

NAHID ISLAM

NCP CONVENER

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nahid Islam, a sociology graduate from Dhaka University, was one of the key organisers of the anti-discrimination student movement, which toppled the Sheikh Hasina regime.



Nahid was one of the student representatives within the interim government. He resigned from the advisory council on Tuesday to take on his new role.

Nahid became the member secretary of Ganotantrik Chhatra Shakti on October 3, 2023, which was a breakaway faction of Chhatra Odhikar Parishad led by Nurul Haque Nur.

Chhatra Shakti was dissolved on September 14, 2024, a week after the Jatiya Nagorik Committee was formed.

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AKHTER HOSSEN

NCP MEMBER SECRETARY

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Akhter Hossen, a law graduate from Dhaka University, was also one of the key organisers of the anti-discrimination student movement, which toppled the Sheikh Hasina regime.



He came under the spotlight when he went on a hunger strike all by himself on October 16, 2018, protesting the question leak of a Dhaka University admission test.

In 2019, he contested the Ducus polls from the panel of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Odhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad, a platform that had led the 2018 quota reform movement. He contested for the social service secretary post and won.

Akhter later joined Chhatra Odhikar Parishad, a student body of Nurul Haq Nur's Gono Odhikar Parishad,

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PHOTO: STAR

As the National Citizen Party was launched yesterday at the capital's Manik Mia avenue, its top leaders raise their hands as a sign of success.

What does a second republic mean?

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Second republic signifies transformation of the political system through democratic means, rewriting or reform of constitution and political institutions following a revolution or mass uprising.

The term "second republic" has been used in various countries to refer to a specific period in their political history, usually marking a transition from one form of political system or government to another, said political analysts, in their instant reaction regarding the new political party's call.

The new party led by July uprising leaders also envisions a constituent assembly.

A professor of government and politics at Jahangirnagar University, Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, said the second republic indicates a revolution and the transformation of the political system through democratic means.

"It speaks of correcting the failures of the first republic through reformation and a new constitution, indicating a change in the political system and the entire political settlement," he said.

Dhaka University political science teacher Sabbir Ahmed said the leaders of the new party perceive that although the people had established ownership of the state through the independence of 1971, they had lost it afterwards.

"The people regained their ownership through the mass uprising of 2024, and therefore they now want to declare a second republic," he said attempting to explain the new party's vision.

"The second republic brings about fundamental changes in the state, the political system, and institutions. The constitution can be rewritten or formed anew and political institutions can be reconstituted or reformed as well," he added.

Asked about constituent assembly, Al Masud Hasanuzzaman explained that it is elected for the sole purpose of writing a new constitution.

TWO 'SECOND REPUBLICS'

The first French republic (1848-1852) after the French Revolution had given way to monarchy. The second French republic was established through the revolution of 1848 toppling the monarchy of King Louis-Philippe.

The liberal hopes of establishing an enduring democratic regime were soon frustrated. In 1848 Louis-Napoléon (a nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte) was elected president with a monarchist majority in the legislative assembly. This led to the enactment of conservative measures restricting voting rights and freedom of the press, giving the church increased control over education. Soon realizing that his power and future reelection were limited by the assembly's actions, Louis-Napoléon organized a coup d'état in 1851. Following a new constitution that reduced the assembly's power, and a plebiscite, Louis-Napoléon declared himself emperor Napoléon III in 1852. Louis-Napoléon, and thus the second empire was born.

France has so far had five republics with the last one founded in 1958.

Second Republic of Spain (1931-1939) emerged as King Alfonso XIII was forced to leave Spain after municipal elections showed massive support for republicanism. It led to the introduction of secular reforms, including separation of church and state. The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) led to collapse of Second republic and Francisco Franco established a dictatorship that lasted until 1975.

Pledge made to build a 'second republic'

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and ordinary citizens from across the country started arriving at the venue in the morning, with the NCP slated for an afternoon launch.

