

Barind orange shows hope

SHYKH SERAJ

It was mid-October this year and a bright sunny morning. I was travelling through the Barind area on Rajshahi-Chapainawabganj highway along the Mahananda river to reach the orchard of one of the most progressive farmers of the Barind region. Fields after fields of green grains. It was as if someone had placed a green carpet on the ground. Aman is cultivated in the fields at this time of Sharat (autumn). Again, some fields are full of early Rabi crops. Twelve years back, Barind was not as green like today. Barind means barren land, barren hard soil, and barren fields. But history says that the name 'Barendra' comes from 'Indra's land of blessings.' Long ago this region was fertile, rich in fruits and crops. But over the years, the soil of Barind lost its organic attributes. Another reason for the soil to become dry was the Farakka barrage. The people of this region could produce only one crop. There was no other crop except the Aman rice. Mango did not become a cash crop back then as it is now. As a result, hunger and scarcity engulfed

But as the water level went down, shortage of crop diversity was evident. Although the Barind has changed due to efforts from government and non-government organizations, there are still many areas where agriculture is still troubled due to lack of enough water.

I arrived at Matur Rahman's fruit orchard in Jamtara village in Chapainawabganj. I came here a few years back. He's more known for his malta, but he also does guava, orange and many other diversified fruits. I went there this time especially to see Matur's success on his 16 bigha orange orchard. He has cultivated three varieties of oranges. Once we knew that oranges are cultivated in hilly lands. But with the invention of new varieties, there is no longer a seasonal constraint. You probably would recall Rafiqul's orange orchard located in Jhenaidah's Maheshpur. Let me again remind you that, Matur was a truck driver of the Roads and Highways Department. He could have easily carried on with his job, but he fell in love with nature and



Matur, wearing a broad smile on his face, at his orange orchard in Chapainawabganj's Jamtara village, situated in the Barind region of Bangladesh.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

Matur while walking in his orchard. "I started off with a leased land of seven bighas when you first came to my orchard. I gradually increased the farming area to 61 bighas," said Matur.

"My orchard now has increased to 70 bighas and I hope to do even better in the future; You know what, today I have my own 15 bighas of land," gladly said the successful agro-entrepreneur. Each of the orange trees in Matur's orchard is full of oranges. According to statistics, in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, Bangladesh imported 1,17,170 tonnes of orange and malta. Per tonne, the price was Tk 93,000

(USD 1098). And the total amount that was spent was Tk 1,088 crore (USD 1285 million). The total import of orange and malta during the previous fiscal year (2018-2019) was 1,02,100 tonnes. In other words, there is a demand for oranges worth around Tk 1,500 crore (USD 1800 million) in our country. Matur attempts to cultivate 100 percent organic fruits and crops. In the orchard, therefore, various arrangements of integrated pest management, for example, colour charts, sex pheromone traps are already installed. Matur still faces some problem with pest management and also looks forward to the bagging

method. "How much are you looking forward to earning this year?" I asked Matur.

"No less than Tk 4 lakh this year, but next year the profit would be even more," he gladly replied.

I also saw some female Santal labourers who looked quite happy working at Matur's orchard. It was great talking to them. They are well satisfied with their employment. Matur hasn't only worked on orange farming, he is industriously working on orange saplings and thus he could make improved varieties. He also has his nursery for selling saplings

and seeds of various fruits and is earning very well from his nursery project. Matur is pretty successful in his family life as well. He has the most cooperating wife, a son and a daughter. His son Nahid obtained his degree in Computer Engineering and now has a store of agricultural tools in Chapainawabganj. His daughter, Mitu recently completed her studies in Statistics from Jagannath University. Her dreams revolve around the farming sector and she wishes to become a successful agricultural entrepreneur, just like her father.

Agriculture has changed Matur's life. It's not just that he has enriched but he has helped others becoming enriched too. Many have found employment at his orchard and nursery. He has inspired many farmers and those who want to become real entrepreneurs. He has received many honours from government and non-government organizations for his contribution to the development of farming in the country and for his brilliant agricultural initiatives.

