



Climate activist Greta Thunberg marches beside members of the indigenous Sami community during a Friday for Future protest in Jokkmokk, northern Sweden yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Delhi goes

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the CAA as being against national interest per se.
Modi addressed two rallies while Amit Shah addressed many more and undertook door-to-door campaign. BJP President J P Nadda and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were also in full throttle over the Shaheen Bagh protest.
The campaign plunged to a new low in bitterness when federal minister Anurag Thakur had , at a rally, egged the crowd to say “shoot the traitors”, and the party’s West Delhi lawmaker Parvesh Verma made a controversial statement on Shaheen Bagh protesters.

Both Thakur and Verma were banned by the Election Commission from campaigning for 72 and 96 hours respectively and ordered by the polls body to be dropped from the party’s star campaigner’s list. On Wednesday, Verma was barred from campaigning for a second time.

While the BJP focussed on high-pitched campaign stoking nationalistic and Hindutva sentiments, AAP chief and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, a former revenue service officer who quit government job to join politics six years ago, sought to woo voters projecting his government’s achievements in like providing cheap water and power and setting up neighbourhood health centres and improving school education.
The Congress’ campaign failed to match the vigour of its opponents and former prime minister Manmohan Singh, Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra addressed just a few public meetings.
The BJP won all seven Lok Sabha seats in the national capital in the 2019 national elections with its overall vote share at an overwhelming 57%. The AAP finished third in terms of vote share. The BJP also controls all the three municipal corporations to which polls were held in 2017.

Girl raped

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disturbed to learn of allegations of a sexual assault of a child on the embassy compound.”
“The embassy took prompt action, including reporting the incident to the police and assisting the alleged victim to obtain medical assistance,” the statement added.
An investigation has been launched, and a court date has yet to be set.
In the wake of a brutal 2012 Delhi gang rape -- which brought worldwide condemnation and still haunts the collective memory of women in India’s capital -- lawmakers passed a series of amendments to the existing rape laws.
The amended law lengthened prison terms and introduced the death penalty in cases in which the victim is younger than 12 years of age.
In 2018, more than 33,000 cases of alleged rape were reported -- roughly 91 cases each day, according to India’s National Crime Records Bureau -- but experts say the real number is likely much higher, owing to the shame attached to sexual assault and the social barriers faced by victims.

‘Robber’ killed

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Police also claimed to have recovered a firearm, several bullets, and cartridge from the spot.
The body of Kashidul was sent to Dinajpur M Abdur Rahim Medical College for an autopsy.
The injured were sent to Dinajpur Police Lines Hospital, the OC added.
On January 13, two alleged drug dealers were killed in a similar incident with police in Dinajpur Sadar upazila.

Bangabandhu’s nation-building

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statement, issued at the end of Bangabandhu’s two-day visit to Kolkata, says: “The task having been completed, the two prime ministers felt that these armed forces should be withdrawn.”
The two prime ministers had detailed discussions covering every aspect of the mutual relations between the two countries. They resolved to give a practical shape to the legitimate and deeply felt aspirations of the common people of India and Bangladesh guided by the principles of democracy, socialism, secularism, non-alignment and opposition to racism and colonialism in all forms and manifestations, adds the statement.
DHAKA UNIVERSITY REOPENS
The University of Dhaka reopens finally today. President Justice Abu Sayeed Choudhury declares that there

would be complete freedom for the universities in the country. “Those days of interfering with the university administration is no more. Now students must dedicate themselves to build up a new education system worthy of the new state,” says the president.
100 KILLED IN MIRPUR BY PAKISTANI COLLABORATORS
At least 100 men of Bangladesh Force and Police were killed by Pakistani collaborators in Mirpur last week. Confirming the casualties an official spokesperson says that the miscreants, who had received huge quantities of arms and ammunition from Pakistani forces just before their surrender, had launched an unprovoked attack on the personnel of Bangladesh Force and Police.
He adds that the government had no intention to harass innocent persons in Mirpur. Out of about 1500 persons

rounded up on suspicion from Sector 1 and Sector 2 of Mirpur, many were released after interrogation.
ACCREDITATION LETTERS IN BANGLA
Ministry of Foreign Affairs has introduced Bangla letters in accreditation for the envoys posted in foreign countries.
TK 18CR GRANTS TO REHABILITATE DISPLACED PERSONS
In a bid to rehabilitate the millions of returnees from India at a speedy pace and save them from starvation, the government of Bangladesh has allocated more than Tk 18 crore in cash in addition to about 30 lakh maunds of food grains to the district authorities.
Sources: February 9, 1972 issues of Ittefaq, The Bangladesh Observer, Azad, Morning News, Dainik Bangla and Purbodesh.

