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‘Govt silent over attacks on Mahfuj’

Alleges Nahid; govt condemns attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite repeated attacks on Mahfuj Alam, the interim government has neither taken decisive action nor issued strong statements, alleged Nahid Islam, convener of the National Citizen Party, in a post on his Facebook page yesterday.

“Not a single adviser or press secretary has commented on these incidents. There seems to be a silent consent also within the government and advisory council for humiliating or even eliminating Mahfuj Alam,” said Nahid.

“Those in power have exploited figures like him and are now pushing them towards death. We will remember this – and there will be a political reckoning,” warned the NCP chief.



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A displaced Palestinian child walks amid devastated tents, following an overnight Israeli strike that levelled a building and damaged the surrounding temporary shelters, in the Rimal neighbourhood of Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



FARIDA PARVEEN
(Dec 1954–Sept 2025)

Lalon songbird takes final bow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Celebrated folk singer Farida Parveen, revered as the “Queen of Lalon Geeti”, passed away at 10:15pm last night. She was 70.

The news was confirmed to The Daily Star by Ashis Kumar Chakraborty, managing director of Universal Medical College Hospital. Farida is survived by her husband and four children.

After battling kidney complications for years, her health worsened in recent months, requiring dialysis twice

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Jamaat, 6 other parties to wage simultaneous movements

Will demand implementation of the charter, PR for upper house

RASHIDUL HASAN

The political arena is bracing for fresh heat as the Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Andolan Bangladesh and five like-minded parties have moved to begin simultaneous movements this week for a four-point demand, including immediate implementation of the July Charter.

According to IAB, the other like-minded parties are Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish, Gono Odhikar Parishad, Amar Bangladesh Party, Khelafat Majlish, and Bangladesh Nezame Islam Party.

Their three other demands include banning the politics of Jatiya Party as “Awami League’s accomplice and India’s agent”, implementing the proportional representation system for an upper house in the upcoming national election, and creating a level playing field for the polls.

Top leaders of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish and IAB told The Daily Star that the National Citizen Party agreed to join their movement.

However, NCP’s Senior Joint Convener and Chief of Political Liaison Ariful Islam Adib in a message told this newspaper that the party has not yet made any decision regarding joining any alliance or simultaneous movements.

He said the NCP held informal discussions with several political parties over its demand for a legal basis of the July Charter and the framing of a new constitution through a constituent assembly election. “We want the PR system for the upper house only,” Ariful added.

He also said the NCP will support the demand for banning Jatiya Party’s organisational activities since it is

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Govt cuts specialist care for children with special needs

SHISHU BIKASH CENTRES

NILIMA JAHAN

For children with special needs, the 35 Shishu Bikash Kendras have been more than clinics – they are lifelines offering hope in a country where proper, affordable care is rare.

Launched in 2008 to provide free treatment and therapy, these government-run child development centres have transformed countless families’ lives.

Their future, however, now hangs in the balance, as the project’s term expired last June and the government plans to run it on a shoestring budget.

As part of this plan, all developmental paediatricians – doctors trained to manage complex neurodevelopmental conditions – are to be removed and replaced with general paediatricians attached to hospitals.

With staffers unpaid for 14 months, doctors facing dismissal, and thousands of vulnerable children at risk, experts and parents say the government is abandoning children with special needs.

Under the Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Programme, the health ministry set up the 35 centres – 24 in medical college

AT A GLANCE

The 35 centres serve children aged 0–16

ISSUES TREATED

Autism

Down syndrome

Cerebral palsy

ADHD

Seizures

Epilepsy

Delayed speech

Intellectual disabilities

Neurodevelopmental disorders

243,000 children received treatment

hospitals and 11 in district hospitals – staffed by developmental paediatricians, therapists, and child psychologists.

The centres treat children aged

0–16 with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, ADHD, epilepsy, delayed speech, intellectual disabilities and other disorders.

Patient numbers rose from under 10,000 in the first year to over 56,000 in 2022–23. In total, 243,000 children have received treatment, with more than 1,000 attending daily between 8:30am and 2:30pm.

To bridge the gap after the project’s closure, the health ministry had proposed a two-year initiative titled “Implementation of Essential Activities of the DGHS, DGDA and Community Clinic Health Assistance Trust”.

However, when the finance ministry sent the plan to the Planning Commission, posts for developmental paediatricians were dropped. Instead, it suggested outsourcing 35 therapists and 12 psychologists.

Experts warned that cutting specialist care may save money in the short term but will raise far greater costs later, as children deprived of early treatment risk growing up dependent on long-term state support.

Dr Shaidur Rahman Shohag,

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Killing Hamas chiefs in Qatar will end war in Gaza

Says Netanyahu; US says Doha strike ‘not going to change’ ties

AGENCIES

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday said that getting rid of Hamas chiefs living in Qatar would remove the main obstacle to releasing all hostages and ending the war in Gaza.

Israel targeted the Hamas leadership in Doha in air strikes that were condemned by Qatar, which has served as one of the venues for ceasefire talks.

Hamas has said five of its members, including a son of its exiled Gaza chief Khalil al-Hayya, were killed in the attack, but its senior leaders and members of its negotiating team survived. Qatar has said a member of its internal security forces was also killed.

“The Hamas terrorist chiefs living in Qatar don’t care about the people in Gaza. They blocked all ceasefire attempts in order to endlessly drag out the war,” he said on X.

“Getting rid of them would rid the main obstacle to releasing all our hostages and ending the war.”

Hamas has described the Doha attack as an attempt by Israel to derail the ceasefire negotiations, and said it would not change the group’s terms for ending the war in Gaza.

Israel has demanded Hamas free all remaining hostages held in Gaza and disarm. Hamas says it will not free all hostages without an agreement that would end the war, and will not give up its weapons until Palestinians have an independent state.

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Nepal sets polls date on March 5 next year

Parliament dissolved; Yunus greets Karki as she takes charge

AGENCIES

Nepal’s President Ramchandra Paudel has dissolved parliament and called for fresh elections on March 5 next year following a week of deadly violence that culminated in the appointment of the country’s first woman prime minister.

The statement from Paudel’s office late on Friday came just hours after he announced former Chief Justice Sushila Karki would lead the country on an interim basis following the deadly “Gen Z”-led anti-graft protests that forced former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli to resign.

According to the statement, the president has “dissolved the House of Representatives” and fixed March 5 next year for the elections.

Karki was appointed after two days of intense negotiations between Paudel, army chief Ashok Raj Sigdel and the protest leaders behind Nepal’s worst upheaval in years, in which at least 51 people were killed and more than 1,300 injured.

Nepal’s southern neighbour, India, said it hoped that the developments would help foster peace and stability.

Kakri began work yesterday by visiting young protesters wounded in the deadly anti-corruption rallies that ousted her predecessor.

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ASIA CUP 2025 Lankans outclass Tigers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sri Lanka outclassed Bangladesh in every department to secure a convincing six-wicket victory in a Group B Asia Cup encounter at the Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

Having restricted the Tigers to 139 for five in 20 overs, the Lankans also dominated with the bat, chasing down the target in just 14.4 overs.

Despite a commanding seven-wicket win over Hong Kong in their first game, Bangladesh now find themselves in a tricky position. The Litton Das-led side not only need to win their next game against Afghanistan on Tuesday but may also have to rely on the outcome of other group matches to qualify as one of the top two teams.

Bangladesh got off to a woeful start after being put in to bat, losing both openers – Tanzid Hasan Tamim and Parvez Hossain Emon – in 1.4 overs without a run on the board. Sri Lanka’s bowlers piled on the pressure, reducing the Tigers to 53 for five in

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Bangladesh batter Towhid Hridoy is caught short of his crease as Sri Lanka players celebrate during a Group B Asia Cup encounter in Abu Dhabi yesterday. It was a disappointing day for the Tigers, who suffered a six-wicket defeat as the Lankans chased down a 140-run target in just 14.4 overs.

PHOTO: AFP