Diversified fruit cultivation is changing in the hands of enterprising farmers of Bangladesh. The farming scenario of Barind is also changing with the help of farmers, young and big entrepreneurs, keeping the objective of commercial farming in mind. Loving the soil and fruits, they are setting example of diversified success in agriculture. After guava, mango, dragon fruit and malta, orange production has started in Matur's orchard and it is gradually spreading across the Barind region. The massive production of oranges in the soil of the Barind shows the immense potential of the fruit. I strongly believe that we can come out of the import-dependence of fruits through the assistance of enterprising farmers like Matur and also sure that Bangladesh will go a long way towards sustainable development.

Shykh Seraj is Bangladesh's pioneer development journalist. He received country's two highest civilian honours, Swadhinata Puroshkar and Ekushey Padak, respectively. He is a BIDS, Ashoka and Bangla Academy Fellow. He also received highest award for agricultural journalism from the United Nations, FAO A.H. Boerma Award, Gusi Peace Prize (Philippines) and many other prestigious accolades at home and abroad. At Channel i, he's the Founder Director and Head of News. He's also Director and Host of Channel i's popular agro-documentary, Hridoye Mati O Manush.



the people of the Barind region.

I have had the opportunity to witness and learn the socio-economic context of agriculture and farmers in this region since the 80s. This area became a storehouse of pulse crops.

his spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling was expressed through his diversified fruit orchard. Over the years, agriculture has brought him great economic prosperity.

I was chatting with 55-year-old

Under fire, IPH scraps dress code circular

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general of the DGHS, said, "Rahim sent a letter to me saying sorry and that he will not make such mistakes in future. He has withdrawn the circular. But the issue is not going to end here.

"He has to officially explain why he would do this."

Wednesday's IPH circular said, "For Muslims, men must make sure their clothes do not cover their ankle joints... and women must wear hijabs in addition to making sure that their clothes cover their ankle joints."

The IPH director was asked to reply to the health ministry "show-cause" notice within three working days, said the notice signed by Deputy Secretary Sharmin Akter Jahan of the ministry.

A ministry spokesperson said the order to issue a "show-cause" letter came from the health minister himself.

The Daily Star made multiple phone calls and sent texts to Dr Abdur Rahim. He did not respond before switching off his phone.

Bangla Tribune quoted him as saying, "Ours is a Muslim country; if the people in our office, our country are adorned in this manner, it will make me feel good. I have given this order to ensure that my staff are following the path of discipline and rahamat."

Dr Mahbuba Jamil, head of the virology lab at IPH, was contacted by The Daily Star. "I have received the notice. I do not know why this was issued," she said.

Prof Nasima Sultana, additional director general of the DGHS, said, "He [IPH director] cannot do this. We have asked him to withdraw it immediately."

"Any such notice requires prior approval from multiple levels. He has not done any such thing. He has issued the circular without maintaining the procedure."

State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain said no government official can issue such a circular mentioning a religious dress code for his office.

"Bangladesh is a secular country. People of different religions work in the offices. Therefore, such a circular citing dress code cannot be issued," he told The Daily Star.

Salma Ali, veteran women's rights lawyer, said, "No one has the right to impose a separate rule for any government office without any discussion with the stakeholders. Human rights, and gender equality and this order cannot exist together."

Shireen Haq of Naripokkho said, "This notice is absolutely outrageous. Women's clothing is policed everywhere. In public places especially, women are routinely harassed for not covering their heads, or for not carrying scarves; but at least those harassments come from strangers. When a workplace, an institution, polices women's clothing, it is absolutely unacceptable. He does not know that imposing a dress code to followers of a certain religion is against the constitution."

Special classes likely from next month

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Bangladesh in the winter.

"If the situation improves in the next few weeks, we will try to reopen classes for candidates on a limited scale," she said.

About two million students are scheduled to sit for next year's Secondary School Certificate and equivalent exams in February and another 1.3 million students are expected to sit for the Higher Secondary Certificate and equivalent exams slated for April 2021.

While elaborating on the plan, Dipu Moni said they are planning to bring class-10 students, who are set to sit for the SSC exams, and class-12 students, who will appear for HSC exams, back to schools and colleges.

They will be divided into several groups and will receive lessons spread over several classrooms.