Europe can’t be ‘spectators’

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post-Brexit nuclear strategy.
France is now the only nuclear-armed power in the European Union at a time when long-standing accords on limiting the growth of nuclear arsenals appear increasingly at risk.
The US and Russia have abandoned the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, each blaming the other for breaching its limits, and Washington is threatening to quit the New START arms reduction treaty when it expires next year.
Add to that China’s bid for global sway, there is a strong need for Europe to ensure it does not find itself in the middle of a Cold War-style standoff “which could jeopardise the peace obtained after so many tragedies on our continent,” Macron said.
He warned of “the possibility of a pure and unrestrained military and nuclear competition, the likes of which we haven’t seen since the end of the 1960s.”
“The vital interests of France now have a European dimension,” Macron said.
“European nations should also insist on being signatories of any

new deal to limit the development of new intermediate-range weapons,” he added.
“Let us be clear: if negotiations and a more comprehensive treaty are possible... Europeans must be stakeholders and signatories, because it’s our territory” that is most at risk.
NO SHARING
France has already reduced the number of its warheads to under 300, Macron said, giving it “the legitimacy to demand concrete moves from other nuclear powers toward global disarmament that is gradual, credible and can be verified.”
But he stopped short of offering to share France’s nuclear deterrence capabilities, a pillar of its security strategy since implemented by Charles de Gaulle in the 1960s.
Germany in particular remains strongly opposed to atomic weapons, although a leader in Chancellor Angela Merkel’s party, Johann Wadephul, said this week that Paris should consider putting its arsenal under the auspices of the EU or Nato.
Macron invited European partners to engage in a “strategic dialogue” on the deterrent role of France’s nuclear

capacity as the country embarks on a costly modernisation of its arsenal.
“Our independence in terms of decision-making is fully compatible with our unshakeable solidarity with our European partners,” Macron said.
Macron also warned of the need for “a greater capacity for autonomous action by Europeans,” who must step up their military spending.
“Why are they not ready to make defence a budget priority and make the necessary sacrifices, even as the risks are growing?” Macron asked.
His speech came as a diplomatic freeze between the EU and Russia since Moscow’s annexation of Crimea from Ukraine has rekindled fears of fresh conflict along Europe’s eastern flank.
France has broken with some EU nations by recently reaching out to restore dialogue with President Vladimir Putin, who controls the world’s largest nuclear arsenal.
“There can be no defence and security project for European citizens without a political vision that seeks to progressively restore trust with Russia,” Macron said.

Date palm plants

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However, the last remains of the region’s date plantations were wiped out by the 19th century, and this particular variety is now extinct, Sallon said.
To grow the trees, the researchers soaked 33 ancient seeds found by archaeologists in water for 24 hours and then treated them with hormones and organic fertiliser to encourage rooting.
After discarding one seed that was damaged, they planted the rest in potting soil and used desalinated water enriched with iron and fertiliser to water them.
Eventually, six of the seeds sprouted: “Some of them took a few weeks but others took months,” said Sallon, who gave the plants names.
Three of the plants have now been replanted outside the greenhouse. Sallon is hopeful that Hannah, a female date tree, will flower this year and the plant could be pollinated by Methuselah -- a tree the team grew from a 1,900-year-old Judean date palm seed in 2008.
However, Sallon says it’s impossible to know if the female tree will bear fruit.

“We hope that the pollen and the flower are compatible and that she will respond to it. We’ll come back to you if she starts producing dates.”
These date trees aren’t the oldest plants to be brought back to life. Scientists in Russia have grown plants from fruit stored away by squirrels in permafrost 30,000 years ago. However, the seeds from the Silene stenophylla plant weren’t grown naturally. Instead, scientists propagated them in lab dishes from fruit tissue.
Youth stabbed
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his friends in Tilagarh area around 9:30pm.
Both Dip and Saikat stabbed each other and were seriously injured during the fight.
Later, the two were taken to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical where Dip succumbed to his injuries, the OC said, adding that Saikat was still receiving treatment at the hospital under police custody.
Dip’s family is preparing to file a case, the OC said, adding that they were looking for those who were involved in the clash.