Many had travelled overnight. Their eyes were heavy with exhaustion but alight with anticipation. Most had come in groups, arms linked, voices filled with excitement.

"This is the change we fought for last year," said Imran Khan, a former Dhaka University student. "We want a political party that represents our generation."

By afternoon, the crowd swelled, spilling onto the streets surrounding the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. And amid the sea of people, one thing stood out—the red and green of the national flag. It was everywhere. Wrapped around foreheads, draped over shoulders, waving high above heads. From a distance, the gathering looked like a great tide of red and green, moving as one, a rhythmic wave of unity and hope.

"This flag is not just fabric. It carries our history, our struggle," said Nishat Rahman, a college student from Sirajganj, gripping her flag tightly.

Among the crowd was Abu Zar, who had left Terkhada, Khulna, at 2:00am

effective bureaucracy.

On foreign relations, he said, "We will maintain friendly ties, but without external prescriptions. Who enters the Ganabhaban or parliament will be decided by the people of Bangladesh—not by India."

Sarjis Alam, NCP's chief organiser (northern region), called for unity among all political parties to rebuild Bangladesh.

"Sheikh Hasina destroyed the country's institutions—we must come together to restore them and ensure her trial," he said.

Warning against political monopolies, he added, "If major parties suppress smaller ones, another autocracy could emerge. Let's learn from Hasina's example."

Nowsher Ali, father of uprising martyr Jabir Ibrahim, demanded an end to the practice of using brutal and deadly force to suppress protests.

Expressing his support for the party, he said, "I stand firmly with them in building a new Bangladesh. I want my country to be safe in their hands."

Mim Akhtar, sister of July martyr Ismail Hossain Rabbi, announced the names of Nahid and Akhter Hossen as the NCP convener and member

Abedin Shishir, Mohammad Muntasir Rahman, Gazi Salauddin Tanvir, Tamim Ahmed, and Tahsin Riaz

Akhter said, "The youth envision a future Bangladesh governed under a new constitution. With that dream in mind, I conclude by demanding an election for a constituent assembly."

As the sun dipped below the horizon, the crowd showed no sign of dispersing. The flags kept waving, their red and green catching the glow of streetlights and stage floodlights. Voices rose in unison, carrying the dream of a new Bangladesh. The crowd erupted in thunderous chants and applause as Nahid, wrapping a national flag on his speech, began the introductory speech around 6:30pm.

"Finally, we reaffirm our commitment to building a just and equitable society. We firmly believe that the July 2024 mass uprising was not just a victory against a fascist regime—it was a pledge to shape our future," Nahid said.

"Let us stand together, hand in hand, to build a Bangladesh where every citizen's voice is heard, where justice prevails, and where the struggle for people's rights defines politics. A nation founded on equality and human dignity."

Parties welcome NCP launch

Some congratulate, some apprehensive

MD ABBAS

Several political parties, including BNP, Jatiya Party, the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, Ganosamhati Andolon, and Islami Andolon Bangladesh, have welcomed the newly formed National Citizen Party (NCP), saying it has the potential to bring a shift in the country's political landscape.

Jatiya Party, however, claimed the new party had the "blessings of the interim government", while CPB warned that if any government affiliation was found within the NCP, the people would not accept it, which would be detrimental to its success.

Speaking to reporters at the capital's Manik Mia Avenue, where the NCP was formally launched, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi hoped the party would bring change and a new political dynamic to Bangladesh, offering a fresh perspective to the people.

"I hope the NCP will become a genuine political platform for the masses and that people will see it as nothing more than that."

Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader said the formation of this new party would strengthen the country's multi-party democracy.

However, he alleged the NCP is receiving preferential treatment from the interim government and enjoying various advantages, adding that some members of the government are affiliated with the party. He refrained from naming anyone.

Quader also questioned whether the upcoming parliamentary election, set to be held under the interim government, would be free and fair, given the government's apparent support for the NCP.

Meanwhile, CPB General Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince told The Daily Star his party welcomes any initiative that involves those who participated in the July uprising, upholds the spirit of the Liberation War, believes in democracy and secularism, and opposes discrimination.

"This party is now the talk of the country, which is natural. There're speculations that it was formed with 'the blessings of the interim government'. If any evidence of such affiliations comes up, the people will not accept them [NCP], and it will not be beneficial for the party either."

Regarding the NCP's declaration of a "second republic" or "new independence", Prince said, "They need to clarify what they mean by second republic because our independence came only through our great Liberation War. If this concept [of a new independence] seeks to undermine the Liberation War, then they don't truly recognise it [the 1971 war], regardless of what they claim publicly."

He further noted that while the NCP envisions equitable wealth distribution, it would not be able to achieve this goal if it continues to uphold a free-market economy. However, he said this was just his initial reaction. "My party will have further discussions [regarding the new party] internally."



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- Ruhul Kabir Rizvi
BNP Senior Joint Secretary General



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CPB General Secretary

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar told this newspaper that welcoming new political parties is the beauty of democracy.

"The formation of the NCP will play a positive role in advancing the country," he said, expressing hope that his party would engage with the NCP with mutual understanding.

Regarding the government's alleged support for the NCP, he said there was no clear evidence of such an affiliation so far.

Islami Andolon Bangladesh Secretary General Principal Hafiz Maulana Yunus Ahmad also congratulated the newly formed NCP, emphasising that a multi-party system is essential for democratic politics.

He said Bangladesh had developed a two-party system instead of a multi-party one, which had led to various political challenges in the country.

"The emergence of a new political party could serve as an alternative solution to this problem.... The formation of this youth-led political party brings hope to the nation."

Also congratulating the NCP, Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of the Ganosamhati Andolon, hoped the party, which was formed by the masses, would remain deeply connected to the people.

"If the party has clear goals and is committed to recognising the struggles of the masses, it will be able to win over the people of the country."



PHOTO: STAR

Leaders of the BNP, Jamaat, and other political parties at the rally for the launch of National Citizen Party.

secretary.

Akhter, who is also the member secretary of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee, read out a partial organogram of the party.

Samanta Shermeen and Ariful Islam Adib were named senior joint convenors, while Tasnim Jara and Nahida Sarwar Niva were appointed senior joint member secretaries.

Nagorik Committee Convener Nasiruddin Patwary was made the chief coordinator, while Abdul Hannan Masud will serve as the joint coordinator.

Nusrat Tabassum, Monira Sharmin, Mahub Alam, Sarwar Tushar, Advocate Mujahidul Islam Shahin, Tajnuva Zabin, Sultan Muhammad Zakaria, Atiq Mujahid, Ashraf Uddin Mahdi, Arpita Shyama Deba, Tanjil Mahmud, Anik Roy, Khaleda Saifullah, Javed Rasim, Ehtesham Haque, and Hasan Ali were made joint convenors.

Joint member secretaries of the 171-strong NCP committee are Abdullah Al Amin, Arif Sohail, Rashidul Islam Rifat, Mahin Sarkar, Mohammad Nizam Uddin, Akram Hossain, SM Saif Mustafiz, Saleh Uddin Sifat (attached to the office cell), Alauddin Muhammad, Farid Uddin, Mohammad Farhad Alam Bhuiyan, Mohammad Miraj Mia, Lutfar Rahman, Mohammad Mainul Islam Tuhin, Mushfiqur Salehin, Zahidul Islam, Zahirul Islam Musa, Humayra Noor, Mushfiqur Rahman Juhon, Molla Mohammad Faruq Ehsan, Shagufta Bushra Bismah, Ahanaf Saeed Khan, Abu Saeed Mohammad Sujauddin, Mir Arshadul Haque, Faisal Mahmud Shant, Tarek Reza, Mashhur Rahman, Zainal