

Lemon cultivation changes fortunes for many

SHYKH SERAJ

In February last year, when there was no sign of spread of COVID-19 in Bangladesh, I received a phone call from a farmer named Zahid Hasan from Mymensingh's Bhaluka. The caller in his local dialect said, "I am Zahid. I would be very happy if you could come and visit my lemon orchard one day." I learned more about Zahid's orchard and promised him to visit his orchard very soon. It is unfortunately for the world and Bangladesh, coronavirus started spreading and Bangladesh felt a heavy impact. Every plan was ruined. The country went through lockdown and so came the quarantine period. A whole year had gone by in uncertainty. At the end of February this year, Zahid came to my mind. I had promised him to visit his orchard but couldn't make it due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I called Zahid and asked him whether

a guest used to visit any rural village, it was a tradition to greet him or her with a glass of lemonade (lemon juice) first. Now everything has changed and no one thinks of greeting guest with lemonade. Electricity is everywhere, practically in every village. The financial state of the people has also improved and now many have a refrigerator at their village homes. Many people are selling soft drinks at the rural market. So, whenever someone visits the village, she/he is welcomed with soft drinks instead of lemonade. So the question is how did the demand for lemons increase?

If we look at the 80s, we'll see people in our country started having tea at an increasing rate. But, the demand for lemon tea had increased a lot over the years, especially in the city. We can say lemon returned to life once again in the city areas. Due to the increased demand of lemon,



Zahid Hasan at his lemon orchard at Tamat village in Mymensingh's Bhaluka.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

to take a lot of Vitamin C to protect yourself from this pandemic. Those who will be infected with the deadly virus must intake plenty of Vitamin C. As a result, the demand for lemons increased instantly. Speaking of now, the price of lemons in the country has gone up further after the second wave of COVID-19. Four lemons are being sold for Tk 40 to Tk 50 (USD 0.47 to USD 0.59). The price of lemon varies on the variety.

Let's share some milestones of lemon cultivation in our country. I remember Ibrahim Sarker established a lemon orchard at Char Raghurampur in Mymensingh in the 90s. At that time, no one could have imagined commercial lemon cultivation in the Mymensingh region. Ibrahim was a confident farmer. His success story was first captured in 2003 during the first filming of Hridoye Mati O Manush (Soil & People in Heart). Ibrahim passed away almost 15 years back. His dream of lemon cultivation had spread far and wide in the entire Mymensingh region. I also remember the story of the unimaginable success of farmer

Mainuddin of Char Nilakshia village. Not only Mainuddin, but many people like him have also changed their fortunes by cultivating lemons. In my various news reports, I have highlighted the news of the expansion of lemon cultivation in different areas including Mymensingh's Fulbaria and Muktagachha upazilas. Lemon cultivation has also expanded in Tangail and Narsingdi.

Dear readers, you may remember, a few days back, I worked on the lemon orchard of Chasha (Farmer) Aziz at Shaliyobho village in Tangail's Ghatail upazila. Aziz also mentioned some of his new plans for lemon cultivation. He told me that due to the coronavirus pandemic, he could make a huge profit from lemon and had increased its cultivation.

Shortly after the morning sun appeared, I reached Tamat village in Bhaluka. Zahid, the lemon entrepreneur, was eagerly waiting for me. A 30-year-old young man with a wide smile on his face, greeted me with a lemonade. Zahid's face was filled with rural simplicity. He was

so excited to have me at his orchard. "Let's go to your lemon orchard Zahid; don't get busy as I am here; I came here to visit your great work, so let's go," I requested Zahid.

Looking at Zahid's lemon orchard, I could understand that the paddy fields have turned into lemon orchards. Many farmers are now leaning towards alternative crops as they are not getting profit from paddy cultivation. Zahid said all the lemons in his five acre orchard are seedless. The more I walked along the orchard path, the more I had to be amazed. Each tree, full of lemons. Even the bamboo poles couldn't carry the weight of the lemons, produced from a single tree. Zahid continued to tell me the story of his lemon orchard. Even a decade ago, Zahid fought with extreme poverty. "Due to lack of money, I returned empty-handed many times without buying anything at all from the market," shared Zahid. An episode of Hridoye Mati O Manush has changed Zahid's world and he decided to cultivate lemons. From then on, Zahid never looked back for a single time since then. Lemons gradually changed Zahid's fortune. Zahid was saying with tears in his eyes, "There was a time when there was no food at my house, but today I have everything."

"How much profit did you had last year?" I asked Zahid.

"It will be around Tk 30 lakh (USD 35408)," Zahid replied.

