

## Horse-drawn plough piques interest

MD QUAMRUL ISLAM  
RUBAIYAT

In recent weeks, people have witnessed a curious sight unfolding in a farm in Dhondogaon area of Thakurgaon.

Two horses, and not two bullocks or buffaloes as has been the age-old custom, were tied to a yoke to plough the field.

Although the sight is an unusual one, this method of ploughing his potato field is proving to be a financially fruitful one for 45-year-old farmer Bhushan Barman.

This correspondent visited the village to see the farmer till the land with his horse-drawn plough near his house.

A smiling Bhushan said he bought the two horses from Panchagarh's Atwary Rush Mela about two and a half months ago for Tk 21,000.

He said it costs almost Tk 1 lakh to buy two medium-sized bullocks suitable for ploughing.

The cost to feed a pair of bullocks is higher, Bhushan said, adding that a horse-drawn plough is also much faster.

It is easy to plough one and a half acres of land in a day from 8:00am to 1:00pm, Bhushan said.

At present, after Bhushan ploughs his 50 decimals of land with his horses for late potato cultivation, he ploughs other farmers' lands for a fee. He has already ploughed about seven and a half acres of land and earned Tk 17,500.

He also has off-season plans for a horse-drawn carriage for rent.

Since the introduction of motorised farming equipment, however, the use of animals in this rigorous activity has been discouraged. District Livestock Officer Abul Kalam Azad said as employing horses in cultivating land is not common in the country, it is discouraged.

But Abu Hossain, deputy director of Department of Agricultural Extension in Thakurgaon, said traditional ploughs drawn with domestic animals are a good option for poor farmers.



**Bhushan Barman has become a local celebrity in the farming community in Dhondogaon area of Thakurgaon after successfully ploughing farmland using his horses. He bought the pair for only Tk 21,000 and was able to train them to pull the plough.**

PHOTO: QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT

# APBn arrests Mohib Ullah murder suspect

Detained chief commander of ARSA is believed to have issued the fatwa to assassinate the Rohingya leader

UNB, Cox's Bazar

Armed Police Battalion has arrested the chief commander of so-called Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Ulama branch), who issued the fatwa for the assassination of Rohingya leader Mohib Ullah.

Zokoria, 55, was arrested in Lambasia camp-1 of Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar.

APBn members held Zokoria after a four-month effort.

He went into hiding during a raid on the camp area after Mohib Ullah's assassination, confirmed SP Naimul Haque, commander of the 14th Armed Police Battalion, yesterday.

Zokoria had a rivalry with Rohingya leader Mohib Ullah. He is considered the top adviser to the Rohingya camp's perpetrators, said the official.

SP Naimul also said Zokoria came to Bangladesh from Myanmar in 2015. Later, he went back there again. As a refugee in 2016, he started living in the Lambasia area. Since 2020, he has been serving as the chief commander of the Ulama branch



MOHIB ULLAH

of so-called ARSA in the Kutupalong camp.

Legal procedure is underway against him, he added.

So far, 10 Rohingya men have been arrested in this case. Of them, two gave confessional statements of involvement in the murder before the court.

Commander of APBn-14 SP Naimul Haque said during primary interrogation of the accused, the suspect spoke of a total of 19 Rohingya miscreants being involved in the murder plan, "and of them,

five, including him, were members of the killing squad".

On September 29 last year, another arrestee Murshid called Mohib to the latter's office to discuss Rohingya repatriation issues and informed other members of the squad, said SP Naimul.

They fired four shots at Mohib Ullah, he said, adding that they fled the scene using a lane behind Mohib Ullah's house.

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On September 30, police filed a case over Mohib Ullah's murder, following a complaint from his brother Habib Ullah.

On August 25, 2019, Mohib Ullah came to the limelight as a leader after holding an assembly of around five lakh Rohingyas.

## Bangladeshi shot dead near Kushtia border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A Bangladeshi man was shot dead near Kushtia's Daulatpur border on Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as Liton Bishwas, 35, said Jabid Hasan, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station.

Quoting Liton's family, Pragpur Union Parishad Chairman Ashrafuzzaman claimed that India's Border Security Force opened fire at Liton and his companions near the Meghna border under India's Hogaalbaria Police Station.

Liton's body has been kept at the police station in India's Nadia district, OC Jabid Hasan said, adding that he received a phone call from the police station informing him of the death, as well as a photo of Liton's body.

