



A launch prepares to dock at Sadarghat terminal on the river Buriganga, cruising through what resembles far more than water. At a seminar marking World Water Day yesterday, an environmental activist said he has been campaigning to save the river from pollution for over two decades, to little avail.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## JAHA ALAM'S IMPRISONMENT Submit report by May 2: HC to ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday asked the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to submit its probe report on Jaha Alam's imprisonment by May 2, to identify the culprits responsible for his wrongful imprisonment and sufferings in jail for three years.

The bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader also set May 2 for further hearing on this issue.

Jute mill worker Jaha Alam, who had been languishing in jail since February 2016, was released on February 4 this year, a day after HC exonerated him from the charges.

He was arrested in connection with cases filed by the ACC for misappropriation of Sonali Bank money.

During yesterday's hearing, the bench asked ACC lawyer Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan to place the progress report before it by May 2, if the probe committee cannot complete the inquiry by that time.

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## Defeat anti-liberation forces once and for all Sector Commanders' Forum urges nation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The formation of Mujibnagar government during the Liberation War led the country towards independence by providing people hope during a crisis, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

On April 10 in 1971, the public representatives in-exile who were elected in 1970 general election, formed the first government of Bangladesh. They took oath on April 17 at Mujibnagar in Meherpur — creating a base during the war, they added.

Sector Commanders' Forum (SCF) organised the discussion at Jatiya Press Club on the occasion of Mujibnagar Day (April 17).

Harun Habib, secretary general of SCF, said the formation of the government during the initial stage of the war startled the whole world, and it gave an organisational struc-

ture to the war.

"As a result of that, mass people's war against the then Pakistan army gained momentum that led us towards victory," said Harun, also a noted writer.

He urged the government as well as the nation to defeat once and for all the anti-liberation forces, who still remain active in and outside Bangladesh, to honour the immense sacrifice of lives lost in the war.

Speaking as the chief guest, Barrister M Amirul Islam said the ideologies of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the spirit of Mujibnagar government should be upheld to ensure a prosperous Bangladesh.

Maj Gen (ret'd) KM Safiullah Bir Uttam, president of SCF, and Sarwar Ali, a trustee of Liberation War Museum, among others, also spoke at the discussion.

## Accurate voter list must for fair polls

EC Mahub says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In absence of free and fair elections, democracy loses its purpose, said Election Commissioner Mahub Talukdar yesterday.

"Those who do not believe in democracy want to make the elections controversial," he said. The EC was speaking at a training programme ahead of updating the voter list at Electoral Training Institute in Agargaon.

He said it is not possible to hold a free and fair election by destroying the "sanctity of vote". Through casting ballots, people get

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## 'Flood of commitments but no proper implementation'

Bapa general secy says about water, environment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There have been a flood of commitments by governments regarding water and the environment, but proper implementation of those cannot be seen, an environmental rights activist told a seminar yesterday.

Mihir Biswas, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), made the remark at a seminar titled "Leaving no one behind" — held at the conference room of Bangladesh Water Development Board. The Ministry of Water Resources organised the event to mark World Water Day 2019.

Mihir said he has been rallying to save the Buriganga from pollution since 1996, but it has not caused much change.

Speakers at the seminar stressed on improving water quality by reducing pollu-

tion, eliminating waste-dumping and minimising release of hazardous chemicals and materials, to ensure safe water for future generations.

Around 40 percent of pollutants of rivers across the country come from domestic sources while 60 percent is from industries, said Umme Kulsum Navera, a professor of Department of Water Resources Engineering of Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology.

Stressing the need for sewage treatment plants, effluent treatment plants and enforcing laws concerned to minimise the challenges, Navera said dissolved oxygen remains almost nil from January to May at different locations of the rivers Buriganga, Shitalakkhya, Balu and Turag.

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Expel students  
enrolled through  
fraudulence

*Demands human  
chain at DU*

DU CORRESPONDENT

A group of Dhaka University (DU) students yesterday formed a human chain at the base of Aparajeyo Bangla on campus, demanding expulsion of students who enrolled into DU through fraudulent process and their aides from the university.

Ducus vice-president Nurul Haque Nur and social service affairs secretary Akhtar Hossen took part in the human chain, organised under the banner of "General Students of

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## The Versatile BOTTLE GOURD

Eat  
Healthy



Commonly known as lau, bottle gourd or calabash has gained so much popularity in the Bangladeshi cuisine that there are even songs about the vegetable! It is usually cooked as a curry with shrimp in light gravy or julienned and then fried; in both forms it is exquisitely delicious. It can be sautéed, fried, pickled or grilled.

