



People hold signs next to a mock border barricade during a protest by anti-Brexit campaigners, Borders Against Brexit in Carrickcarnan, Ireland, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## In S'pore, Ershad

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Singapore National University Hospital on January 20 with multiple complications including low haemoglobin.

Ershad's younger brother Hossain Moshred and his wife Roksana Khan Moshred and Ershad's Personal Assistant Maj (retd) Khaled Akhtar have been accompanying him there.

As he was leaving for Singapore, Khaled said, "His [Ershad] bilirubin count is high and he is also suffering from acute knee pain."

The JP chairman has hardly been able to take food properly for nearly a month due to liver complications which has further deteriorated his health."

The acting chairman of the party GM Quader told The Daily Star last week that Ershad's liver condition was quite serious.

JP Secretary General Moshiur Rahman Ranga yesterday told a doa-mahfil at the party's Kakrail office that Ershad would probably return by January 30.

At another doa-mahfil last week, Quader said Ershad was able to walk without any assistance.

The 89-year-old former military dictator had been undergoing treatment at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka for three months before he was taken to Singapore on December 10.

The JP took part in the December 30 election as part of the ruling grand alliance and bagged 22 seats. Ershad won in Rangpur 3.

But on January 4, he issued a statement saying he would act as the opposition leader, a day after his party decided to be part of the ruling alliance. The sudden change of mind surprised and aggrieved many JP lawmakers.

In the statement, he also appointed his younger brother Quader as deputy leader of the opposition.

Some JP lawmakers had been saying that Quader's leadership might face challenges from several MPs loyal to JP Senior Co-Chairperson Raushan Ershad, who was in favour of joining the government.

Over the last few days, several JP senior leaders have been remaining absent at the party events.

## Jubo League

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Khan Road of the city, said Abu Bakar Siddiq, officer-in-charge of Kishoreganj Sadar Police Station.

Locals later rescued the siblings and sent them to Kishoreganj General Hospital. As their conditions deteriorated, they were shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where Yusuf succumbed to his injuries around 10:30pm, he added.

Police detained five people for interrogation, the OC told The Daily Star.

No case was lodged in this connection till the filing of this report.

Meanwhile, two Chhatra League activists were injured in a factional clash in Chaudanga.

The two are Miraz Uddin, 22, and Basir Ahmed, 22, students of Chaudanga Poura Degree College.

Panna Begum, mother of Miraz, filed a case with Chaudanga Police Station in this connection.

According to the case statement, supporters of Mofizur Rahman, former joint secretary of Chaudanga municipality unit BCL, cut off a vein in Miraz's left leg and hit Basir's head with iron sticks.

The attackers fled the scene as locals came forward to protect the two, the case statement added.

A total of 14 Chhatra League men were accused in the case when some Mofizur was made the prime accused, said Abdul Khaled, officer-in-charge of Chaudanga Sadar Police Station.

Contacted, Mohaimen Hossain Joarder Anik, president of Chaudanga BCL, said he was looking into the matter.

[Our Mymensingh and Kushtia correspondents contributed to the report.]

## Trump backs off shutdown

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required to work without pay. Many employees as well as contractors were turning to unemployment assistance, food banks and other support. Others began seeking new jobs.

With polls showing most Americans blamed him for the painful shutdown - the longest of its kind in US history - Trump embraced a way out of the crisis that Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had been pushing for weeks. The shutdown, which pitted Pelosi against Trump, was her first test since assuming the post three weeks ago. She drew praise from fellow Democrats for what they said was an outmaneuvering of the president.

Top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer said he hoped the experience would be a "lesson learned" for Trump and his party that it is self-defeating to shut the government over policy disputes. Schumer said Democrats and Trump have "so many areas" of agreement on border security but not a wall.

Democrats remained unyielding in their opposition to a wall, one of Trump's signature campaign promises that they call ineffective, costly and immoral. Trump has said a wall is needed to curb illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

Asked by reporters if she could guarantee there will not be another government shutdown in three weeks, Pelosi said, "I can't assure the public about anything that the president will do, but I do have to say I'm optimistic."

An administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that stories of law enforcement officials not being able to do their jobs at full capacity helped convince Trump to agree to a short-term solution to reopen the government. The official said the White House ultimately would accept a deal with lawmakers if it includes wall funding, even if it is less than \$5.7 billion.

"We really have no choice but to build a powerful wall or steel barrier," Trump said. "If we don't get a fair deal from Congress, the government will either shut down on Feb 15 - again - or I would use the powers afforded to me under the laws and the Constitution of the United States to address this emergency."