Subedar Amjad Hossain, acting company commander of Pragpur Border Guard Bangladesh, said a formal letter was sent to India asking for more information.

**BARAPUKURIA GRAFT CASE**

## Charge framing against Khaleda adjourned

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned till April 26 the hearing on charge framing against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and six others in the Barapukuria coalmine graft case.

Judge (in-charge) Mohammad Nazrul Islam of the Special Judge's Court-2 of Dhaka passed the order after a petition seeking adjournment was filed on Khaleda's behalf, Masud Ahmed Talukder, one of her lawyers, told The Daily Star.

In the petition, Masud said Khaleda, who is now out of jail following an executive order of the government, is unwell and her appearance at the court was earlier exempted.

## 3 killed in B'baria accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Three men died when a tractor rammed their motorcycle on Saturday night in Brahmanbaria.

The accident occurred on the Dhaka-Agartala road in Chinair area of Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila around 8:00pm, said Emranul Islam, officer-in-charge of Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station.

The deceased were identified as Nazel Mahmud Khan, 24, Nazim Bhuiyan, 24, and Enamul Islam, 26.

Nazel and Nazim were killed on the spot, the OC said. Enamul was sent to Dhaka with severe injuries and died there around 2:00am yesterday.

The driver of the tractor managed to flee, the OC added.

## KSA lifts Covid testing, quarantine protocols

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People landing in Saudi Arabia will no longer need to take Covid-19 PCR tests, the kingdom said on Saturday.

Also, it will no longer require travellers to undergo mandatory Covid-19 quarantine upon arrival, reports Saudi Gazette.

However, anyone arriving on visit visas will need insurance to cover costs of treatment in case of Covid infection.

It will also end social distancing in the two Holy Mosques and all other mosques, but worshipers still have to wear masks.

## Stop trying to halt

FROM PAGE 1

dialogue with Ukraine and foreign partners but any attempt to draw out negotiation would fail, a Kremlin statement said. Turkey said Erdogan had called for a ceasefire to ease humanitarian concerns.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett made a surprise visit to the Kremlin Saturday for three hours of talks – Putin's first face-to-face meeting with a foreign leader since the invasion began.

The Israeli leader later spoke with Zelenskyy.

Meanwhile, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's office said he is to launch an international "plan of action" to ensure Russia's invasion of Ukraine fails, including a flurry of diplomatic meetings next week.

Kyiv renewed its appeal to the West to toughen sanctions beyond existing efforts that have hammered Russia's economy. It also requested more weapons, including a plea for Russian-made planes, to help it repel Russian forces.

US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said Washington was "very, very actively" considering how it could backfill aircraft for Poland, if Warsaw decided to supply its warplanes to Ukraine, speaking on a trip to neighbouring Moldova.

Putin says he wants a "demilitarised", "denazified" and neutral Ukraine and on Saturday likened Western sanctions "to a declaration of war".

Moscow calls the campaign it launched on

Feb 24 a "special military operation", saying it has no plans to occupy Ukraine, which was once part of the Soviet Union under Moscow's sway but which has now turned West seeking membership of Nato and the European Union.

"They're destroying us," Mariupol mayor Vadym Boychenko told Reuters in a video call, describing the plight of the city of 400,000. "They will not even give us an opportunity to count the wounded and the killed because the shelling does not stop." Read full story

Russia, which denies attacking civilian areas, has poured troops and equipment into Ukraine. A huge Russian convoy on a road north of Kyiv has made limited visible progress in recent days, although Russia's defence ministry released footage yesterday showing some tracked military vehicles on the move.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russian rockets had destroyed the civilian airport of the central-western region capital of Vinnytsia yesterday. He also said Russia was preparing to bombard another southern city, Odessa.

The World Health Organization said there had been several attacks on Ukrainian healthcare facilities during the conflict. The attacks caused deaths and injuries, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a Twitter message, but gave no details.

## In the driving seat in a man's world

FROM PAGE 1

simultaneously, and inspiring other women to join Uber – many of whom have already followed her suit.

Although she initially feared negative responses, she realised that most of her passengers are pleasantly surprised to find her behind the wheel. Many of them even commented that women are better drivers, she said.

"Many men told me they felt safer [knowing I was the driver] when their wives took Uber. With a male driver, they would be nervous and either constantly be on the phone or track the location."

