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4.2. Operational status following the power shift

Following the fall of the former government, on 10 August 2024, pressure from leaders of student protests forced the Chief Justice of the Bangladesh Supreme Court and five other supreme court judges to resign over corruption perceptions; the protesters called for a judiciary free from political influence.331 New appointments to key positions within the judiciary and prosecution were made,332 and the new Chief Justice issued a 12-point instruction to improve service to justice seekers and transparency and accountability among Supreme Court staff.333 A Supreme Judicial Council was moreover reinstated to handle the removal of Supreme Court Judges.334 At least 12 High Court judges had reportedly been dismissed as of May 2025.335

In December 2024, the backlog of cases in Bangladesh's courts had reached an all-time high, with nearly 4.8 million cases pending. An advocate of the Supreme Court described the situation as 'dire', also because justice-seekers were suffering financially. As reported by the Daily Sun, five judges of the Appellate Division managed a caseload of over 27 000 pending cases (approximately 5 500 cases per judge). The delayed judicial process impacted litigants and defenders, 'with some victims of serious crimes waiting up to 20 years for justice' according to the same source.336 By March 2025, the backlog of cases continued to increase reaching over 4.5 million pending cases as reported by the Daily Star. The same source cited lengthy legal procedures, a shortage of judges, and overburdened courts as reasons for the backlog. A Supreme Court lawyer and head of law firm Law Lab, Mohammad Shishir Manir, expressed concern of the 'growing backlog [of cases] is eroding public trust in the judiciary.'337 In April 2025, the law adviser and chairman of the National Governing Board of the National Legal Aid Services Organization (NLASO), Asif Nazrul, stated that around 500 000 new cases are filed each year, many of which concern family matters or minor offences that could be resolved by other state functions than the courts.338

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