

SUCCESSFUL FARMING ON WATER: A woman harvests vegetables from her floating garden, made on a raft made of water hyacinth and bamboo, in a water body at Gobordhon village in Mohishkhocha union under Aditmari upazila of Lalmonirhat district.

## Floating vegetable farming boon for marginal farmers

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Vegetable cultivation on floating gardens prepared in abandoned water bodies brings good prospect for marginal farmers at villages in Teesta River basin areas of Aditmari upazila under Lalmonirhat district.

Around 100 marginal farmers at Gobordhon, Balapara, Kutirpar and Char Gobordhon villages under Mohiskhocha union in Aditmari upzila have bene-

fited by cultivating vegetables on floating beds in this season.

Such vegetables, cultivated without any insecticides, have already gained popularity among local consumers and so, they are buying it for prices higher than that of other vegetables in the market.

This floating bed cultivation, a long forgotten tradition in some rural areas of Bangladesh, is now receiving renewed interest as a poten-

tial solution for farmers whose lands have been waterlogged, and the landless ones.

Using local resources, especially rapidly growing water hyacinths, the process is as an environmentally sustainable way to use wetland areas for cultivation.

"I cultivated vegetable on a 100 square feet floating bed at an abandoned government water body in our village in October last year. After meeting our family need, I earned over Tk 2,000 by selling the produces," said Korban Ali, 45, a marginal farmer of Gobordhon village.

Monowara Begum, 42, of the same village said the money earned by selling vegetables from a 120 square feet floating bed helped bear schooling cost of her children, in addition to meeting their domestic requirement.

Floating vegetable growers said they prepared floating beds of water hyacinth 'tightened' with bamboo and cultivated different vegetables including aubergine, coriander, okra, green chilli, tomato, spinach, bottle gourd, mint, mustard lal shak in different water bodies.

Vegetable cultivation on a 100 square feet floating garden costs only Tk 300 to 400, they said. However, regular care and physical labour is needed for getting expected output from there.

"Local people come to me to purchase vegetables produced in my floating garden as these are grown without insecticides. People buy such vegetables for higher prices than that of the ones grown in usual ways," said Ashraf Ali, 48, a marginal farmer at Kutirpar village of Mohiskhocha union.

"I prefer the vegetables grown on floating gardens as they are free from insecticides," said Badsha Miah, a teacher of Mohishkhocha

High School. Yakub Ali, Shamsul Islam, Moksedur Rahman, Khobir Uddin, Mamotaz Uddin, Noya Miah and other marginal farmers at Char Gobordhon village said they will start cultivating vegetables in this system in the next year as they are encouraged to see success of some growers this year.

Local NGO Own Village Advancement is implementing the project funded by UK-based development organisation Practical Action Bangladesh.

Moniruzzaman Shahin, agriculturist of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Aditmari upazila, said 100 marginal farmers prepared the same number of floating vegetable beds in 10 abandoned government water bodies at some Teesta River basin villages of

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Aditmari upazila this year. The DAE is extending technical support to the marginal farmers for such cultivation and the project will see expansion in the

## Jamaat-Shibir men clash with JCD activists in Feni

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) clashed with Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) over taking room at a rally of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at Feni Government Pilot High School ground yesterday.

The incident took place before arrival of the BNP chief, who was leading a road march to Chittagong.

The trouble began after several hundred activists of Jamaat and its student wing Shibir went to the meeting venue in processions and took seats close to the stage.

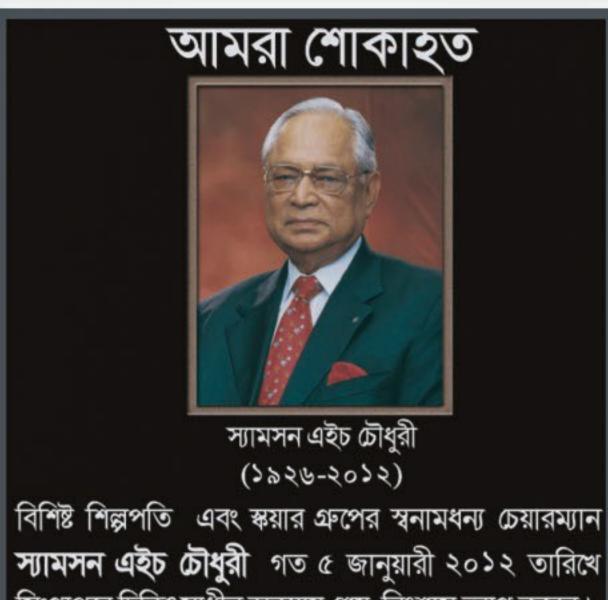
activists also reached the venue to avoid further school ground in proces- trouble.

sions to attend the BNP chairperson's rally and requested the Jamaat-Shibir men to free a portion of the ground near the dais for them.

Jamaat-Shibir men did not pay heed to their request and locked in a scuffle with the JCD men.

Chase and counterchase between Jamaat-Shibir and JCD men continued until 2:30pm, leaving at least four people from both sides injured.

Later, police with the help of local Jamaat and BNP leaders brought the situation under control. Additional law enforcers were deployed in and Several hundred JCD around the meeting



সিংগাপুরে চিকিৎসাধীন অবস্থায় শেষ নিঃশ্বাস ত্যাগ করেন। আমরা তাঁর মৃত্যুতে গভীর ভাবে শোকাহত। বিল্ডট্রেড গ্রুপ এর পরিচালনা পর্ষদ এবং সর্বস্তরের কর্মকর্তা/কর্মচারীগনের পক্ষ থেকে শোক সন্তপ্ত পরিবারের প্রতি আমাদের গভীর সমবেদনা জানাচ্ছি এবং তাঁর বিদেহী আত্মার শান্তি কামনা

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## Boy drowns in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A seven-year-old boy drowned in a pond at Uttar Gobdha village in Aditmari upazila yester-

Family sources said Imran Ali, son of Rashed Sarker of the village, was playing along with four other children on the bank of the pond near their house at around 9:00am.

Suddenly, he slipped into the pond and drowned.

Locals found the body floating on the pond and recovered it.

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আমরা তার শোক সন্তপ্ত পরিবারের প্রতি গভীর সমবেদনা জানাচ্ছি ও তার বিদেহী আত্মার শান্তি কামনা করছি।



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