When asked about the possible deferment of the 2021 SSC exams, Dipu said she was hoping that it would not be needed, but everything depended on the Covid-19 situation.

She said all SSC and HSC candidates would have to go through a qualifying

test at schools to appear in public exams. On March 17, the government closed the schools to contain the spread of Covid-19. Educational activities of about four crore students are being hampered due to the crisis.

This year's HSC, Primary Education Completion and its equivalent exams and Junior School Certificate and its equivalent exams were cancelled.

In place of HSC exams, candidates would be evaluated based on their results in Junior School Certificate (JSC), Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and their equivalent tests.

More than one crore students of classes six to nine will be promoted to the next classes this year without any annual examinations, the government announced.

Instead, school authorities will give assignments to students so that they can achieve the minimum learning outcome.

About the textbook distribution ceremony, she said, "The festival is important but it will not be wise to hold such festivals that could create a health risk."

She added that all books would be ready by January 1 and the government is looking at alternative ways to get books to the students.

National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) Chairman Prof Narayan Chandra Saha told this newspaper that they will distribute 34.36 crore textbooks among 4.16 crore students.

Of them, about 24 crore books will be distributed among secondary students and the rest among primary students.

Dipu Moni urged educational institution authorities to refrain from taking unnecessary fees from guardians during the closure of the institutions. She also said the government will issue a directive regarding tuition fee realisation.

She said while many universities may be saying that they would take admission tests but all have to keep the safety of students in mind.

"What situation will arise if all universities take admission tests like they did before; [instead] combined admission tests should be considered to ensure safety of all students."

Incident not covered

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and that they would now look into the roles of the accused and to what extent they were individually involved in the incident.

Some witnesses got the incident on video which later went viral on social media.

In the video, injured navy officer Lt Wasif Ahmad is seen describing the incident to bystanders.

Dhaka-7 lawmaker Haji Salim's son Erfan, 37, councillor of ward-30 under the Dhaka South City Corporation and his bodyguard Zahidul Mollah, 35, was on a three-day remand each in a case filed over the attempted murder of the officer.

Lt Wasif lodged the case with Dhanmondi Police Station naming four people. The two other accused in the case are AB Siddique Dipu, 45, and Mizanur Rahman, 30. All four are now behind bars.

Driver Mizanur was on a one-day remand who admitted his role in the assault, police said.

Dipu was placed on a three-day

remand on Monday.

Meanwhile, Dhanmondi police interrogated Erfan and Zahidul on the first-day of their remand. Then the investigation charge was transferred to the Detective Branch (DB) of police.

"There is no doubt that an assault took place. We will now investigate what roles the accused were playing individually during the incident. We are interrogating them," said HM Azimul Haque, deputy commissioner of Ramna division DB.

According to the statement of the case filed by the navy official, a vehicle, with the plate "Dhaka Metro-Gha 11-5736", rear-ended his motorcycle in Dhanmondi area when he and his wife were returning to their Dhaka Cantonment home from Nilkhet around 7:45pm on Sunday.

A man came out of the SUV and verbally abused them and left the spot. When the car stopped at a nearby set of traffic lights, Lt Wasif knocked on the car's window and introduced himself. After that, all passengers got off the vehicle and started hurling abuse and

assaulting Lt Wasif, the complainant said.

When his wife came to save him, they also assaulted her, the case statement said. They then left the scene abandoning the car.

The complainant said he could identify DSCC councillor Erfan and Dipu as a protocol officer of Madina Group owned by Haji Salim from his ID card.

On Monday, Erfan and his bodyguard Zahidul were sentenced to one year in prison for illegally possessing walkie-talkies and foreign liquor, after the Rapid Action Battalion assisted by an executive magistrate conducted a raid in Haji Salim's building "Chan Sarder Dada Bari" at Debidas Ghat Lane in Chawkbazar.

Besides, four separate cases were filed against Erfan and Zahidul with Chawkbazar Police Station for carrying illegal firearms and possessing narcotics.

An officer at Chawkbazar Police Station told this correspondent that they have sought 14 days remand each for Erfan and Zahidul.

