

# Contract farming: A prospect yet to be unveiled

SHYKH SERAJ

I met Farid in Qatar's Alkhor area in 2011. Farid, who hails from Chattogram, went to Qatar as a labourer in 2001 and like other expatriate workers, he was working there day and night. He worked for decades at his Qatari Sheikh's organization. One day he saw a piece of a fallow land near his office and started thinking what crops can be cultivated there. His colleagues laughed at him and said, "Hey, will there be any crop on this land where the soil is filled with sand, stones, rocks and gravels." But Farid was adamant in his decision and started farming by taking lease of the land from the owner of the company at a nominal price. He had believed that he would find soil under the rocks and sand. He kept digging the soil with a spade but found a lot of slate stones beneath the soil. It was difficult to remove those from the ground and the job would have been easier if he had a tiller.

He made a tiller or plough like object with a piece of metal. The problem was, who would pull that as there were no bulls, but horses and donkeys. Horses cost a lot. In the end, Farid bought a donkey and removed the stones and finally started farming. It was like turning impossible to possible. By the time I went to Farid's farm, it was already three-year-old. It was sheer hard work, I tell you my dear readers.

With hard work, concentration and dedication Bangladeshi workers like Farid are making amazing success stories in different countries

of the world. Farid continued to increase the amount of leased land in the following years. He created employment opportunities for Bangladeshi workers, started commercial farming in full swing and became an entrepreneur in Qatar. In 2014, I went to Farid's farm again which literally turned huge. Red spinach, spinach, tomato, cabbage, cauliflower, and radish: there were so many vegetables there. Twenty five young men were working at his farm and following his footsteps Alkhor region has many other farms now. Farid was stressing on an issue that Qatar imposed strict regulations over Bangladeshi expatriates. As a result, Bangladeshi workers were decreasing at the farm and vacant posts are being occupied by workers from India, Pakistan, Nepal and other countries. After learning about the issue, I took the then Bangladeshi Ambassador in

shortages. By the infinite mercy of the almighty, we have handled the matter using our skills in Bangladesh. As the pandemic approached quite viciously in every part of the world, Bangladeshi expatriate workers were told to return home and forced to quit their jobs. They became unemployed. Regarding this when Covid-19 was at the peak during March-April, 2020, I talked to our Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and asked him to look into the matter. The honourable minister took the proposal very seriously. I also spoke with Ambassador Golam Masih in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He said farming in Saudi Arabia is very expensive and their government is trying to build farms in the African country of Sudan, as farming is much cheaper there.

The history of our relationship with Africa is quite old. Ibn Battuta

taking a 99-year lease. But for some unknown reason, no one has taken any initiative from our government or private sector to capture the lease. Although some Bangladeshi private initiatives have started in one or two African countries.

On January 20, an online seminar on 'Contract Farming and Job Opportunity for Bangladesh Abroad' was organized at the Foreign Service Academy in Dhaka. There was an opportunity to listen to others as well as share my views. Retired Ambassador Golam Masih presented a paper on contract farming abroad, especially in Africa. He was Bangladesh's Ambassador in Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh Representative to OIC in Sudan. He gave an excellent presentation on the possibilities of contract farming in African countries. "If we can run farming in Africa, it will play a vital role in our food security as well as ensure employment opportunities for Bangladeshis," he said. He also discussed the issue of meeting the demand for cotton in our textile sector by cultivating cotton in Sudan. His proposals seemed quite realistic. We should have taken this initiative 15 years back. Indo-Pakistani traders have a monopoly on agricultural farms in Africa. They are leading agricultural commerce and trade sector in many African countries. I remember, I went to see the Maire Estate, an Indian-built farm, led by Khan Mohammad Huda at a place called Kuwenda in Uganda in 2014. His forefathers started cultivating flowers and vegetables there in 1956 for the European market. Till date, Huda has been cultivating flowers and vegetables.

Even after 50 years of independence, we cannot think of the international concept of agribusiness. In this competitive world, if we can't make the right decision regarding international agri-business and labour market, we will keep on falling behind. At the seminar held at the Foreign Service Academy, everyone was saying that it was too late to make a decision. Even though it is late, but it is necessary to participate in this competition to stay in the race. So that we do not fall further behind. To ensure the successful participation of skilled workers and agri-entrepreneurs in the farming sectors abroad, the necessary cooperation from the government and right policy-decisions need to be taken as soon as possible. I do believe agriculture can give us economic freedom, the real freedom whether at home or abroad.



Shykh Seraj talks with Bangladeshi fish entrepreneur Sohel at his fish farm in Uganda's Luwero district.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

Qatar, Ashud Ahmed to Farid's farm. He said he would discuss the matter at the higher level.

Not just Farid, I have seen Abdur Razzak from Pirojpur's Mathbaria, who started one of the largest agricultural farms at Al Faisal, in Kuwait's Wafra region. In Oman, Mustafiz has set up a commercial farm on around 70 acres of land. Sohel has set up a fish farm at Chicabo village in Luwero district of Uganda, Africa. For 15 to 20 years, Bangladeshi entrepreneurs in different parts of the world, including Malaysia, the Middle East and Africa, have occupied a unique position. However, the government has barely thought that it is possible to employ the skilled agro-workers in the farming sector in abroad.

The whole world is going through a difficult time because of the spread of coronavirus pandemic. United Nation's World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, have repeatedly warned of food

writes in his book that even in the 14th century, he met traders from West Arab and some African countries. The biggest issue is that after independence, the countries of Africa recognized Bangladesh as a sovereign and independent nation. We know that Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made efforts to strengthen political and business relations with Africa. Due to three decades of dedicated service as a peacekeeper of the United Nations in different war-torn countries in Africa, Bangladesh's military, navy, air force, police and NGOs have strengthened relations with different African countries, who have a positive attitude towards Bangladesh. The war-torn countries in Africa invited various countries including Bangladesh to produce agricultural products on their vast, unused and agriculturally fertile lands. Responding to the invitations, neighbouring India and other countries have started farming



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.

## Gambia not eligible to file case

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"The Republic of the Union of Myanmar filed preliminary objections to the jurisdiction of the Court and the admissibility of the Application, and whereas a signed copy of those preliminary objections was immediately transmitted to the other Party," according to an order signed by the ICJ on January 28.

The Court set May 20, 2021, as the deadline within which The Gambia may present a written statement of its observations and submissions on the preliminary objections raised by Myanmar. The content of the objection, however, has not been made public by the ICJ.

Asked about the significance of the preliminary objections raised by Myanmar, Dhaka University Law Professor Dr Mizanur Rahman said this is a procedural and technical issue raised by Myanmar, questioning if the ICJ is ever eligible to conduct the trial on the crimes committed. "Now, The Gambia has to place its arguments about why the ICJ is eligible to conduct the trial. Only if the arguments withstand, the trial can start," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Such objections are often raised because it's possible that they may result in the Court declining to rule on the substantive issues of a case, according to the New York-based Global Justice Centre (GJC).

It said justice for the Rohingya genocide could be delayed for a year due to Myanmar's objections.

He said that, however, the fact that the Myanmar military took control of the country will not hamper the justice process.

Some 750,000 Rohingya refugees, mostly women and children, fled Myanmar and crossed into Bangladesh after the Myanmar military launched a crackdown on the minority Muslim community since August 2017.

Nearly 24,000 Rohingyas were killed, according to a report by the Ontario International Development Agency. The Gambia's case also focused on Myanmar's security forces' so-called "clearance operations" in 2016 and 2017 against the Rohingya community.

In response to case, the ICJ in January 2020 issued provisional measures, requiring Myanmar to take certain actions to protect the Rohingya including preventing genocidal acts, ensuring that military, police and other forces within its control do not commit genocidal acts, and preserve all evidence of genocidal acts.

The ICJ also asked Myanmar to report every six months to the Court on the steps it has taken to comply with the measures. In September last year, Canada and the Netherlands also announced formally joining The Gambia's legal bid to hold Myanmar accountable over allegations of Rohingya genocide.

Myanmar filed reports to the ICJ in May 2020 and November 2020, with the next compliance report due on May 23, 2021. These reports are not currently public but The Gambia is able to review them and provide commentary to the Court.

The United Nations and other rights bodies, however, say that persecution against the Rohingyas in Rakhine continued to happen.

In October 2020, The Gambia filed its Memorial, which details its case against Myanmar, which, however, came up with the preliminary objections on January 20 this year. Myanmar was due to file its Counter-Memorial by July 23, 2021.

"The filing of the Preliminary Objections will now suspend merits proceedings in the case until the issues now raised by Myanmar are adjudicated by the ICJ," the GJC said.

## BB withdraws

FROM PAGE 12

Shah Alam did not respond to a request for comment from The Daily Star.

Halder misappropriated loans of Tk 10,200 crore from the NBFIs and laundered the money to Canada, Singapore and India, using 30 organisations, owned by him and his associates.

The allegation of embezzlement against him surfaced after the Anti-Corruption Commission launched an enquiry into the wealth of illegal casino owners last year.

Halder, who is now in Canada, embezzled Tk 2,500 crore from International Leasing and Financial Services (ILFS), Tk 2,200 crore from FAS Finance, Tk 3,000 crore from Peoples' Leasing and Tk 2,500 crore from Reliance Finance.

Shah Alam supervised the non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) since 2013 when he was appointed as general manager of the DFIM, which is responsible to make policies and monitor those.

He promoted as an executive director in 2017 and was appointed to supervise NBFIs once again.

In the confessional statement, Rashedul Haque, also a former managing director of ILFS, said Shah Alam was given Tk 2 lakh per month to hide the scam.

Reliance Finance and ILFS gave Tk 5 lakh to Tk 7 lakh to the central bank's inspectors when they inspected the NBFIs, he said.

SK Sur Chowdhury had played a key-role among the central bank officials to help the scammers, he added.

Rashedul Haque also confessed that he disbursed crores of money including Tk 70.82 crore as loan to a non-existent company as per PK Halder's direction.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Baki Billah recorded confessional statement of

Haque after Anti-Corruption Commission Deputy Director Gulshan Anwar Pradhan, also investigation officer of the case, brought him at his chamber.

After recording the statement, the magistrate ordered to send him to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj, an official of the ACC told The Daily Star.

In his statement, Rashedul told the magistrate all the activities regarding submission of application for loan in the name of Anan Chemical Ltd and sanction of loan were done as per PK Halder's direction even though there were no existence of the company.

"I had disbursed crores of money as loan to a number of non-existing companies and a number of high-profile persons as per PK Halder's direction.

ACC official Gulshan interrogated Rashedul and Uzzal Kumar Nandi, former chairman of People's Leasing and Financial Services Limited, at the ACC office on January 25 and then they were kept at Ramna Police Station -- out of fear that they might leave the country -- for their alleged involvement in the scam.

The ACC also filed a case against 24 people including the two with its Integrated District Office-1 of Dhaka.

PK Halder is the prime accused in the case.

According to the prosecution, it was alleged that Uzzal, one of directors of the fake company "Anan Chemical Ltd", and Rashedul in collusion with PK Halder and others took Tk 70.82 crore as loan and laundered the money.

According to ACC sources, Rashedul and Uzzal were named in the case as close associates of PK Halder, who has laundered huge amount of money abroad with their help.

## LAND DISPUTE

### Madrasa teacher killed, 3 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A madrasa teacher was stabbed to death in an attack by his rivals allegedly over a land dispute in Mirzaganj upazila of the district yesterday morning.

The deceased, Mannan Mujahidi, 57, a resident of West Subidkhali area, was an assistant teacher at Salehiya Alim Madrasa.

Three supporters of Mannan were also injured during the attack. Injured Shakil, 37, Shahidul, 27, and Azhar, 70, were admitted to Mirzaganj Upazila Health Complex from where Azhar was later shifted to Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated. Officer in Charge (OC) of Mirzaganj Police Station Shawkat Anwar Islam said.

Quoting locals, police said there had been a dispute between Mannan and Kitab Ali, Liton and Shipon over the ownership of a piece of land adjacent to Mannan's house.

The incident occurred when a group led by Ali, Liton and Shipon attacked Mannan and his followers while the latter was erecting a house on the dispute land yesterday, leaving four people severely injured.

Neighbours and family members took the injured to Mirzaganj Upazila Health Complex where the doctors declared Mannan dead, police said.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Patuakhali General Hospital for autopsy, the OC said, adding that they were trying to arrest the attackers.

KEY INFORMATION	
1	Ministry/Division: Ministry of Commerce
2	Agency: Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)
3	Procuring Entity Name: Chief Officer (Commercial), TCB, Dhaka.
4	Procuring Entity Code: Not applicable.
5	Procuring Entity District: Dhaka.
6	Invitation for: (a) Refined Soyabean Oil (b) Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil
7	Invitation Ref. No.: (a) 26.05.0000.016.08.116.21.651 (b) 26.05.0000.016.08.116.21.652
8	Date: 04-02-2021
FUNDING INFORMATION	
9	Budget and Source of Funds: TCB's Own Fund.
PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
10	Package No.: (a) TCB/Imp-25/Soyabean Oil/2021 (b) TCB/Imp-25/Red Lentil/2021
11	Package Name: (a) Refined Soyabean Oil (b) Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil
12	Tender Publication Date: 05-02-2021
13	Date: 22-03-2021
14	Time: 17:00 P.M.
15	Tender Closing Date and Time: 23-03-2021
16	Time: 12:00 P.M.
17	Tender Opening Date and Time: 23-03-2021
18	Time: 12:15 P.M.
19	Name & Address of the office(s): (1) Sonali Bank Ltd. Kawran Bazar Branch, TCB Bhaban, Dhaka. (2) Trust Bank Ltd. Kawran Bazar Branch, and (3) Accounts & Finance Division, TCB's Principal Office at Dhaka.
20	Receiving Tender Document: In front of TCB's reception (2 <sup>nd</sup> floor), TCB Bhaban, 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.
21	Opening Tender Document: Board Room, TCB.
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER	
18	Eligibility of Tender: Bonafide Suppliers/Manufacturers. Details conditions will be mentioned in the Tender documents.
19	Brief Description of goods: Import of (a) 3,000,000 (±5%) (Three Million Plus Minus Five Percent) Liter Refined Soyabean Oil Packed in 02 (Two) Liter Food Grade PET Bottle. (b) 3,000 (±5%) (Three Thousand Plus Minus Five Percent) M.Tons Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil.
20	Price of Tender Document: (a) Tk 3,000 (Three Thousand) only Per Set. (b) Tk 3,000 (Three Thousand) only Per Set.
21	Lot Identification No.: Location: Tender Security Amount (USD/TK): Shipment Schedule:
21	1. (a) Refined Soyabean Oil: Offers are to be made on CFR (C) Chattogram (Previous name Chittagong) by Sea. Tender is to be submitted along with Tender Security amounting to: (a) USD 85,000.00 (US Dollar Eighty Five Thousand) or BDT 72,00,000.00 (BDT Seventy Two Lac) Only. (b) USD 49,500.00 (US Dollar Forty Nine Thousand Five Hundred) or BDT 42,00,000.00 (BDT Forty Two Lac) Only in the form of Pay-Order/Bank Draft/Bank Guarantee. The Successful Tenderer is to submit 5% (Five Percent) Performance Security in the form of Pay-Order/Bank Draft/Bank Guarantee.
22	Entire quantity of Goods is to be shipped within (a) 45 (Forty Five) days (b) 45 (Forty Five) days (Including L/C correction & grace period) from the date of opening L/C.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS	
22	Name of Official Inviting Tender: Md. Shekhabur Rahaman
23	Designation of Official Inviting Tender: Chief Officer (Commercial), TCB Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.
24	Address of Official Inviting Tender: Principal Office, Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.
25	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender: Telephone No. 02-8180074 Fax No 880-2-8180057 E-mail: tcb@tcb.gov.bd, tcbimp@tcb.gov.bd
26	Special Instructions: a. Incomplete, conditional Tender and alternative offer shall not be considered. b. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any/all Tenders partly or wholly without assigning any reason. c. Tenderer who was awarded the Notification of Awarded (NOA) earlier but could not submit Performance Security (PS) in due time, will not be eligible for the Tender. d. Tenderer who's Performance Security (PS) was partially or totally forfeited earlier will not be eligible to participate in the Tender.
GD-240	(Md. Shekhabur Rahaman) Chief Officer (Commercial) Trading Corporation of Bangladesh

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সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ	
ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ	
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১. মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়/সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ।
২. সংস্থা	ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ।
৩. সজ্জাহকারী সত্তার নাম	প্রকল্প পরিচালক, বাস রুট র্যানালাইজেশন প্রকল্প, ডিআইসি।
৪. সজ্জাহকারী সত্তার ঠিকানা	ঢাকা।
৫. আবেদনের জন্য	পণ্য এবং সার্ভিসিং সেবা।
৬. আবেদনের সূত্র	৩৫.০২.০০০০.০০৮.১৪.০০২.২০২০-০০২ তারিখ ০৩/০২/২০২১খ্রিঃ
৭. দরপত্র আবেদনের তারিখ	০৭/০২/২০২১খ্রিঃ।
প্রধান শব্দ	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।
৮. ক্রম পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।
৯. বাজেট এবং অর্ধের উৎস	বার্ষিক উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচি বাজেট, বাংলাদেশ সরকার।
১০. দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	২৪/০২/২০২১ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১১. দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৫/০২/২০২১ সময় দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১২. দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২৫/০২/২০২১ দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৩. অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ নগর ভবন, ১৪ তলা, ঢাকা-১০০০।
১৪. দরপত্র বিক্রয়/দরপত্র গ্রহণ/দরপত্র খোলা	প্রকল্প পরিচালক, বাস রুট র্যানালাইজেশন প্রকল্প, ডিআইসি এর অফিস কক্ষ।
দরপত্রাদাতার শর্তাবলী	
১৪. দরপত্রাদাতার যোগ্যতা	ক) দরপত্রাদাতার যে কোন সরকারি দপ্তরে, বেসরকারি দপ্তরে, একক্রেতৃত্ব অথবা যে কোন এনজিও-তে, পর্যাপ্ত প্রতিষ্ঠান কর্মসূচক ২ (দুই) বৎসর ধরে আউটসোর্সিং এর মাধ্যমে জনবল সরবরাহের বাবে পরিচালনার অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। খ) পণ্য ও (সীসা) বস্তুসমূহের মতো সর্বোচ্চ ৩টি চুক্তির আওতায় কর্মসূচক সর্বমোট ১০ লক্ষ টাকার আউটসোর্সিং এর মাধ্যমে জনবল সরবরাহ সেবার আনুষ্ঠানিক/স্বল্প উক্তির সন্তোষজনকভাবে সম্পূর্ণ করার অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। গ) দরপত্রাদাতার কর্মসূচক ও লক্ষ টাকার ন্যূনতম সঞ্চয়/সঞ্চয়িত মুদ্রা/সঞ্চয়িত মুদ্রা থাকতে হবে।
১৫. দরপত্র দাখিলের মূল্য	টাকা ৫০০ (পাঁচশত) টাকা।
১৬. আউটসোর্সিং এর মাধ্যমে ০২ (দুই) জন অফিস সহকারী কাম কম্পিউটার অপারেটর এবং ০২ (দুই) জন অফিস সহায়ক নিয়োগ	মূল্য: টাকা = ২০,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা ক্রেতার সময় (মাস): আনুমানিক ২২ মাস
ক্রয়কারীর বিবরণ	
১৭. দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর নাম	গ্রুপ আনাম।
১৮. দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর পদবী	ডেপুটি ট্রান্সপোর্ট গ্র্যানার।
১৯. দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর ঠিকানা	ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ নগর ভবন, ১৪ তলা, ঢাকা।
২০. দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর যোগাযোগের নম্বর	ফোন: ০১৬২১৪৪৪২৪৩ ই-মেইল: dhrubo101@yahoo.com
২১. বিশেষ নির্দেশনা	ক) ক্রয়কারী কোন কারণ ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করতে পারেন। খ) দরপত্রের বিবরণে বিস্তারিত তথ্যাদি দরপত্র দাখিল পাওয়ার সাথে সাথে। ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ এর ওয়েবসাইট <a href="http://www.dtca.gov.bd">www.dtca.gov.bd</a> দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি পাওয়া যাবে।
প্রকল্প পরিচালক (অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্ব) বাস রুট র্যানালাইজেশন প্রকল্প ফোন: ০১৬২১৪৪৪২৪৩ ই-মেইল: dhrubo101@yahoo.com	
তারিখ: ২০২১	