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SHAH CEMENT

# 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 India's Republic Day parade at New Delhi's Rajpath yesterday, commemorating 50 years of the country's Liberation War and establishment of diplomatic ties with India. The contingent marched to the song titled "Shono Ekti Mujiborer Theke".

PHOTO: ISPR

# ROHINGYA RETURN, GSP Dhaka pins high hopes on Biden admin

Momen tells webinar DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka sees a ray of hope for Rohingya repatriation and restoring Generalised System of Preferences facilities as new US President Joe Biden is focusing on promoting democratic institutions, human rights and is supportive of the developing countries' causes.

"Our expectation from the Biden administration is indeed reasonably higher and we believe the US will again lead the world in achieving core values and principles," said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen.

He said Biden appears to be more supportive of the causes of the developing world -- climate change, trade facilitation, Covid-19 response and migration.

Bangladesh, being a developing country, has been suffering from the

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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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## TRIAL OF WRONG MAN

# ACC admits 'mistake' to HC in fraud case probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Kamrul Islam from Noakhali's Purba Rajarampur was going to be another victim of the Anti-Corruption Commission's "wrong investigation" like innocent jute mill worker Jaha Alam, who had been behind bars for more than three years due to ACC's "wrong probe".

The ACC has admitted to the High Court that it made a mistake by conducting the investigation incorrectly in a fraud case and pressing charge sheet against innocent Mohammad Kamrul Islam.

The graft watchdog on Sunday submitted a statement to the HC expressing sorrow for committing the "mistake" during hearing on a writ petition, filed by

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# '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 South Lawn," LaRosa told CNN in a statement Monday.

The Biden's dogs, both German shepherds,

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## FINAL-YEAR STUDENTS

# DU likely to reopen dormitories next month

UNB, Dhaka

After a year of closure due to the coronavirus outbreak, the provost committee of Dhaka University (DU) has finally recommended opening residential halls by the first week of March for its final-year and last-semester examinees at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The preliminary move for opening dormitories came immediately after the Ministry of Education issued a notice for schools and colleges to prepare for reopening at any time from February 4.

The committee comprising all 18 hall provosts, pro-vice-chancellors and with VC Prof Md Akhtaruzaman in chair recommended the university authority in this regard.

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# 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 Ukhaia upazila of Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

The dead is Mohammad Javed, 20, son Mohammad Islam of Tanjimarakhola camp under Palongkhali union in Ukhaia, 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

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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 govt-owned buses broke rules

Find mobile courts of BRTA

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Mobile courts of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority have found different types of 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, 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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## 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