



A section of influential people put bamboo enclosures, blocking the flow of this canal at Muchibari in Wazirpur upazila under Barisal district for fish cultivation, causing disturbance to irrigation in the nearby boro fields and stopping movement of boats in the locally important waterway.

PHOTO: STAR

Boro cultivation hampered as canal blocked for pisciculture

SUSHANTO GHOSH, Barisal

Blocking of a canal for fish farming hampers irrigation for boro cultivation and pollutes environment in Uttar Satla area of Wazirpur upazila under Barisal district.

Recently a group of influential people led by local union unit of Awami League (AL) president Liton Molla started fish farming by blocking the canal at Muchibari, locals said during this correspondent's visit to the area.

Thus they stopped the natural

flow of the canal connecting waterways with Wazirpur, Agoiljhora and Gournadi upazilas of the district.

Hundreds of locals dependent on irrigation-based boro farming on around 1,200 acres of land and fishing in the open water body are affected due to the callous act, locals said.

"Boro paddy on my five acres of land is nearly damaged as irrigation is hampered due to blocking of the canal," said Abdul Mannan, a

farmer of the area.

Use of poisonous feeds for fish farming is killing sweet water fishes, and crabs in the canal area and the polluted water is causing skin diseases among the locals, said Ayub Mia, another resident of the area.

Several locals said they informed the upazila administration of the matter but failed to get any result as the canal blockers are influential ruling party men.

Sohrab Hossain, upazila nirbahi officer of Wazirpur, said, "None was

permitted to start a fish farm by creating any obstacle to the water flow. I will take action in this regard after investigation."

Contacted, AL leader Liton Molla claimed that the fish farm started after discussion with the local people in a meeting held at United School last year.

"That time none opposed it and we have invested Tk 65 lakh for the purpose. Now seeing the prospect of our profit, some people are raising objections," he said.



This iron bridge over Dora canal in Dhulasar union of Kalapara upazila under Patuakhali district has remained virtually unusable for the last two years, much to the sufferings of around 8,000 people of six villages.

PHOTO: STAR

Two youths held with arms, ammo in Sirajganj

UNB, Sirajganj

Police arrested two young men with two pistols, four magazines and 29 bullets on the western side of Bangabandhu Bridge early yesterday.

The arrestees are Din Islam, 30, of Dhaka, and Mohammad Ali, 28, of Narayanganj.

Officer-in-Charge Belal Uddin of Bangabandhu Bridge (West) Police Station said, law enforcers, acting on a tip-off, intercepted a Dhaka-bound pick-up van from Chapainawabganj while it was passing through the area at around 4:30am.

Later, the law enforcers arrested the duo and seized the pistols, magazines and bullets from the vehicle.

NEGLIGENCE OF COLLEGE AUTHORITIES

35 students in Jhenidah denied attending HSC exams

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Thirty five of the 696 Higher Secondary Certificate examinees of Mahtab Uddin Degree College in Kaliganj upazila under the district have lost a valuable academic year due to utter negligence of the college authorities.

The 35 students, including four regular and 31 irregular ones, could not sit for this year's examinations on the first day yesterday as the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), Jessore, did not issue admit cards for them due to faults of the college

authorities, victim students said.

They demanded proper investigation of the matter and justice as they lost a valuable academic year despite filling up forms by paying Tk 2590 before the stipulated date.

"My father is a poor farmer. I continued my study through great hardship but I could not appear at the examination. How I will compensate this loss?" said Shuvradeb Bhadra, one of the victim candidates.

Nayem Hossain, Arup Kumar and Bipul Kumar echoed the same sentiment.

Abdul Mozid, acting

principal of Mahtab Uddin Degree College, admitted that the names of the 35 students had not been included in the list of the education board for issuing admit cards due to mistake of the college authorities.

"We will bear the expenses of the deprived students next year," he said.

Md Alauddin Mia, chairman of BISE, Jessore, said, "The college authorities are responsible for the 35 students' loss of the valuable academic year. I will see the matter and take proper action in this regard."

20 injured in AL infighting in Bhola

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bhola

At least 20 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups of Awami League near Sharif Khan Bazar in Sadar upazila on Tuesday night.