I was so amazed and happy to hear this. Even then I did not know that a bigger surprise was waiting for me. Zahid said, "About 20 to 40 people work in my garden throughout the year. I need to pay Tk 22,000 (USD 260) to the workers every day. I wanted to know, why so much money? He said he sold 600 thousand lemon saplings last year. And this year he is on a mission to make 20 lakh lemon saplings. That is why he has to pay them more as they are working on a larger scale. I realized that Zahid was getting more money by selling lemon

saplings than lemons. Zahid said he sold saplings worth Tk 1.2 crore (USD 141635) last year. Although, there were production costs, the profit was way too large.

"Starting from zero, you have turned into a millionaire Zahid," I congratulated him.

Zahid bought more land in the meantime and now he has a total 10 acre orchard, 5 acre dedicated for malta and orange, and 5 acre for lemon.

Zahid is a symbol of change to many of Tamat village. He has inspired countless people to plant lemons. I talked to some local farmers. A farmer named Zahir has also built a lemon orchard and nursery at Tamat. After finishing his studies, he is no longer looking for a job. Not just Zahir, many others like Rafique and Masud have also succeeded in establishing lemon orchards and good profits out of those. Dear readers, I say prosperity lies in farming.

Evidence of this can be found in Zahid's lemon orchard. After seeing his orchard, I went to Zahid's home. He built a big house. As soon as I entered the house, I could see the signs of prosperity in Zahid's home, as well. He has a TV, refrigerator and other fancy stuff at his home. I had lunch with him where he gave me lemons from his orchard. It was so luscious and the smell was really good.

The success of an agro-entrepreneur lies in the initiative to meet the demands of the market and also the time. Zahid Hasan has not only ensured his success, but he has given birth to a revolution in lemon cultivation. I believe that many young entrepreneurs in the country will be inspired by his success. Similarly, amid the second wave of COVID-19 across the country, during this time of Holy Ramadan, initiatives are needed to be taken to make lemons easily available to the consumers. Happy Ramadan and Shubho Nababarsha to my passionate readers. Stay well and stay safe.

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.



he has lemons in his orchard. "What are you saying, my orchard has become even bigger; you just visit my orchard and see it with your own eyes," replied Zahid. Bhaluka isn't far from Dhaka. Generally, I go out to film early in the morning and in early March this year, I started for Zahid's lemon orchard.

Lemon cultivation has significantly expanded in our country in the last 15 years or so. In the past, there was not much demand for lemons. It was better to have one slice of lemon during the lunch or dinner time. However, when

its cultivation also started increasing gradually. Later, when people became health-conscious they started drinking lemonade even more than in the past. In this perspective, demand for lemon increased. However, even before last year, lemons were sometimes sold at a nominal price on the sidewalks of the capital as lemons would come in plenty at the market. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a substantial demand for lemons. It was known from the beginning of the spread of coronavirus that you need

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Thakurgaon
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No-46.02.9400.000.14.001.21.717
Date: 13/04/2021

NCB Reference No: 02/2020-2021
Corrigendum #1

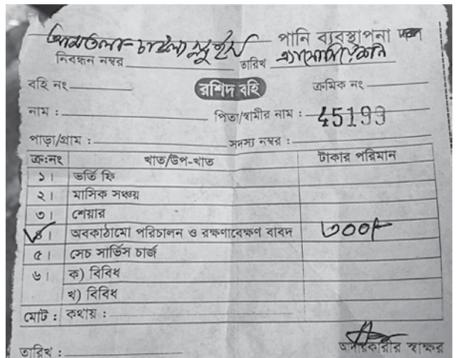
Due to unavoidable circumstance following Amendment/Corrigendum is Issued for the NCB Reference No. 02/2021, Dated: 01/03/2021.

Contract No.	Field name	Existing date & time	Amendment date & time
LGED/RADARDP/T hakurgaon/W-15(Lot-2)	Document last selling date & time	18/04/2021 11:00	04/05/2021 11:00
	Closing date & time	19/04/2021 11:30	05/05/2021 11:30
	Opening date & time	19/04/2021 11:30	05/05/2021 11:30
	Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents during the office hours 09:00 to 3:30 hours on all working days up to.	18/04/2021 15:30	04/05/2021 15:30

All other terms & conditions as laid down in that Invitation of Tender & Tender Document will be unchanged. This Corrigendum Notice with above amendment shall be part of the Tender Document.

Md. Shaharul Alam Mondol
Executive Engineer
LGED
District: Thakurgaon, Bangladesh
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GD-773



A printed receipt is being used to collect the extortion money from watermelon-laden truckers in Barguna's Amtali upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Rampant extortion from truckers in Barguna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A gang, led by one Shamim Hawlader, is collecting extortion money from truckers carrying watermelon at Sonakhali village of Barguna's Amtali upazila. They are collecting Tk 300 per truck in the name of Sluice Gate water management association of Chaula area of Water Development Board.

