



## Peaceful BNP rally brings sigh of relief

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN, HELEMUL ALAM and DIPAN NANDY

Allaying public fears of violence, the BNP yesterday held its Dhaka rally peacefully and unveiled a 10-point demand to “restore democracy”.

The demands include the resignation of the Awami League government and dissolution of parliament.

The event in the capital's Golapbagh wrapped up the opposition party's series of rallies that began two and a half months ago.

From the rally, the BNP announced protest rallies across the country for December 13 and processions for December 24.

The processions will be a part of its movement to press home the demand for a non-partisan administration to oversee the next election.

Some like-minded parties including Jamaat-e-Islam too will simultaneously organise programmes on similar demands, sources said.

To garner support for its demands, the BNP at the rally announced all seven lawmakers of the party will resign from parliament, and the resignation letters will be sent to the Speaker today.

Five of the lawmakers were present on the stage while one was abroad and the other was sick.

Although there was no transport strike ahead of the rally, unlike the rallies in other divisional cities, few

- ✓ BNP placed a 10-point demand, including dissolution of JS
- ✓ 7 lawmakers of the party to resign from parliament today
- ✓ Protest rallies nationwide on December 13
- ✓ Processions on December 24
- ✓ Simultaneous movement with like-minded parties

public transport was seen in the capital and mobile internet in Golapbagh was slowed down.

The venue was confirmed only hours before the event, and BNP supporters alleged many of them were prevented from attending the rally. Despite this, tens of thousands of people made it to the event.

“The ruling party conspired to foil our rally... but you've come here defying all odds,” BNP Standing Committee Member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said, addressing the rally as the chief guest.

People from different parts of the country attended the event. The crowds, which included many women, spilled over a kilometre on roads adjacent to the venue. Police diverted traffic from those roads.

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## Quitting JS won't help BNP much

### Experts on resignation of the party's 7 MPs

RASHIDUL HASAN

The BNP at its Dhaka rally yesterday announced all its seven MPs will resign from parliament.

The announcement was apparently designed to pile pressure on the government to realise the party's demand for holding the next national polls under a non-partisan caretaker government.

Although there has been talk that its MPs might resign from parliament in a bid to up the tempo of the ongoing anti-government movement, the party took this decision at a time when

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## Their rallies are picnics

### Addressing AL Savar gathering, Quader says about BNP

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH and SHEIKH TAJUL ISLAM TAJ

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said it would be a blunder for the BNP if seven of its lawmakers resigned from parliament.

“There is no reason to think that parliament will be paralysed if the seven go. The BNP will have to regret [making] this blunder.”

He came up with the remark while

addressing an AL rally at the Radio Colony Model School and College ground in Savar yesterday afternoon, hours after the BNP lawmakers made the announcement of the resignations at their party rally in Dhaka's Golapbagh.

“The BNP has turned their rally into picnic. They have also done this in rallies in other districts. Where does the money come from? We know the businessmen and industrialists who give them money and how

much. They are financing the BNP to arrange such picnics,” said Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister.

He claimed that the BNP appointed a British lawyer to lobby in the US and the UK for sanctions on Rab and police. The party's acting chairman Tarique Rahman is spreading propaganda against Bangladesh by appointing lobbyists abroad.

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Olivier Giroud (C) celebrates as Harry Kane failed to equalise from the spot in the 84th minute. France edged past England 2-1 in a thrilling World Cup quarter-final at the Al Bayt stadium yesterday and are on course to become the first team to retain the title since Brazil in 1958-1962.

PHOTO: AFP



## DESERT FEST

### When the greatest are to say goodbye



NAZIBA BASHER

While I may have started watching football during the time of the great Zinedine Zidane, understanding teams -- their strategies, styles, stars, et al -- came to me much later.

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## France see off England in nail-biter

### High-flying Morocco await the holders

AFP, Al Khor

Olivier Giroud scored the winner and Harry Kane missed a late penalty as holders France beat England 2-1 in a tense World Cup quarter-final on Saturday.

Aurelien Tchouameni had swept France into a first-half lead only for Kane to equalise from the spot nine minutes into the second half.

England were the better side for long stretches of the game at Al Bayt Stadium but, almost from nowhere, France went back in front when Giroud headed home with 11 minutes left.

Kane then blazed his second penalty of the game over the bar as England's wait to win a first major international trophy since the 1966 World Cup goes on.

France though remain on course to become the first side since Brazil 60 years ago to successfully defend the World Cup.

With Brazil having been eliminated on Friday and England dealt with here in the desert north of Doha, France are now surely the favourites to retain their crown as they prepare to face Morocco in the semi-finals.

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