Bottle gourd has always been regarded as one of the healthiest vegetables. It is full of water (about 92%) and is a rich source of Vitamin C, K and calcium. It helps in maintaining a healthy heart and brings down bad cholesterol levels. It is also rich in fibre and is believed to help in healthy digestion. The juice of the bottle gourd is rich in Vitamin C and zinc contents and it helps in regulating blood sugar levels. However, one should be careful to never consume bottle gourd juice that has developed a bitter flavour as it may contain toxins that can cause extreme harm to the digestive system. Bottle gourd also contains a good amount of choline—a kind of neurotransmitter that helps in improving the functions of the brain and helps in preventing stress, depression and other mental disorders.

Turab, a bottle gourd farmer from Shahbazpur, Jessore, shares his experience of growing this wholesome vegetable. He shares that bottle gourds are grown either by directly sowing seeds or by planting 15 to 20-day-old seedlings. Bottle gourd can be grown in various kinds of soils but sandy loam soils are usually ideal. Pesticides such as urea, potash, TSP are put in the soil when the plant grows to a certain level. Irrigation should be done at four to seven days interval after applying pesticides. If planted under a tall tree, the vine may grow up to the top of the

tree. To obtain more fruit, farmers sometimes cut off the tip of the vine when it has grown to 6-8 feet in length. This induces the plant to produce side branches that soon bear flowers and yield more fruit. Crops are ready for harvest within two months.

Turab, along with many farmers of the area, provide vegetables for Shwapno under the Shuddho project. According to Turab, this initiative has helped him adopt the right agricultural practices for growing bottle gourds, in terms of learning about how much fertiliser or pesticide should be used. Farmers also have an opportunity to learn about the interval period between pesticide application and harvesting, known as the Pre-Harvest Interval (PHI).

Bottle gourd can be grown year-round in tropical climates. It is a vegetable that can be paired up with almost any dish. Surely enough, this is a vegetable that should be consumed often for getting its optimal benefits.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Petition seeks recognition of English as second language

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court, seeking its directive on the government to take all necessary steps to recognise and declare English as the second official language of Bangladesh.

Barrister Moksadul Islam submitted the petition as a public interest litigation, saying, "...our constitution recognizes English as the only other language besides Bangla, hence it should be declared as the second language of Bangladesh".

For that, undoubtedly English is the de facto second official language of Bangladesh and all the organs of the state such as legislative, judiciary and administrative are using English almost every day and therefore, now it requires official sanction, he said in the petition.

The lawyer said the government by their conduct has accepted English as second

language. It uses the language for international communications and signing of foreign treaties, memorandums of understanding, inviting foreign contracts etc, he said.

"...higher education demands that English be given official sanction. By recognizing English as our second official language, we can stop brain drain from this country and give recognition to millions of students who are pursuing their education in English medium under different curriculum," he said in the petition.

All the education boards use English as a de facto second language, the lawyer said, adding that digital Bangladesh demands English be given its proper status as the second official language.

The HC is likely to hold hearing on the writ petition on Sunday, Moksadul Islam told The Daily Star.

## DHAKA TODAY

### THEATRE

Thikana  
**Venue:** Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
**Time:** 7pm

### SEMINAR

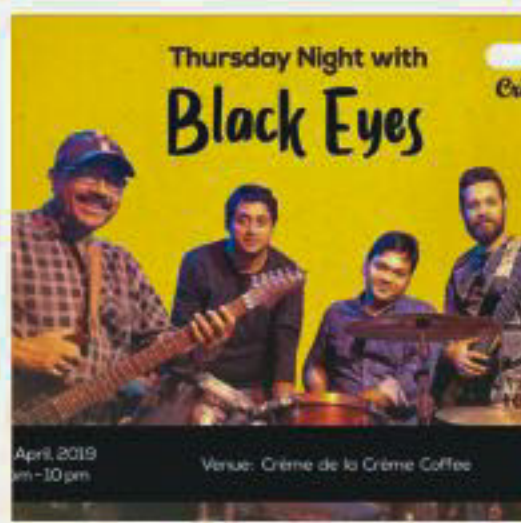
Thalassemia Awareness and Blood Donation Program  
**Venue:** University of Asia Pacific  
**Time:** 10am

### FILM SCREENING

Through Her Eyes  
**Venue:** Goethe-Institut  
**Time:** 5pm

### MUSIC

Thursday Night with Black Eyes  
**Venue:** Crème de la Crème Coffee, Gulshan 2  
**Time:** 7pm



### FAIR

Bangladesh Travel & Tourism Fair  
**Venue:** Bangabandhu International Conference Center  
**Time:** 11am

### OPEN MIKE

Open Mic VIII  
**Venue:** 3rd Space, Dhanmondi  
**Time:** 5:30pm

### MUSIC

Rhythm Divine  
**Venue:** EMK Center  
**Time:** 6:30pm

### SEMINAR

National Awareness Seminar on Dementia  
**Venue:** PKSF, Agargaon  
**Time:** 10am

### DEMONSTRATION

We Are for Julian Assange  
**Venue:** TSC, University of Dhaka  
**Time:** 5pm

দারুণ সব ফিচার নিয়ে স্যামসাং রেফ্রিজারেটর

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