There are also allegations that the truck is being barred if their demand is not met.

According to locals, this year there has bumper watermelon yield in Atharogachhia, Kukua, Haldia and Chawra unions of Barguna's Amtali upazila. Watermelon traders from different areas of the country including Dhaka come to buy watermelons from here and shift them to different places by trucks.

Shamim Hawlader is tactfully using a printed receipt from the local sluice gate water management association to collect the extortion.

Watermelon traders also complained that if a trucker refuses to pay the toll, they do not allow him to transport watermelons.

A local resident, Jalal Chowkida, said Shamim has been collecting Tk 300 from each truck driver since the beginning of watermelon season. He is forcing them to collect the toll. Rabiul, a truck driver from Natore who came to carry watermelons, said the truck is barred from carrying watermelons if Shamim's demand is not met.

"We are being forced to pay the money. Every time I load watermelon in my truck, Shamim and his men come up with their demand," he said.

Several other truckers—Mofiz, from Sirajganj, Mosharrar from Mymensingh and Osman from Gazipur—made similar allegations and demanded immediate action against Shamim.

Watermelon traders Ahidul and Mosharrar Hossain said Shamim comes and demands extortion while loading watermelon in the truck. He doesn't allow watermelon to be loaded in the trucks unless the toll is paid.

When asked, Shamim Hawlader denied the allegation of extortion of Tk 300 per truck and said that a small amount of money is being collected for repairing the roads damaged due to the movement of trucks.

Barguna WDB executive engineer Kaiser Alam said Shamim is not from their office. No one was allowed to collect tolls using the name of Water Development Board.

It is also not true that the roads of the Water Development Board have to be repaired by collecting tolls. Legal action will be taken against such extortionists.

Amtali Police Station Officer-In-Charge Shah Alam Hawlader said, "I am not aware of the matter. If such allegations of extortion are found, legal action will be taken against Shamim."

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Asaduzzaman said police would be directed to take legal action against the extortionists after investigating the matter.

'Cattle lifter' beaten dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A suspected cattle lifter was killed in a mob beating in Juri upazila of the district.

The deceased was Sultan Mia, 40, of Kuchai village.

Locals said a group of cattle thieves entered the house of one Manik Lal of Kuchai village on Monday night.

Sensing the presence of the gang, members of the family raised a hue and cry.

Later, neighbours chased the gang, caught Sultan and beat him dead on the spot while other members of the gang managed to flee.

Police in Charge of Juri Police Station Sanjay Chakraborty said.

Woman arrested for killing husband

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A court here yesterday sent a woman to jail in connection with a case for killing her husband on Wednesday night in Parbatipur upazila allegedly over a family feud.

Earlier, police arrested Sharifa Begum, 26, daughter of Shaful Islam of Bhotgachh village in the upazila, the same morning.

The law enforcers also recovered the body of Sharifa's husband Shahajad Hossain, 38, from his house and sent it to the hospital for autopsy.

Quoting the deceased's family members, police said the couple had a feud over Sharifa's extramarital affair since their marriage two year ago.

On Wednesday night, the duo again had an altercation over the issue. Later, Sharifa mixed some sedative pills in Shahajad meal and fed him.

At one stage, when Shahajad went unconscious Sharifa strangled him to death. But sensing the incident as murder, family members informed the matter to local police.

Meanwhile, victim's father Jahir Uddin filed a case with Parbatipur Police Station in this regard yesterday morning.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Barishal
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Memo No. 1020
Dated: 13/04/2021

Invitation for e-Tender

Invitation reference No.	33/e-GP/BRD/2020-2021
Tender ID	569076
Name of works	Providing and Installation of Road Directional Signboard, Traffic Sign, Sign Post, Road Marking at 137th to 165th km. of Dhaka (Jatrabari)-Mawa-Bhanga-Barishal-Patuakhali (N-8) Road & at 15th to 22nd km. of Gariarpar-Banaripara-Sawrupkati-Kawkhali-Naikati Road (Z-8033) under Barishal Road Division during the year 2020-2021.
Qualification criteria	As stated in Tender Notice & Tender Data Sheet (TDS) of the Tender Document.
Tender document price	Tk. 1,000.00 (one thousand) only.
Tender security amount	Tk 41,000.00 (forty one thousand) only.
Tender document last selling	Date: 02 May 2021. Time: 17:00
Last date and time for tender security submission	Date: 03 May 2021. Time: 11:30
Tender closing date and time	Date: 03 May 2021. Time: 12:30
Tender opening date and time	Date: 03 May 2021. Time: 12:30

01. These are online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline and hard copy will be accepted.
02. To submit e-Tender, visit to the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Masud Mahmud Sumon
ID No. 602165
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Barishal

