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SECOND EDITION

"We recognise China poses a systemic challenge to our values and interests, a challenge that grows more acute as it moves towards even greater authoritarianism."

British PM Rishi Sunak



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DECEMBER 10 RALLY

## Govt, BNP at odds over venue

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government and the BNP appear to be on a collision course over the venue of the latter's much-talked about December 10 Dhaka rally as neither would budge on its stance.

The opposition party has been insisting it would hold the rally in front of its headquarters at Nayapaltan at any cost while the government and law enforcers have been saying the BNP would not be allowed to hold the rally anywhere but Suhrawardy Udyan.

office," Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, senior joint secretary general of the party, told The Daily Star.

The BNP has been holding a series of rallies in its organisational cities to protest price hike of essentials and fuel and to press home the demand for its chief Khaleda Zia's permanent release from jail.

The December 10 rally is supposed to wrap up the series.

The country's politics started emitting heat after some BNP leaders said they would unseat the government on the day of the rally while some Awami League leaders said they would not allow the

"The government to take tough actions if the party holds its rally at Nayapaltan with the aim of creating chaos."

Hasan Mahmud  
joint general secretary of AL

"We will hold our rally in front of the Nayapaltan office."

Ruhul Kabir Rizvi  
senior joint secretary general of BNP

Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday gave the BNP permission to hold the rally at Suhrawardy Udyan on 26 conditions.

Some of the conditions are no gathering outside the venue; supporters can go to the venue no earlier than two hours before the start of the rally; no sticks and rods can be carried by supporters; no anti-state statements or activities; no processions to join the rally; and no inciteful speech or leaflets.

The DMP said the rally organisers would be held responsible in case of deterioration of law and order.

The BNP, however, is defiant. "I got a letter from DMP. But we will hold our rally in front of the Nayapaltan

BNP to hold any rally in Dhaka.

Amid such a situation, a BNP delegation met the DMP commissioner on November 15 and sought permission for a rally in front of its office.

Sources in the police said the law enforcers, not keen on giving permission for the rally at Nayapaltan, asked the BNP for alternative venues.

The BNP then proposed Suhrawardy Udyan and Manik Mia Avenue.

The DMP commissioner rejected Manik Mia Avenue citing the thoroughfare is not used for political rallies anymore and that it is too close to the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban and the Gono Bhaban, the police sources said.

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Christian Pulisic stepped up to score the decisive goal during the United States' 1-0 win over Iran at the Al Thumama Stadium in Doha. Although he was hurt in the process of bundling this effort home, the result means the USA progress to the last 16 where they will meet the Netherlands.

PHOTO: REUTERS



## England set up Senegal clash

USA brace for Dutch challenge in Ro16

AFP, Doha

Marcus Rashford believes the best is yet to come from England at the World Cup after cruising into the last 16 with a 3-0 win over Wales on Tuesday while Christian Pulisic fired the United States into the last 16 as the Americans downed Iran 1-0 in their politically charged grudge match.

Rashford scored twice to move into a group of four players level on three goals in the race for the Golden Boot. Phil Foden was also on target as the Three Lions set up a last 16 clash with Senegal on Sunday.

"This is what I play football for, the biggest moments, the best moments," Rashford, who has experienced a huge upturn in form for club and country this season,

told the BBC. "I'm really happy today that we're going through to the next round. I have massive ambition for this team and think we can play even better than we showed today."

England are the tournament's top scorers with nine goals despite drawing their second group game against the United States 0-0. Rashford was one of four changes

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DESERT FEST

Confident Brazil move along amid mayhem



AL-AMIN

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In what has so far been a roller coaster World Cup, record five-time champions Brazil remain unscathed after victories against two feisty European sides.

While the 2-0 win against Serbia in the opening game was more about Jogo Bonito -- a demonstration of the beautiful game associated with Brazil -- the second, against a deep-defending Switzerland, was something of a chore before a sublime late strike from the omnipresent Casemiro sealed the game 1-0.

That victory took the Selecao to the last 16 with a group-stage game in hand and the Brazilians could not have asked for a better start to their fresh pursuit

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## INCOME TAX RETURN Submission deadline may be extended till Dec 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) may extend by one month the deadline for the submission of income tax returns amid demands from various quarters, said officials yesterday.

In a letter to the NBR chairman yesterday, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry sought the extension, citing that many had been unable to complete the submission due to difficulties arising from the recent economic downturns.

The tax administration is likely to issue a notification in this regard today, the final day of filing income and wealth statements by individuals without any penalty.

