions to understand the needs and priorities of women and children across urban, rural and climate-vulnerable areas, said a press release yesterday.

Findings from these consultations, along with insights from the coalition’s initial position paper, will inform a set of concrete demands to be presented at a dialogue with political parties on December 14 in Dhaka.

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A group of students from the seven government colleges in Dhaka hold a sit-in in front of Shikkha Bhaban, demanding prompt implementation of the Dhaka Central University Ordinance. Police set up barricades and suspended vehicular movement towards the Secretariat due to the protest, causing traffic congestion and suffering for commuters. The photo was taken yesterday noon.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Frame charges against Hasina and 12 others

Prosecution urges ICT-1 in enforced disappearance case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday urged the International Crimes Tribunal-1 to frame charges against 13 accused, including deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, over their alleged involvement in a series of enforced disappearances carried out between 2015 and last year.

The accused also include Hasina’s former defence and security adviser Maj Gen (ret’d) Tarique Ahmed Siddique and 11 army officers who served at the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence during the period.

Five charges have been brought against them for allegedly detaining 26 victims in the DGFI’s secret facility “Aynaghar”, torturing them, and segregating victims based on the duration of confinement and the roles of DGFI officials.

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam told the tribunal that 26 individuals were abducted from their homes and workplaces, blindfolded, and taken to Aynaghar, where

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