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তারিখঃ

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সিরাজগঞ্জ সিভিল সার্জন কার্যালয়ের নিয়ন্ত্রণাধীন উদ্ভাপাড়া (সদর) ৩০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট হাসপাতাল ও খোকশাবাড়ী ১০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট পল্লী স্বাস্থ্য কেন্দ্রের জন্য ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বৎসরের এমএসআর সামগ্রী ক্রয়ের নিমিত্তে পিপিএ-২০০৬ পিপিআর-২০০৮ ও সংশোধিত পিপিআর-২০০৯ মতে নিম্নোক্ত "ছক" ও তফসীল মোতাবেক নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর বরাবরে লিখিত, স্বাক্ষরিত ও সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাইতেছে।

০১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	ঃ	স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়।
০২।	সংস্থা/প্রতিষ্ঠান	ঃ	স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর, মহাখালী, ঢাকা-১২১২।
০৩।	বাজেট/তহবিলের উৎস	ঃ	স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় এবং স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর, মহাখালী, ঢাকা (অনুন্নয়ন/উন্নয়ন খাত)।
০৪।	সংগ্রাহক/সংস্থা/সংগ্রাহকারীর নাম, পদবী ও জেলা	ঃ	ডাঃ মোঃ জাহিদুল ইসলাম, সিভিল সার্জন, সিরাজগঞ্জ।
০৫।	দরপত্র ক্রম সংগ্রহের পদ্ধতি	ঃ	উন্মুক্ত (খোলা) দরপত্রের মাধ্যমে দরপত্রের সিডিউলের সহিত সংযুক্ত আরোপিত শর্তাবলী অনুসরণ মতে।
০৬।	দরপত্রের প্যাকেজ নাম/দরপত্রের ধরণ	ঃ	এমএসআর (গ্রেপ ভিত্তিক)।
০৭।	দরপত্রদাতার যোগ্যতা	ঃ	দরপত্রের সিডিউলে সংযুক্ত শর্তাবলী মতে।
০৮।	দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য	ঃ	সিডিউল/নিম্নবর্ণিত নির্ধারিত ছকে।
০৯।	দরপত্র জামানতের (বায়নার) টাকা	ঃ	সিডিউল/নিম্নবর্ণিত নির্ধারিত ছকে।
১০।	দরপত্রের নিরাপত্তা জামানত	ঃ	কার্যাদেশ প্রাপ্তির মোট অংকের উপর ১০% (গ্রেপ ভিত্তিক) ফেরতযোগ্য।
১১।	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রির স্থান	ঃ	সিভিল সার্জন কার্যালয়, সিরাজগঞ্জ।
১২।	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের পর হইতে ১৮/১১/২০২০ইং তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় (সিভিল সার্জন অফিস বিকাল ৫.০০টা)।
১৩।	দরপত্র জমা/দাখিলের স্থান	ঃ	সিভিল সার্জন কার্যালয় এর প্রস্তুত দরপত্র বাঞ্জে।
১৪।	দরপত্র দাখিল/গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	নিম্নবর্ণিত ছকে।
১৫।	দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	ঃ	২২/১১/২০২০ বেলা ২টা, সিভিল সার্জন কার্যালয়, সিরাজগঞ্জ (সংশ্লিষ্ট দরপত্রদাতাগণের সামনে যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।

ঊষধপত্র কোম্পানির ট্রেড দরের নীচে নহে ও এমআরপি দরের ঊর্ধ্বে নহে এবং অন্যান্য সামগ্রী স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত এসআর দর/বাজার দরের ঊর্ধ্বে নহে।

১৭।	এমএসআর গ্রেপ সমূহের তথ্যাদি/বিবরণ	ঃ	নিম্নবর্ণিত ছকে।			
ক্রম নং	এমএসআর দরপত্রের ক্রম সমূহের নাম/বিবরণ	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)	দরপত্র জামানত সরকারি বিধি মোতাবেক	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র সিডিউল দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	মন্তব্য
ক	ঊষধপত্র (ইউসিএল বহির্ভূত)	৭৫০/-	৪৭,০০০/-	১৮/১১/২০২০ইং অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত	২২/১১/২০২০ইং তারিখ দুপুর ১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত	
খ	গজ, ব্যাভেঞ্জ, তুলা	৭৫০/-	১৪,০০০/-			
গ	যন্ত্রপাতি	৭৫০/-	২৭,০০০/-			
ঙ	হাসপাতাল আসবাবপত্র	৭৫০/-	৮,০০০/-			
চ	হাসপাতাল লিলেন সামগ্রী	৭৫০/-	১৪,০০০/-			