GD-774

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
অর্থ মন্ত্রণালয়
অর্থনৈতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগ
প্রশাসন-৫ শাখা
শের-ই-বাংলা নগর, ঢাকা
erd.portal.gov.bd
তারিখঃ ১৩/০৪/২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

তারিখঃ ১৩/০৪/২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

০১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	অর্থ মন্ত্রণালয়, অর্থনৈতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগ।
০২।	সম্পর্কিত সত্তার নাম	প্রশাসন-৫ শাখা।
০৩।	সম্পর্কিত সত্তার জেলা	ঢাকা।
০৪।	আধিকারের সূত্র	স্মারক নং-০৯.০০.০০০০.০৭৬.১৮.১৯৭.২১-১১৫
০৫।	তারিখ	১৩/০৪/২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ।
০৬।	সম্পর্কিত পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি।
০৭।	বাজেট এবং অর্থের উৎস	রাজস্ব খাত।
০৮।	দরপত্র/কাজের নাম	অর্থনৈতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগের একজন গাড়িচালকসহ ১৬-২০ মেট্রিক কর্মচারীদের ২০২০-২১ অর্থবছরে সাজ-পোশাক সরবরাহ (তফসিলে উল্লিখিত বর্ণনা অনুযায়ী নারী ও পুরুষের গ্রীষ্মকালীন ও শীতকালীন পোশাক, বাজ/নামের ট্যাগ, জুতা, মোজা ও ছাড়া সরবরাহ)।
০৯।	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৩/০৫/২০২১ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১০।	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৫/০৫/২০২১ তারিখ বেলা ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১১।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	০৫/০৫/২০২১ তারিখ বিকাল ৩:০০ ঘটিকা।
১২।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের স্থান	সিনিয়র সহকারী সচিব, প্রশাসন-৫ শাখা, অর্থনৈতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগ, ঢাকা-১২০৭।
১৩।	দরপত্র গ্রহণকারীর দস্তর	সিনিয়র সহকারী সচিব, প্রশাসন-৫ শাখা, অর্থনৈতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগ (স্মারক নং-১০, কক্ষ নং-২৬), শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭।
১৪।	দরপত্র খোলার দস্তর	যুগ্ম-সচিব (প্রশাসন), অর্থনৈতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগ এর দস্তর।
১৫।	দরপত্রের যোগ্যতা	প্রকৃত পোশাক গ্রহণকারী/সরবরাহকারী।
১৬।	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	৫০০/- (পাঁচশ) টাকা (অক্ষেরতথ্যে)।
১৭।	জামানতের পরিমাণ	২০,০০০/- (দিশ হাজার) টাকা ফেরৎ।

বিশেষ শর্তাবলীঃ

- ১৮। দরপত্র খোলার দিন কোন দরপত্র বিক্রয় করা হবে না।
- ১৯। দাবিলকৃত দর সুস্পষ্টরূপে অঙ্কিত ও কথায় উল্লেখ থাকতে হবে।
- ২০। দরপত্রের যাবতীয় কার্যক্রম পিপিআর-২০০৯ অনুসারে পরিচালিত হবে।
- ২১। দরপত্রদাতাকে টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্টের সকল পাতায় অবশ্যই স্বাক্ষর করতে হবে।
- ২২। দরপত্রের সঙ্গে হালনাগাদ গ্রেড লাইসেন্স, ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট, ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সনদ, হালনাগাদ আয়কর (২০১৯-২০) সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা সনদ দাখিল করতে হবে অন্যথায় দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
- ২৩। যদি কোন দরপত্রদাতা অসত্য/ভুল তথ্য অথবা জাল সার্টিফিকেট দাখিল করেন তাহলে তার দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
- ২৪। দরপত্র জামানতের টাকা যে কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংক হতে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার যুগ্ম-সচিব (প্রশাসন), অর্থনৈতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগ, ঢাকা এর অনুকূলে প্রদান করতে হবে।
- ২৫। সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র খামের উপরিভাগে সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের নাম ও পার্সে দরদাতাগণের পূর্ণ নাম ও ঠিকানা (সীলমোহরসহ) পরিষ্কারভাবে লিপিবদ্ধ থাকতে হবে।
- ২৬। নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর সঙ্গে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে যে কোন তথ্যের জন্য যোগাযোগ করা যেতে পারে।
- ২৭। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।
- ২৮। দরপত্র দাখিলকৃত মূল্য সরকার কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত মূল্যের চেয়ে বেশি হবে না।
- ২৯। যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা ফারজানা ফেরদৌস জামান, সিনিয়র সহকারী সচিব, প্রশাসন-৫ শাখা, অর্থনৈতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগ (স্মারক নং-১০, কক্ষ নং-২৬), শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭, ফোনঃ ৮৮১১২০১৮।

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