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## RAPE INCIDENTS CPB raises black flag in protest

Army, cops guard party office after calls online to take it over

### STAR REPORT

The Communist Party of Bangladesh raised a black flag at its central office in the capital yesterday, protesting a surge in rape incidents and demanding punishment to the perpetrators.

The event took place amid tensions over calls online to take over the CPB headquarters. However, nothing untoward happened as police and army personnel guarded the facility.

In the presence of police and army men, CPB leaders raised a black flag at 10:40am.

Earlier in the day, CPB leaders and activists gathered at the office to protect the building. Some had stayed overnight to ensure its safety.

Meanwhile, several left-leaning student bodies cancelled their anti-rape march, fearing chaos on Dhaka University campus.

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## Hours after detention, suspect dies at hospital

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A murder suspect died while under treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday, hours after detectives detained and took him to the hospital, family members have said.

They said DB officials picked up Ezaz Bin Alam around 3:00am yesterday from a hospital in the capital's Saat Masjid Road, where he was already taking treatment.

He died at the dialysis centre of DMCH around 6:08pm, police said.

According to the DMCH register, Sub Inspector Mahfuz of the DB police admitted Ezaz to the hospital.

DB chief Rezaul Karim Mallick denied that the man died in their custody.

"A team detained him at a city hospital and found him sick. We then immediately took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where he died while undergoing treatment. We did not take him into our custody," said Rezaul, an additional commissioner (Detective Branch) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Hafizur Rahman, inspector (investigation) of Mohammadpur Police Station, said Ezaz was wanted in a murder case.

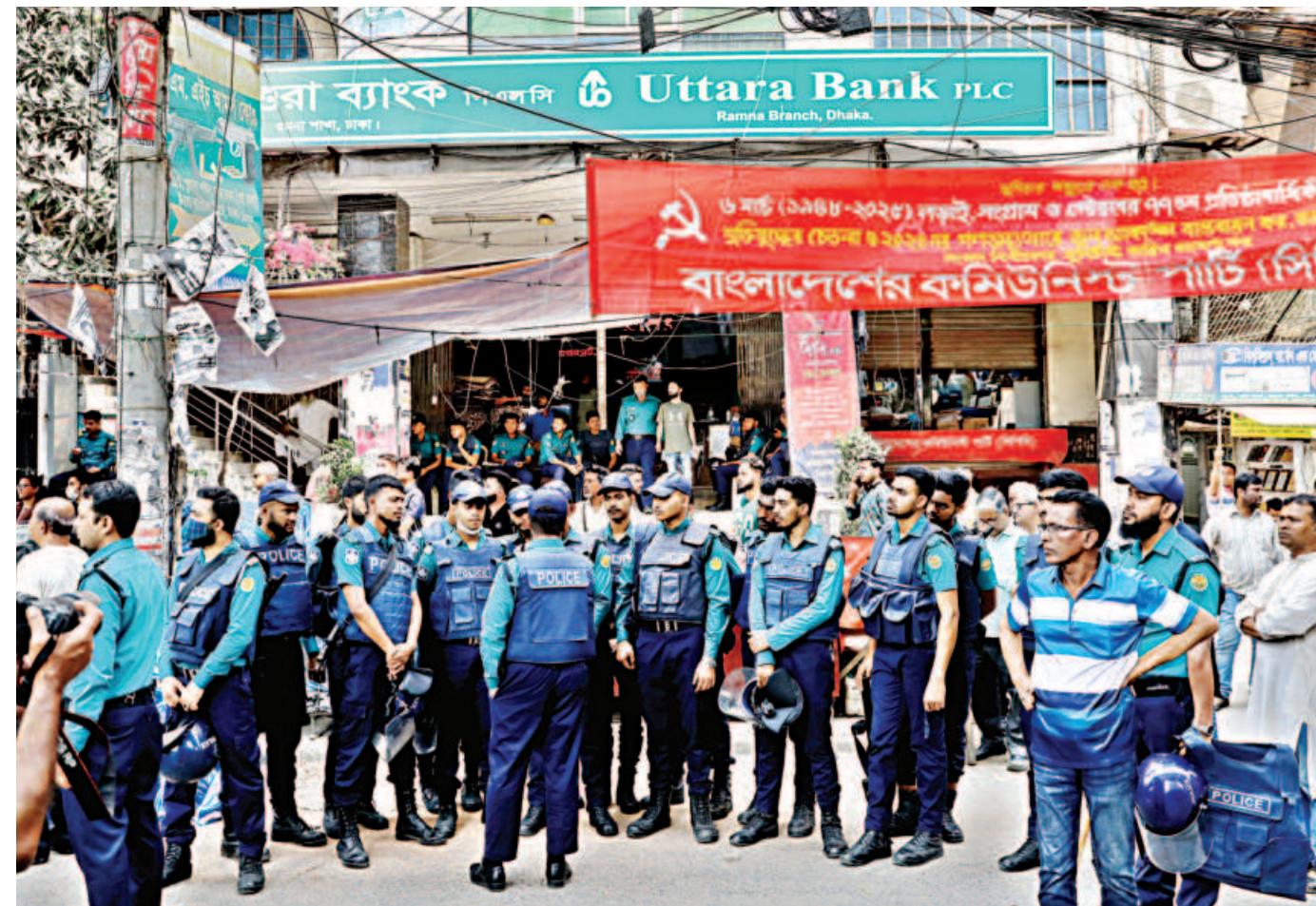
Victim's father Shah Alam said his son was picked up by a joint forces team from Mohammadpur's Baroikhali area on March 10.