This would be the third consecutive year the NBR is granting more time to

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## FY23's first budget support materialises

China-backed AIIB approves \$250m

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has become the first multilateral lender to respond to Bangladesh's call for budget support this fiscal year to weather the impacts of the Ukraine war after its board approved \$250 million last week.

The government has sought \$500 million as budget support from the Beijing-based multilateral lender and on November 23, its board approved half the sum, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

The loan programme is meant for improving the coverage and efficiency of social protection programmes, building the resilience of the disadvantaged and supporting an inclusive recovery.

The programme, which is being co-financed with the Asian Development Bank, will help improve the inclusiveness and responsiveness of social development in Bangladesh, reads the project documents.

The Manila-based multilateral lender is supposed to provide another \$250 million, which is yet to be approved by the board. ADB would be thrashing out the terms for the programme with the

government.

The government is expecting \$1-1.5 billion in budget support from development partners this fiscal year to ride out the wave of elevated global commodity prices and inflation unleashed by the pandemic and the Ukraine war.



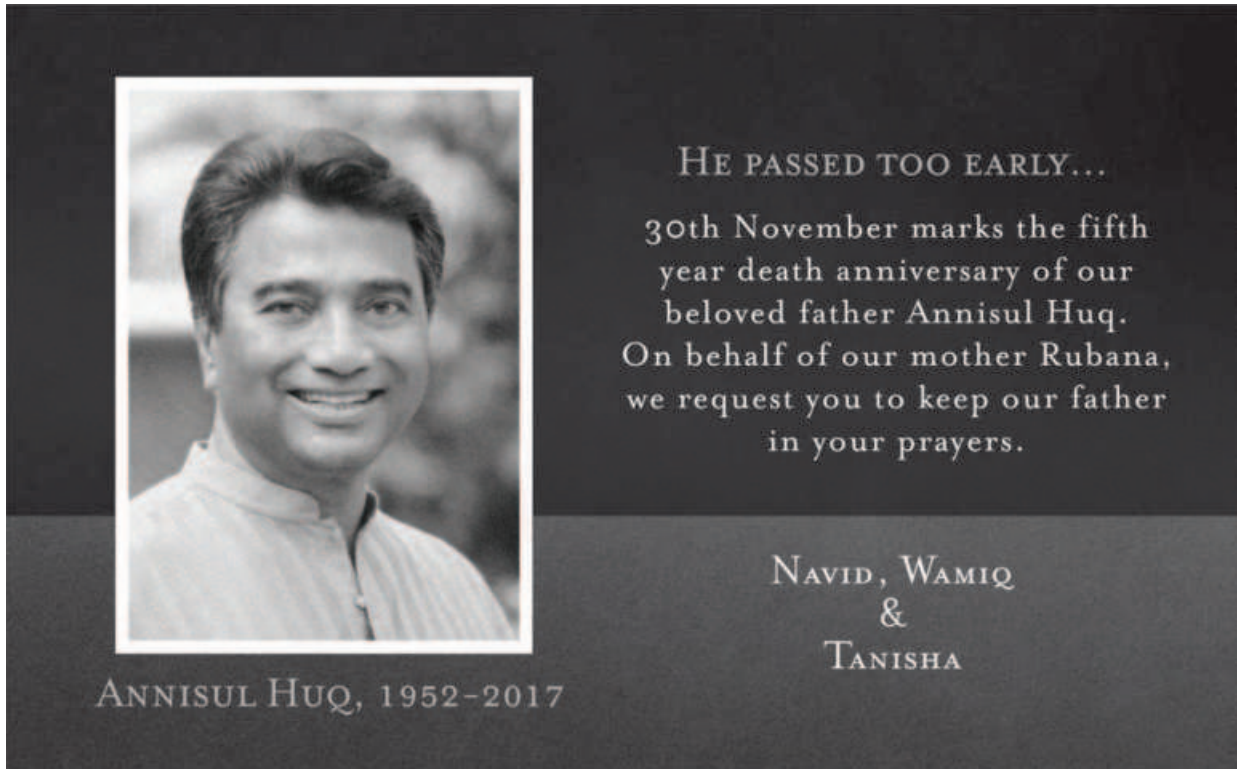
The first instalment of \$447.8 million from the International Monetary Fund's prospective \$4.5 billion loan package is expected in February, while ADB has intimated it would provide \$500 million.

The World Bank would provide \$250 million. Another \$250 million could have been obtained but the government is dithering on some of the policy reforms the lender has sought for the funds.

Japan International Cooperation Agency is likely to provide \$500 million.

The expected budget support for this fiscal year is not inconsequential at all, said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the WB's Dhaka office.

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