Six of the injured--Md Khokon Hawlader, 55, Md Nasir, 50, Md Altaf, 45, Md Mokbul Hossain, 60, Md Ibrahim, 30 and Md Yousuf, 30--were admitted to Bhola Sadar Hospital while the rest given first aid at the upazila health complex.

Mobassir Ali, officer in-charge of Bhola Sadar Model Police Station, said there had been a long-standing rivalry between Md Harun Farazi, organising secretary of Velumiah Union unit of Awami League, and Md Khokon Hawlader, general secretary of ward No 8 unit of the party, over establishment supremacy in the union.

Following an altercation between two supporters of Harun and Khokon at the Bazar in the afternoon, supporters belonging to both groups, equipped with lethal weapons, swooped on each other at around 7:30pm. At least 20 people from both sides injured during the clash that continued for an hour.

Being informed, law enforcers led by Sub Inspector Md Mahmud of Velumiah police camp rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Stalker jailed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A mobile court yesterday sentenced a stalker to one-year imprisonment in Sadar upazila of the district.

The convict, Mukter Hossain Mahadi, 23, son of Tangor Biswas, is a resident of Batai village in the upazila.

Police arrested Mahadi while he was harassing an HSC examinee on her way to the examination hall around 9:00am.

Perching method for killing insects gains popularity

Paddy growers in Lalmonirhat take the eco-friendly way as alternative to chemical pesticides

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Environment-friendly perching method for killing harmful insects is gaining popularity among the paddy farmers of the district, thanks to the motivational programme of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

As per suggestion of the field-level sub assistant agricultural officers (SAAO), the farmers at many villages in the district have erected bamboo poles on their paddy fields at specific distances, DAE officials said.

In search of food, birds perch on the poles and eat the pests.

The method, alternative to the use of chemical pesticides, is now playing a sig-

nificant role in protecting paddy fields from pest attacks, said farmers.

It appears as a blessing against the backdrop of random use of toxic pesticides that threaten the ecological balance.

As the pesticides find their way to water bodies, some indigenous species of fish have already become extinct and many others are following, farmers said, adding that using chemical pesticides also costs a good amount of money.

Now a large number of farmers are using perching method as it has been proved effective to save paddy fields from pest attack, said Mobarok Hossain, a farmer of

Panchagram village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

A few years ago, the agriculture department undertook a programme to popularise perching method among the farmers to help them produce paddy without using harmful insecticides, said Alok Adhikary, an SAOA in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

"Most of the farmers have already learned it and we are trying our best to introduce the natural method in all the paddy fields in the area," he said.

This method is playing a vital role to save the environment from pollution by toxic pesticides, said Safayet Hossain, deputy director of Lalmonirhat DAE.

