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# Covid widens disparity in education

WB report on Bangladesh says about the poor's limited access to distant learning tools

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

The coronavirus crisis has worsened education inequality between rich and poor in Bangladesh as a huge number of students from poor families are not able to access the distance learning adopted by the government, according to a World Bank working paper.

Only 9.2 percent of children aged between five and 15 years in the poorest households have access to televisions, one of the four remote learning mediums, as opposed to 91 percent of school-going children from the richest households, it said.

Some 59.7 percent of children belonging to the middle-income households have access to tele-broadcasting, said the paper that assessed the impact of school closures on student learning in Bangladesh.

Computers have the lowest penetration among these four mediums. In the richest and poorest quintiles, just 0.3 percent and 19.6 percent of the children have access to computers, showed the WB paper released last week.

It said though access to mobile phones remains high across all groups, a large share of the poorest households may not include internet connections.

The paper presents the results from a series of

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A contingent of the Bangladesh armed forces taking part in a parade in New Delhi yesterday on the occasion of India's 72nd Republic Day.

PHOTO: ISPR

# Cold in North takes toll on the poor

STAR REPORT

People of the northern and southern regions have been suffering through the bone-chilling cold that has been prevailing over one month in phases.

Such adverse weather started sweeping over the regions near the end of December. The temperature improved for a day or two but the mercury took a dip again.

"In most days over the last one month, we saw sunshine just for a little while at noon," said Mokammel Hossain, a resident of Jashore Sadar upazila.

"We poor people cannot tolerate it anymore. We cannot work properly. We have to keep our entire bodies covered with warm clothes. How can we earn our livelihood without being able to work?" said Rahmat Ali, who works as a day labourer in Jashore town.

In Kurigram and Lalmonirhat, farmers and day labourers are the worst

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# AGRI REFORM PROTEST

## Indian farmers clash with cops

Enter Delhi's Red Fort; one dead, several injured

REUTERS, New Delhi

Thousands of Indian farmers protesting against agricultural reforms breached barricades yesterday to enter the historic Red Fort complex in the capital and hoist flag atop dome after clashing with police, who fired tear gas to scatter them.

Growers, angered by laws they say help large, private buyers at the expense of producers, have camped outside New Delhi for almost two months, posing one of the biggest challenges to Prime Minister Narendra Modi since he came to power in 2014.

The body of one protester draped in an Indian tricolour lay in a central Delhi street after the tractor he rode overturned in one of the clashes, said a witness, Vishu Arora.

"He died right there," Arora added.

A Reuters witness saw at least five police and three protesters injured at the Red Fort, from whose ramparts Modi delivers an annual speech. Some of those who scaled its walls carried ceremonial swords, overwhelming police who were trying to prevent them from entering.

The government ordered internet

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# TREATING COVID-19 PATIENTS

## WHO issues new clinical advice

Warns rich and poor vaccine divide worsening; EU to tighten vaccine exports

AGENCIES

The World Health Organization (WHO) yesterday issued fresh clinical advice for treating Covid-19 patients, including those displaying persistent symptoms after recovery, and also said it advised using low-dose anti-coagulants to prevent blood clots.

"The other things in the guidance that are new are that Covid-19 patients at home should have the use of pulse oximetry, that's measuring the oxygen levels, so you can identify whether somewhat at home is deteriorating and would be better off having hospital care," WHO spokeswoman Margaret Harris told a UN briefing in Geneva.

The WHO advised clinicians to put patients into the awake prone position, on their front, shown to improve the oxygen flow, she said.

"Also we recommend, we suggest the use, of low-dose anti-coagulants to prevent blood clots forming in blood vessels. We suggest the use of lower doses rather than higher doses because higher doses may lead to other problems," Harris said.

She added that a WHO-led team of independent experts, currently in the central Chinese city of Wuhan where the first human cases were detected in December 2019, is due to leave quarantine in the next two days to pursue its work with Chinese researchers on the virus origins.

She declined to comment on reports of delays in roll-out of vaccines in the European Union. She said she had no specific data and the WHO's priority was for health workers in all countries to be vaccinated in the first 100 days of the year.

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# Three hurt as land grabbers attack cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Three police personnel, including a sub-inspector of Birganj Police Station, were injured as they came under attack by some land grabbers in the upazila yesterday.

The injured are SI Bipul Hossain, 25, constables Mozibul Haq, 55, and Habibur Rahman, 30. They took treatment at Birganj Upazila Health Complex.

Monwar Hossain, a witness, said there had been a longstanding dispute over an acre of land in Chakai village between Afzal Hossain and Abdul Latif Lutu.

Afzal was the legal owner of the land, said police sources.

Recently, a court ordered police to hand over the land to its legal owner after evicting the illegal occupiers.

Accordingly, a team from Birganj Police Station,

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# Biden 'First Dogs' arrive at White House



AFP, Washington

Joe Biden's dogs Champ and Major have moved into the White House, reviving a long-standing tradition of presidential pets that was broken under Donald Trump.

The pooches can be seen trotting on the White House grounds in pictures retweeted by First Lady Jill Biden's spokesman Michael LaRosa, with the pointed obelisk of the Washington Monument in the background.

"Champ is enjoying his new dog bed by the fireplace, and Major loved running around on the

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# COVID-19 515 new cases detected, 14 more die

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh's Covid-19 fatalities rose to 8,055 as the health authorities recorded 14 more coronavirus-related deaths in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

"The mortality rate is now 1.51 percent," the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said in a handout.

Meanwhile, 515 new cases were identified pushing up the national tally to 532,916.

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 27

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:35 12:45 4:15 5:46 7:15  
JAMAAT 6:10 1:15 4:30 5:50 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

# Man killed in 'gunfight' at refugee camp

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya man was killed in a "gunfight" between two groups of Rohingyas at a refugee camp in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

The dead is Mohammad Javed, 20, son Mohammad Islam of Tanjimarakhola camp under Palongkhali union in Ukhiya, said a police official.

Shihab Kaiser Khan, commanding officer of Armed Police Battalion (APBn)-8, said the "gunfight" took place between two groups of Rohingyas in block no-8 of Tanjimarakhola camp around 3:00am.

On information, police recovered the body of the Rohingya man and sent it to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital for autopsy, said the commanding officer.

He further said that police were trying to arrest the people involved in the incident.



Dhaka South City Corporation conducts a drive on Jirani canal in the capital's Trimohoni area to protect it from encroachment and improve its navigability. Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority recently handed over the canal to the corporation. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# A third of gov-owned buses broke rules

Find mobile courts of BRTA

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Mobile courts of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) have found irregularities in 30 percent BRTC buses during a special drive this month.

Fifty-six BRTC buses, out of 190 which came under the drive in the first two weeks of this month, were fined Tk 40,300 for different types of irregularities, officials said.

The irregularities include: not having digital number plates and fare charts, not having drivers' photos and mobile numbers inside buses, carrying extra passengers without following health guidelines, unhygienic environment inside buses, they said.

"We have started the special drive from January 1, following the directives of the [road transport and bridges] ministry, to make BRTC buses more service-oriented and prevent irregularities," said BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder.

"We also informed the BRTC authorities about the findings of the mobile court drives and asked them to take necessary steps in this regard," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The issue was also discussed in a recent meeting held at the Road Transport and Highways Division, he added.

BRTA's mobile courts carry out drives regularly against different types of irregularities in the road transport sector, especially against vehicles and drivers without valid documents.

"Although we usually check licence of drivers of all types of vehicles, but were a little bit reluctant to check

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