A religious man, however, once declined to board a car driven by a woman, she said.

"On the other hand, women get ecstatic to get me as their driver. Many even asked if there could be an option where female passengers would only get female drivers for them to feel safe and not be hounded by uncomfortable questions."

According to her, this independent profession enables her to move away from the conventional nine-to-five jobs.

"I can start work after finishing my household chores and giving time to my children. I start in the afternoon and drive till 2:00am. On days that I have other work, I can choose not to drive.

"And by driving three to four days a week, I can earn on average Tk 15,000. And if someone drives 12 hours at a stretch, they can easily

earn up to Tk 6,000 a day. Uber also has a special incentive for its female drivers that helps cover fuel expenses."

Leuza also said she has not yet had any bad experience with regard to her safety. "Both Uber and my family can track my whereabouts and know who is taking the ride."

According to her, this can be a great profession for women, especially in countries like Bangladesh, where there is an existing gender gap in employment and pay, while not all working environments are women-friendly.

"Landing a white-collar job is not always easy for women. Those who, like me, love driving and have a car can easily take up this as a profession – keeping in mind that no job is big or small... In many developed countries, even female doctors sometimes take up driving to make an extra buck between shifts. Why should it be embarrassing for us?"

Contacted, an Uber Bangladesh spokesperson told The Daily Star that Uber offers lucrative incentives for women driver-partners on their platform and has forged multiple partnerships to enable more women to earn through Uber.

"Our robust in-app safety features are built keeping in mind the safety of both riders and drivers, regardless of their gender... A driver-partner like Leuza Akter Kristy inspires all of us and we hope that she serves as a role model to many other women,

## A mission to save the speech

FROM PAGE 1

the cans of films and audio tapes to a further remote village called Karkosai.

Later, the materials were sent to India with the help of freedom fighters and Indian officials, and brought back to Bangladesh after the independence. Amzad resumed his job at DFP after the war and later became the chief cameraman of BTV.

He also played a key role in protecting the precious recording of the speech after the brutal assassination of Bangabandhu and his family members in 1975, when conspirators raided the DFP office.

With the help of some trusted colleagues, he replaced the film negative of the March 7 speech with a different one in the designated canister. The conspirators took away the canister thinking they got the right footage.

Amzad, now 79, said it was the then director of Film Division Mohebbur Rahman Khair, popularly known as Abul Khair, who planned everything – from shooting the historic speech to protecting it all the way.

Abul Khair, an acclaimed film and TV actor who passed away in 2001, had sent an eight-member team to shoot the historic speech Bangabandhu delivered at the mammoth rally on Race Course Maidan. Amzad was a member of that team.

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Amzad said, "There were rumours that the stage might be blown up by a bomb. We were nervous ... but we were more concerned about recording Bangabandhu's speech properly."

He added, "We could not pay that much attention to the speech as we were involved in the shooting, but we were mesmerised by the way Bangabandhu issued clear-cut instructions throughout his address."

Abul Khair had been worrying about the fate of the recorded materials since March 25, when the Pakistan military started massacring unarmed Bangalees as part of one of the worst genocides in the world.

"He [Abul Khair] trusted me as one of his loyal junior colleagues. When he told me about the task, I just said I want to meet my father and seek his blessings," Amzad told The Daily Star.

SM Golam Kibria, the current director general of DFP, said they tried to recognise the persons behind recording Bangabandhu's historic speech and proposed Amzad's name for Ekushey Padak.

The 19-minute address of Bangabandhu set the tone for the Liberation War that would officially begin on March 26 and culminated with the Victory on December 16 after a bloody

nine-month war.

"The struggle this time is the struggle for our emancipation. The struggle this time is for independence," the Father of the Nation had roared to deliver a clarion call for independence.

The speech has been inducted into the book, "We Shall Fight on the Beaches: The

Speeches that Inspired History" by Jacob F Field, a collection of "extracts from the most rousing and inspirational wartime speeches

of the last 2,500 years – Cicero to Churchill, Lincoln to Mao".

In 2017, Unesco inscribed it as a documentary heritage in the Memory of the World Register.

## China pushes 'direct' Russia-Ukraine negotiations as war rages

AFP, Beijing

Beijing urged direct negotiations between Russia and Ukraine during a Saturday call between Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi and his American counterpart Antony Blinken, as the war following Moscow's invasion entered a tenth day.