"He was then taken to a nearby camp. At the camp, he was tortured severely and then handed over to Mohammadpur police early on the morning of March 11."

He added that Mohammadpur police then produced Ezaz before a Dhaka court, which granted him bail.

"Once he got bail, we admitted him to the hospital as he was sick. But again, he was picked up by the DB police," Alam told The Daily Star.

Itfekhar Hasan, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, said, "An army team arrested Ezaz and then



Policemen stand guard outside the Communist Party of Bangladesh office on Topkhana Road in the capital yesterday as security measures were heightened in response to calls online to take over the party office.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

### MAGURA RAPE Accused gives confessional statement

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Bengaluru

The prime accused in the sensational rape and murder case of an eight-year-old child in Magura yesterday gave a confessional statement before a court.

Magura Senior Judicial Magistrate Sabysachi Roy recorded the deposition this evening, confirmed Shahed Hasan Tagor, a panel lawyer for the plaintiff.

He said the accused confessed to the rape.

The accused said he raped the child when he found her alone in an empty room, he added.

A d i t i o n a l Superintendent of Police of Magura Mirajul Islam said the prime accused was produced in the court in the afternoon.

The accused's wife and two sons are currently on remand.

The eight-year-old child was choked and raped late at night while visiting her sister's house in Magura on March 5.

She was initially admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital in a serious

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## Putin will have to 'come to table'

UK PM says hosting coalition call

AFP, London

UK premier Keir Starmer yesterday said the "ball was in Russia's court" and that President Vladimir Putin would "sooner or later" have to "come to the table," after a virtual summit to drum up support for a coalition willing to protect any eventual ceasefire in Ukraine.

The British prime minister told some 26

fellow leaders as they joined the group call hosted by Downing Street that they should focus on how to strengthen Ukraine, protect any ceasefire and keep up the pressure on Moscow.

While Ukraine had shown it was the "party of peace" by agreeing to a 30 day unconditional ceasefire, "Putin is the one trying to delay," he said.

"If Putin is serious about peace, I think it's very simple, he has to stop his barbaric attacks on Ukraine and agree to a ceasefire, and the world is watching," he added.

Military chiefs will now meet again on Thursday in the UK as the coalition moves into "the operational phase," Starmer said after the talks.

"The group that met this morning is a bigger group than we had two weeks ago, there is a stronger collective resolve and new commitments were put on the table this

morning," he added.

EU chief European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a message on X that Russia has to show "it is willing to support a ceasefire leading to a just and lasting peace".

And Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof also said on X it was "now important to continue to exert pressure on Russia to come to the negotiating table."

Overnight fighting continued in the relentless three-year war, with Russia saying it had taken two more villages in its Kursk border region where it has launched an offensive to wrest back seized territory.

Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron have been leading efforts to assemble a so-called "coalition of the willing" ever since Trump opened direct negotiations with Moscow last month.

They say the group is necessary -- along with US support -- to provide Ukraine with security guarantees by deterring Putin from violating any ceasefire.

Starmer and Macron have said they are willing to put British and French troops on the ground in Ukraine but it is not clear if other countries are keen on doing the same.

Macron also called on Russia late Friday to

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## US mulling travel ban affecting 43 countries

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump's administration is mulling a new travel ban that would affect citizens from dozens of countries to varying degrees, the New York Times reported Friday.

Citing anonymous officials, it said the draft list featured 43 countries, divided into three categories of travel restrictions.

The red category of countries whose citizens would be completely barred from entering the United States includes Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cuba, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen.

Another 10 countries in the orange category -- Belarus, Eritrea, Haiti, Laos, Myanmar, Pakistan, Russia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Turkmenistan -- would see their visas sharply restricted.

"In those cases, affluent business travellers might be allowed to enter, but not people travelling on immigrant or tourist visas," the New York Times said.

Citizens from countries on the orange list would also have to undergo in-person interviews to receive a visa.

Another 22 countries on a yellow list would have 60 days to address US concerns or risk being moved up to one of the more stringent categories.

"The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive internal deliberations, cautioned that the list had been developed by the State Department several weeks ago, and that changes were likely by the time it reached the White House," the New York Times said.

As one of his first acts in office, Trump froze the United States' refugee admission program and almost all foreign aid.

Falling SME sales shake economic backbone

B1

Prime Bank

ISLAMIC BANK



PRAYER  
TIMING  
MARCH 16



Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4:51 12:45 4:30 6:08 7:45

JAMAAT 5:01 1:15 4:45 6:23 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI,IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN MARCH SEHRI IFTAR

15 16 6:08

16 17 4:49 6:09

17 18 4:48 6:09



Since January last year, the Dhaka Elevated Expressway project has been plagued by slow progress and work stoppages. The setbacks stem from various issues, such as ownership disputes among the private partners and protests by environmentalists against the construction of a ramp at Panthakunja Park. The photo was taken yesterday near the capital's Hatirjheel area.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN