

# 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

# FARMING IN HAORS OF KHALIAJURI 'Bonus crop' mustard offers hope for better days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Several hundred farmers, who rely on cultivation of only Boro rice once a year in haors of Netrakona's Khaliajuri upazila, are delighted to harvest a second crop this season.

After the Boro is harvested in May, the land in haors usually remains unused till December due to flooding. But this time, in a first in the upazila, the farmers sowed mustard there in November and reaped the harvest by the end of January. Now they have started planting Boro on the same land.

Advised by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), more than 300 farmers cultivated the 'bonus crop' on about 450 hectares of land in the haors of the upazila, according to the DAE.

The farmers said mustard cultivation seems highly profitable. On top of earning around Tk 2,000 to 2,200 for each maund of mustard, they can earn more than the cost of its production only by selling the dead plants as firewood after harvest.

The cost of cultivating mustard on one acre of land is around Tk 5 thousand, whereas mustard plants ripped out after the harvest from the same land can be sold for around Tk 8 to 10 thousand, they also said.

Pallab Sarker, a farmer from Satgaon village, cultivated BARI-14 variety of mustard for the first time on one acre of land.

He said, "I'm expecting 15 maunds of mustard from here. I spent about Tk 5 thousand and hope to make about Tk 30 thousand from the sale of mustard."

"Profits like this in between Boro cultivations were beyond imagination for haor farmers once. But it's a reality now," said Rokon Mia, another farmer from the

same area.

Habibur Rahman, upazila agriculture officer in Khaliajuri, said success in large-scale mustard cultivation has given hundreds of farmers hope for a brighter and better future.

The demand for mustard oil has been on the rise in recent years and the trend will likely continue. Hence, there is a good prospect if mustard is cultivated in large-scale on vast swathes of haor land that remain unutilised after Boro harvest every season.

Advised by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), more than 300 farmers cultivated the 'bonus crop' on about 450 hectares of land in the haors of the upazila, according to the DAE.

Besides, the decomposing fallen leaves of the mustard plants work as bio-fertiliser, which help improve productivity of crops cultivated on the same land later on, he also said.

Khaliajuri Upazila Nirbahi Officer AHM Ariful Islam said to mark the birth centenary of Bangabandhu and the country's 50 years of independence, they are giving subsidy to 3,350 farmers for growing crops and vegetables this winter season on unutilised land in the upazila.



Flowers in bloom at a mustard field in Satgaon village of Netrakona's Khaliajuri upazila.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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.



**Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)**  
TCB Bhaban, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215  
www.tcb.gov.bd  
Import Section

**Invitation For Tender (International) of**  
**(a) 30,00,000 (±5%) Liter Refined Soyabean Oil**  
**(b) 3,000 (±5%) M.Ton Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil**

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

**KEY INFORMATION**  
9 Procurement Method Open Tendering Method (OTM) (International)

**FUNDING INFORMATION**  
10 Budget and Source of Funds TCB's Own Fund.

**PARTICULAR INFORMATION**  
11 Package No. (a) TCB/Imp-25/Soyabean Oil/2021 (b) TCB/Imp-25/Red Lentil/2021  
12 Package Name (a) Refined Soyabean Oil (b) Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil  
13 Tender Publication Date 05-02-2021  
14 Tender Documents Last Selling Date and Time 22-03-2021 17:00 P.M.  
15 Tender Closing Date and Time 23-03-2021 12:00 P.M.  
16 Tender Opening Date and Time 23-03-2021 12:15 P.M.  
17 Name & Address of the office(s) Address  
(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.  
-Receiving Tender Document In front of TCB's reception (2<sup>nd</sup> floor), TCB Bhaban, 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.  
-Opening Tender Document Board Room, TCB.

**INFORMATION FOR TENDERER**  
18 Eligibility of Tenderer 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.

| Lot Identification No. | Location  | Tender Security Amount (USD/TK)   | Shipment Schedule  |
|------------------------|---|---|--|
| 21                     | (a) Refined Soyabean Oil (b) Whole Husked (Without Husk) Red Lentil. Offerers 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. | 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

**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.  
(Md. Shekhabur Rahaman)  
Chief Officer (Commercial)  
Trading Corporation of Bangladesh

## 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.

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**  
সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়  
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নগর ভবন, 18 তলা, রমনা, ঢাকা-1000  
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তারিখ: ০৩/০২/২০২১খ্রিঃ  
নং-৩৫.০২.০০০০.০০৮.১৪.০০২.২০২০-০২

**আউটসোর্সিং এর মাধ্যমে জনবল নিয়োগের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**  
(উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি)

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| ১. মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ          | সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়/সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ। |
| ২. সংস্থা                     | ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ।                              |
| ৩. সজ্ঞাহকারী সত্তার নাম      | প্রকৃত পরিচালক, বাস রুট র‍্যাশনলাইজেশন প্রকল্প, ডিটিসিএ।    |
| ৪. সজ্ঞাহকারী সত্তার কোম্পানি | ঢাকা।   |
| ৫. আবেদনের জন্য               | পণ্য এবং সার্ভিস সেবা।                                      |
| ৬. আবেদনের সূত্র              | ৩৫.০২.০০০০.০০৮.১৪.০০২.২০২০-০০২ তারিখ ০৩/০২/২০২১খ্রিঃ        |
| ৭. দরপত্র আবেদনের তারিখ       | ০৭/০২/২০২১খ্রিঃ।  |

**প্রদান স্থান**  
৮. ক্রম পদ্ধতি উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।

**অর্পণের উদ্দেশ্য**  
৯. বাজেট এবং অর্পণের উৎস বার্ষিক উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচি বাজেট, বাংলাদেশ সরকার।

**বাস্তব কথা**  
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 প্রকল্প পরিচালক, বাস রুট র‍্যাশনলাইজেশন প্রকল্প, ডিটিসিএ এর অফিস কক্ষ।

**দরপত্রাদানের কথা**  
১৪. দরপত্রাদানের যোগ্যতা ক) দরপত্রাদাতার যে কোন সরকারি দপ্তরে, বেসরকারি দপ্তরে, একত্রে অথবা যে কোন এনজিও-তে, পরামর্শক প্রতিষ্ঠানে কমপক্ষে ২ (দুই) বছর ধরে আউটসোর্সিং এর মাধ্যমে জনবল সরবরাহের বাবে পরিচালনার অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।  
খ) গুট ও (পীচ) বস্তুরের মধ্যে সর্বোচ্চ ৩টি চুক্তির আওতায় কমপক্ষে সর্বমোট ১০ লক্ষ টাকার আউটসোর্সিং এর মাধ্যমে জনবল সরবরাহ সেবার আউটসোর্সিং চুক্তির সজ্ঞাহকারকভাবে সম্পূর্ণ করার অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।  
গ) দরপত্রাদাতার কমপক্ষে ৫ লক্ষ টাকার ন্যূন সম্পদ/চলতি মূলধন/স্বল্প সুবিধা থাকতে হবে।  
ঢাকা ৫০০ (পীচসড়) টাকা।

| ১৫. দরপত্র দাখিলের মূল্য | পণ্য ও সার্ভিস সেবার নাম   | সূত্র   | দরপত্র জমাতে (টাকা)                | কার্যের সময় (মাস) |
|--------------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                          | আউটসোর্সিং এর মাধ্যমে ০২ (দুই) জন অফিস সহকারী কাম কম্পিউটার অপারেটর এবং ০২ (দুই) জন অফিস সহায়ক নিয়োগ | ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ নগর ভবন, ১৪ তলা, ঢাকা। | টাকা = ২০,০০০/- (দুইটি হাজার) টাকা | আনুমানিক ২২ মাস    |

**ক্রয়কারীর বিবরণ**  
১৬. দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর নাম গ্রুপ আকার।  
১৭. দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর পতনীর ডেপুটি ট্রান্সপোর্ট গ্যারান্টি।  
১৮. দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর ঠিকানা ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ নগর ভবন, ১৪ তলা, ঢাকা।  
১৯. দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর যোগাযোগের নম্বর ফোন: ০১৮০১৪৫৪৪২৩ ই-মেইল: dhrubho101@yahoo.com

২১. বিধি নির্দেশনা ক) ক্রয়কারী কোন কারণ ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করতে পারেন।  
খ) দরপত্রের বিধি বিজ্ঞপ্তি তথ্যই দরপত্র দাখিলে পাওয়া যাবে। ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ এর ওয়েবসাইট [www.dtca.gov.bd](http://www.dtca.gov.bd) দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি পাওয়া যাবে।

প্রকল্প পরিচালক (অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্ব)  
বাস রুট র‍্যাশনলাইজেশন প্রকল্প  
ফোন: ০১৮০১৪৫৪৪২৩  
ইমেইল: dhrubho101@yahoo.com

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