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Hasina first lost
in the court of
the people

P12



NOTE TO READERS: The Daily Star begins a five-part series tomorrow, offering an in-depth look at the lives of those on the front lines of climate change in Bangladesh's southwest.



'We want to
play without
fear'

P15

Caretaker govt system revived

Apex court overturns 2011 judgment that abolished it; system will not be applicable to Feb polls, say lawyers

ASHUTOSH SARKAR and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The non-party caretaker government system has returned to Bangladesh's constitution, but apparently not for the national polls slated for early February.

In a landmark judgment yesterday, the Supreme Court unanimously revived the caretaker system, ruling that it will apply prospectively.

The upcoming election will therefore be held under the current interim government, lawyers involved in the proceedings said.

A seven-member full bench of the Appellate Division, led by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, delivered the verdict on two appeals and four review petitions against its 2011 ruling that had annulled the 13th amendment to the constitution.

With this, the court overturned its May 2011 judgment that had abolished the caretaker system.

"This court is satisfied that the judgment under review is tainted by several cited errors apparent on the face of the record. It follows that the judgment under review is hereby set aside in its entirety," the court said in its short order.

The ruling activates the constitutional provisions on the non-party caretaker government (NPCG) introduced through section 3 of the 13th Amendment Act, 1996.

The court clarified, "Such revival ensures automatic restoration of Chapter IIA containing NPCG provisions, but its operation is subject to the enforcement of the revived Articles 58B (1) and 58C (2) of the Constitution."

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RISE, FALL, AND REVIVAL

MID-1980S

First discussed during the anti-Ershad movement

1991

Introduced as an interim govt

1996

Added to the constitution through the 13th amendment after prolonged AL protests

2006

Crisis erupts over caretaker leadership

2011

AL govt abolishes the system through the 15th amendment

DEC 2024

High Court annuls parts of the 15th amendment, enabling the system's return

POLLS

1991, JUNE 1996, 2001, 2008

Polls under caretakers widely regarded as free, fair

2014, 2018, 2024

Polls without caretaker considered controversial



A woman returns home with her young grandson on a raft in the waterlogged Bilpatiala village in Khulna's Dumuria upazila. Roads, houses, fish enclosures, and farmland in Bilpatiala and the surrounding areas have been submerged for nearly five months as the heavily silted Shoilmari river cannot drain the water, causing thousands to suffer. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

SC secretariat, a step closer to reality

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The advisory council yesterday granted final approval to the draft Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance, 2025, marking another step toward separating the judiciary from the executive branch of the state.

The ordinance aims to hand all authority over the transfer, promotion, posting, and disciplinary matters of lower court judges to the Supreme Court — powers that currently rest with the government.

However, the interim government has decided that the ordinance will be implemented only after the Supreme Court Secretariat is fully established in terms of infrastructure.

But matters related to budget and financial management will come into effect along with the publication of the ordinance's gazette notification.

After the advisory council meeting, Law Affairs Adviser Asif Nazrul briefed reporters at a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy in the capital.

The law adviser said that the control, discipline, and leave-related matters of judges who are engaged solely in judicial functions will be transferred to the Supreme Court Secretariat.

"However, judicial officers who serve in various state institutions — such as the law ministry, the Election Commission, and the Anti-Corruption Commission — in administrative roles will remain under

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Draft law seeks death penalty for trafficking syndicate members

WASIM BIN HABIB and BAHARAM KHAN

The advisory council yesterday approved in principle a draft ordinance introducing stringent penalties, including capital punishment, for members of human trafficking rackets.

The draft Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants Ordinance-2025

The ordinance, set to replace the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act-2012, defines human trafficking as the abduction, sale or purchase, confinement, concealment, transfer or harbouring of a person for labour, sexual or other forms of exploitation.

Such acts may be carried out through fear, deception, abuse of socio-economic

The ordinance, set to replace the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act-2012, defines human trafficking as the abduction, sale or purchase, confinement, concealment, transfer or harbouring of a person for labour, sexual or other forms of exploitation.

includes provisions for punishments ranging from seven years' rigorous imprisonment to life imprisonment or even the death penalty, along with a Tk 5 lakh fine, for members of such gangs, each of whom would be held equally responsible for the crime.

For those individually involved in human trafficking, it prescribes penalties ranging from a minimum five years' rigorous imprisonment to life imprisonment, in addition to a Tk 50,000 fine.

or environmental vulnerabilities, or in exchange for money or goods.

The ordinance outlines human trafficking offences and penalties across nine chapters.

For instance, forcing a person to work or provide services against their will or holding someone in debt bondage will be considered trafficking. The punishment ranges from five to 12 years of rigorous imprisonment, along with a Tk 50,000 fine.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



Matiul Islam, an icon in finance, is no more

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Trailblazing public servant M Matiul Islam, revered as the "doyen of the financial sector", passed away yesterday. He was 95.

He is survived by his daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held today after Jummah prayers at Azad Mosque in Gulshan, Dhaka.

Widely regarded as one of the architects of Bangladesh's economic foundation, he leaves behind a legacy of vision and institution-building.

Born on January 24, 1930, in Barishal, Matiul graduated with first class first in commerce from Dhaka University and

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Bangladesh stalwart Mushfiqur Rahim celebrates his century in his 100th Test as teammate Litton Das rushes over to congratulate him, while an Ireland fielder offers sporting applause on the second day of the second Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Mushfiqur's 106 and Litton's 128 powered the hosts to 476 before the bowlers reduced Ireland to 98-5 by stumps.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

We Mourn

We are profoundly grieved by the demise of our Founder and Former Chairman, Md. Matiul Islam, FCA. (Inna Lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un). His visionary guidance, unwavering integrity and lifelong devotion will remain an enduring source of inspiration.

May his departed soul attain eternal serenity. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family and cherished ones during this time of sorrow.



Md. Matiul Islam, FCA
(1930-2025)



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