He previously has indicated he was considering an emergency declaration to circumvent congressional funding powers if lawmakers do not fund his wall, an action that almost certainly would be swiftly challenged by Democrats as exceeding his authority under the US Constitution.

Trump triggered the shutdown, which began on Dec 22, with his wall-funding demand after being criticized by conservative commentators for being willing to sign legislation funding the government without securing wall money.

Conservative commentator Ann

14 years gone

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former state minister Lutfozzaman Babar, an accused in the case, was absent.

"There are some accused, like Babar, who move from jail to jail because of being charged in different cases and cannot appear before the court on time."

"From last August to this January, the case was deferred four times," he added.

The prosecutor also said that the court was yet to frame charges against the accused in the other case filed under the explosive act.

Meanwhile, Dr Reza Kibria, son of ASM Kibria, said, "The trial is being progressed based on incomplete investigation reports."

"We believe that there are a lot of truths hidden under the surface, and we cannot get justice for the murder this way," he added.

Family members, relatives and well-wishers of the famous leader will offer tribute at his grave at Banani Intellectual Graveyard in the capital today, Reza also said.

BGB 'rescues'

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was a member of the Myanmar Army.

"We will hand him over to Myanmar border guards soon on completion of our interrogation."

## Iran accuses France of 'destabilising' region

AFP, Tehran

Iran has accused France of being a destabilising force in the region after its foreign minister threatened new sanctions against Tehran over its missile programme.

"The Islamic republic has always called for the strengthening of peace and stability in the region," the Iranian foreign ministry said in a statement released overnight Friday.

As such Iran "considers the mass sales of sophisticated and offensive weapons by... France as a factor in destabilising the balance of the region," the statement said.

It came after French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian on Friday said Paris was ready to impose new sanctions on Tehran if talks on its missile programme and its regional influence fail to make progress.

"We have begun a difficult dialogue with Iran... and unless progress is made we are ready to apply sanctions, firmly, and they know it," Le Drian said.

Le Drian also demanded that Iran change its behaviour in the region, specifically regarding its military presence in Syria.

The Iranian foreign ministry responded saying "Iran's missile programme is not negotiable" and warned that "any new sanction by European countries will lead to a review of our relations with them".

## Another rape

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student was allegedly gang raped by two men in Nadmula village while she was on her way to her grandmother's house nearby.

Later on January 17, the girl's father filed a case with Bhandaria Police Station accusing Sajal and one Rakib.

"We have come to know that Sajal was an accused in a rape case filed with Bhandaria Police Station. We are investigating his murder," OC Enamul said.

None of Sajal's family members could be reached for comments.

Earlier on January 17, one of the key suspects in the gang-rape and murder of a female garment worker was also found shot dead in Savar with a note that read "I am the prime accused in a rape case".

## Fizz sinks

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Rajshahi's left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman who picked up two wickets and eventually helped the side clinch their fifth win in ten games. This was Chittagong's second consecutive defeat but the port-city outfit remain on top of the points table with six wins in nine games.

Yasir Ali top scored with 58 runs off 38 balls while opener Mohammad Shahzad added 49, however, it was not enough as Chittagong fell short in the end.

Mustafizur was yet again the pick of the bowlers for Rajshahi, bagging three wickets for just 28 runs from his four overs while Kamrul Islam and Mehedi Hasan Miraz took two wickets each.

Earlier, Rajshahi posted the tremendous total riding on a 43-ball 55-run knock from opener Johnson Charles while Chris Jonker added a quickfire 17-ball 37-run, laced with three sixes and a four, later in the innings.

In the day's first game, Sylhet Sixers kept their hopes for a spot in the playoffs alive by registering a comprehensive 58-run win over Khulna Titans.

In chase of a huge 196-run target, Khulna were all-out on 137 in 18.1 overs without a fight. Brendon Taylor's 34 was the highest score for the batting side while left-arm spinner Nabil Samad was the pick of the bowlers for Sylhet, bagging three wickets for 20 runs from his four overs.

Sylhet posted 195 for four, courtesy of a flying start from Liton Das and Afif Hossain as the two added 71 runs for the opening wicket. Liton was dismissed after scoring 34 off 22 balls while young Afif top scored with 49 off 37 balls, however, after their departure Sylhet lost their way at the middle.

It was then Sabbir Rahman and Mohammad Nawaz who added a blistering 89-run unbeaten fifth-wicket stand as Sylhet gained momentum, scoring 76 runs in the last five overs.