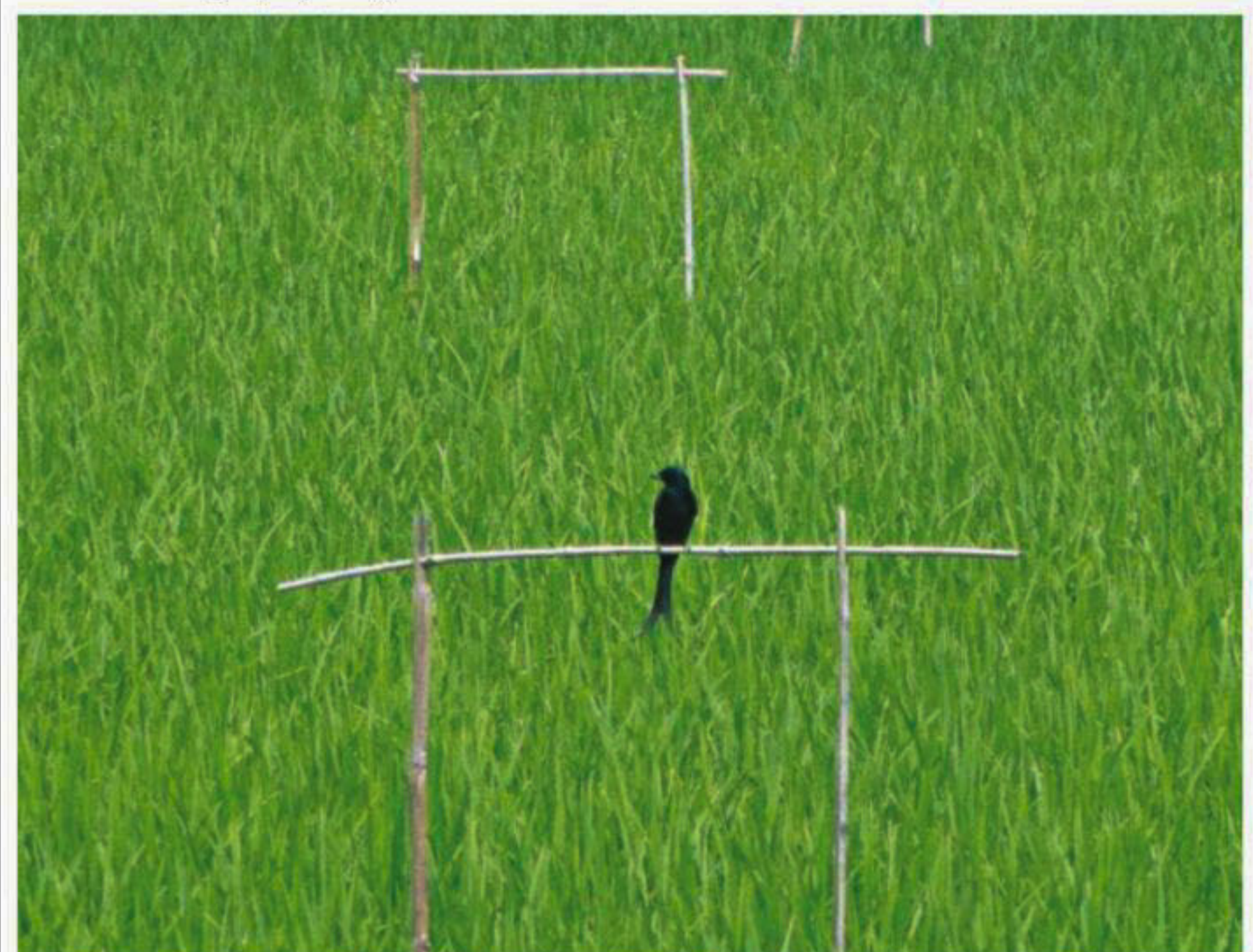


PHOTO: STAR

Helping birds to perch on bamboo poles set at regular distances to let birds eat harmful insects to save paddy plants from pest attack is now a popular practice in different areas of Lalmonirhat district. The photo was taken from Panchagram village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

Vegetable farming brings them solvency

Farmers in Sherpur upazila of Bogra cultivate variety of veg on 2400 hectares of land round the year

MAMUN-UR-RASHID, Bogra

Thousands of farmers of Sherpur upazila under the district have gained solvency by cultivating different kinds of vegetables during the last several years.

A variety of vegetables, including gourd, cucumber, cauliflower, cabbage, bitter melon, basil, tomato, carrot, lady's finger, pumpkin, brinjal, chilly and different kinds of spinach are cultivated in the upazila's 10 unions, especially Garidaha, Shughat, Khamarkandi, Mirzapur and Shimabari.

Around 2400 hectares of land in the upazila has been brought under vegeta-

ble cultivation and the yearly production often crosses 20 tonnes per hectare of land, said sources of the Department of Agriculture Extension, adding that the production in the area has doubled in last one decade.

Visiting the fields of the upazila, this correspondent saw farmers busy nursing their vegetable plants.

Vegetables are cultivated round the year as they bring good profit, they said.

"I have been cultivating vegetables for 10 years. With the profit, I have bought 10 bighas of land and started making a brick-built house," said Abdus

Salam, 52, of Phulbari village.

Around Tk 10-12 thousand is needed for cultivating cauliflower in a bigha of land and it brings profit of Tk 35-40 thousand within a few months, said farmers Faruk Hossain and Enamul Haque of Mirzapur union.

Md Abdur Rahim, upazila agriculture officer of Sherpur, said applying of proper fertiliser, required watering, measures to check diseases, and proper monitoring and suggestions by the field-level agriculture officials helped vegetable farmers to be successful.



PHOTO: STAR

A farmer tends his vegetable field at Phulbari village in Garidaha union of Sherpur upazila under Bogra district.