১৮। দরপত্র আহবানকারীর সহিত যোগাযোগের মাধ্যমে : ফোন নং-০৭৫১৬২১৬০, ফ্যাক্স নং-০৭৫১৬২১৬৮ অথবা অত্র দপ্তরের হিসাব শাখা হইতে বিস্তারিত বিবরণ জানা যাইতে পারে (অফিস চলাকালীন সময় এবং সরকারি ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত)।

১৯। নির্দেশিকা : দরপত্রের শর্ত সম্বলিত সিডিউল ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা হিসাবের কোড নং- ১-২৭১১-০০০০-২৩৬৬ মূল ট্রেজারী চালানের মাধ্যমে সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলা সদরের স্থানীয় সোনালী ব্যাংক, প্রধান শাখায় জমা দিয়া সিভিল সার্জন কার্যালয়, সিরাজগঞ্জ (হিসাব শাখা) হইতে চালানের মূলকপি জমাদানপূর্বক নিজস্ব লেটারহেড প্যাডে আবেদনের মাধ্যমে দরপত্র সিডিউল ক্রয় করিতে হইবে। দরপত্রের সিডিউলের সহিত সংযুক্ত আরোপিত শর্তাবলী, পিপিএ-২০০৬ পিপিআর-২০০৮ ও সংশোধিত পিপিআর-২০০৯ মতে।

২০। বিশেষ নির্দেশিকা : কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন অথবা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। অনিবার্য কারণবশত অত্র নোটিশে দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলা নির্দিষ্ট তারিখে সম্পাদন না হইলে পরবর্তী স্বাভাবিক কর্মদিবসে যথাক্রমে দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলার গ্রহণযোগ্য তারিখ বলে বিবেচিত হইবে। তবে সময় ও স্থান অপরিবর্তিত থাকিবে।

২১। কেবলমাত্র অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন (প্রয়োজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) এমএসআর প্রস্তুতকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/ব্যক্তিসমূহ যাহারা গ্রেপ ভিত্তিক প্রত্যেকটি আইটেমের পূর্ণাঙ্গ নমুনা (প্রয়োজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) অবশ্যই দরপত্রের সঙ্গে দাখিল করিতে সক্ষম হইবেন, সেই সকল প্রতিষ্ঠান/সরবরাহকারী টিকাদারগণ দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করিতে পারিবেন। একজনের আবেদন/দরপত্রে অন্য কোন ব্যক্তি বা দরপত্রদাতা স্বাক্ষরপূর্বক দরপত্র দাখিল করিতে পারিবেন না, অন্যথায় দরপত্র বাতিল বলিয়া গণ্য হইবে। সর্বনিম্ন দরগ্রহণ করিতে কর্তৃপক্ষ বাধ্য হইবেন।

২২। দরপত্র জামানত যে কোন রপ্তায়/তফসিল ব্যাংকের ড্রাফট হইতে হইবে। অন্যথায় দরপত্র বাতিল বলিয়া গণ্য হইবে।

২৩। পিপিএ-২০০৬ পিপিআর-২০০৮ ও সংশোধিত পিপিআর-২০০৯ মতে ও দরপত্র সিডিউলের সহিত সরবরাহকৃত/আরোপিত শর্তাবলী অন্যান্য নির্দেশিকা/বিশেষ নির্দেশিকা অবশ্যই যথাযথভাবে অনুসরণ করিতে হইবে। আরোপিত শর্তাবলী মোতাবেক দরপত্র দাখিল করা না হইলে তাহা বাতিল বলিয়া গণ্য হইবে।

ডাঃ মোঃ জাহিদুল ইসলাম

সিভিল সার্জন

সিরাজগঞ্জ

ফোন নং-০৭৫১৬২১৬০

জিডি-১৭২৬