Sabbir remained unbeaten on 44 runs off 29 balls, including two sixes and four fours, while Nawaz was not out on 39 runs off 21 balls featuring two sixes and three fours.

With four wins in ten games, Sylhet will have to win their next two games and also depend on favourable results from the other teams to get a place in the playoff.

## Kuldip Nayar

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uncompromising stand on secularism, human rights and liberty, died on August 23 last year at his Delhi house after a prolonged spell of age-related ailments. He was 95 at the time.

A former editor of The Indian Express newspaper, Nayar was a lifelong votary of the robust India-Bangladesh relations and an ardent advocate of India's troubled ties with Pakistan.

A nightmar app

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names during short clips played in cinemas before the main screening, and now authorities in Hebei have announced an app that detects debtors in a 500-meter-radius, allowing users to report or shame them.

Described as "a map of deadbeat debtors", the controversial app can be accessed through Chinese all-in-one social media platform WeChat. State-run newspaper China Daily reports that the app can be used to detect debtors within a 500-meter radius. Debtors' information can also be accessed through the app, making it easier for "whistle blowers" to report them if they appear capable of paying their debts.

"It's a part of our measures to enforce our rulings and create a socially credible environment," a spokesperson for the Higher People's Court of Hebei said.

It's been reported that the "map of deadbeat debtors" shows the exact location of a person in debt, making it easier for users of the app to identify them, but it's unclear whether it will show people with any debt or only those over a certain threshold.

Russia is the only other country that even comes close to China when it comes to cracking down on debtors. Just a couple of days ago we reported on the unconventional method used by a public utilities company in Irkutsk to scare people into paying their debts. It installed a wooden outdoor toilet labeled "Toilet for Debtors" outside an apartment building, to remind residents that they risked having their utilities cut off.

During a visit, this correspondent found the structure in shambles with plasters falling off the faded walls full of cracks.

Locals and the residents claimed that the building was made in 1890, but according to the findings of the archaeology department, it was built in 1920.

Any structure needs to be at least 100 years old to obtain the heritage status, said Lovy Yasmin, deputy director of the department, adding that they had conducted a survey of the building and sent a report to Dhaka in early 2018 saying it could be restored and preserved even though the struc-

## Khaled sent Tk 39 lakh

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Where the duo had been hiding and how they had collected the money would be known after interrogating Khaled further, he added.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Khaled on a six-day remand in a case filed with Mugda Police Station under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Police earlier said Khaled and Ripon went to India in April 2016, just two months before 20 hostages, 17 of them foreigners, and two police officers were killed during a terror siege at the Holey Artisan Bakery, a posh cafe in Gulshan.

According to Rab, Khaled came back from hiding in October 2017 and was trying to reunite militants again.

With him, all the eight charge-sheeted accused in the cafe attack case have now been arrested. The Rab caught fugitive Ripon from Gazipur on January 20.

Khaled also led the killing of Prof Rezaul Karim, a teacher of RU English department, on April 23, Rab says.

A Rajshahi court sentenced Khaled and another JMB militant Maskawath Hasan Sakib alias Abdullah to death and three others -- Rahmatullah, Abdus Sattar and Ripon -- to life imprisonment over the Rezaul killing in May last year.

Khaled, himself a student of the RU English department, went into hiding after coordinating the killing of his teacher, said Mufti Mahmud.

Asked why he led the killing of his teacher, the Rab official said, "The murder was part of JMB's plan and there was no personal grudge."

The responsibility for the murder was reportedly claimed by the Islamic State.

Hailing from Bagmara of Rajshahi, Khaled was a talented student and got scholarship in class V and class VIII, said his father Abdul Hakim, a teacher of Bagmara Pilot High School.

But he dropped out when he was a third-year student at Rajshahi University in 2013 and became involved with the militant group, according to Rab.

Khaled last contacted his father in May 2015. "I called him on May 23 in 2015 and since then his phone has been switched off," said Abdul Hakim.

The father also said they used to have normal conversations before Khaled went missing and he didn't see any change in his son back then.

"I wanted him to be a civil service officer," Hakim said, adding that he never thought that his son would end up this way.

"If he's involved in such crimes, he should be punished."

Initially inspired by Islamic State, Khaled was motivated by one of his seniors at the RU named Ahsan Habib Show. First they started spreading extremist ideologies in educational institutions based in Rajshahi and

## 'Drug dealer'

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