China says UK virus advice to citizens an ‘overreaction’

AFP, London
Beijing’s ambassador to London on Thursday said Britain’s advice to its nationals to leave China because of the novel coronavirus outbreak was an “overreaction” and urged the policy to be reversed.
Liu Xiaoming said Beijing had told the UK the move was not “a good idea” and instead called for a more measured approach.
On Tuesday, the British Foreign Office advised UK nationals to leave China “if they can” to minimise their risk of exposure to the coronavirus, following similar advice by the United States.
“I hope the British government... will take an objective, cool-headed view of what is going on in China,” Liu said at a press conference at the Chinese embassy in London.
“We did tell them overreaction is not helpful. We don’t think there should be such a panic,” he added.
“We should support each other, rather than to weaken the other’s efforts.”

Tigers shot out for 233

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Bangladesh on the back foot right from the start.
The only fifty of the innings from Mohammad Mithun and a few starts from Nazmul Hossain Shanto, skipper Mominul Haque, Mahmudullah Riyad and Liton Das helped Bangladesh past the 200 mark.
It was however a day for Pakistan’s pacers led by Shaheen Shah Afridi, who tested the Tigers’ patience and ended up picking four wickets while fellow seamer Mohammad Abbas picked up two wickets for 19 runs from 17 miserly overs.
The day started on the wrong foot as, after Bangladesh were asked to bat first, both openers departed inside the first two overs of the day.
Debutant Saif Hasan departed for a duck while Tamim, coming off a record triple-hundred in the Bangladesh Cricket League, was trapped leg before for three off the bowling of Abbas on review after he was given not out by the umpire initially.
It was then Nazmul and skipper Mominul who repaired some of the damage and tackled the Pakistani bowlers pretty well, adding 59 runs for the third wicket.
Nazmul was compact while Mominul, after surviving a barrage of bouncers and playing out a few maiden overs, finally departed in rather disappointing fashion. The

left-hander chased a ball outside off stump from Afridi and only managed to edge it to the keeper.
Nazmul looked comfortable until he too gifted away his wicket after scoring 44 when the left-hander was caught behind off the bowling of Abbas in the first over after lunch.
Mahmudullah too was guilty of the same error, chasing after a delivery, after scoring 25 but it was Mithun who was arguably the best Bangladesh batsman, displaying the patience and application that his top-order teammates failed to maintain.
Mithun and Liton then started to frustrate the Pakistani bowlers with a quickfire 54-run stand for the sixth wicket before left-arm spinner Harris Sohail gave the all-important breakthrough for the hosts by dismissing Liton for 33 as the Tigers went to tea on 164 for six.
The right-handed Mithun registered his second Test fifty alongside Taijul Islam, who provided great support from the other end in the post tea session.
The pair added a valuable 53-run seventh wicket stand before Taijul became Sohail’s second victim after scoring 24.
Top-scorer Mithun was eventually dismissed after scoring 63 off 140 balls, which included seven fours and a six, as Pakistan rattled through the Bangladesh tail with the second new ball to complete the job inside the first day.

Pollution threatens

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As the pollution continues unabated, there is no reason to assume that water quality of the river has improved since then, DoE officials said.
Around 24 launches carrying roughly 50,000 people ply the river every day, according to Ajmol Huda Mithu, deputy director of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).
The vessels dump non-degradable plastic bottles, single-use plastic bags, and many other types of waste in the Kirtankhola, said Suvankar Chakrabarty, secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA).
“We have instructions to clean the launch quickly after anchoring at the port. We usually throw all the garbage, including solid and plastic waste, into the river,” said Anwar Miah, crew member of a Dhaka-Barishal launch owned by Sundarban Navigation Company.
Indiscriminate dumping of waste is not only polluting the river but also disrupting dredging activities, said Rejaul Islam, assistant engineer of the dredging department of BIWTA.
“Due to the excessive presence of plastic and polythene on the river bed we have to replace the blade of dredging machines every hour. Normally, we change the blade every four to five hours,” said Rejaul.
The government should conduct drives against the polluters and launch awareness programmes, said Kajol Ghosh, a cultural activist in Barishal.
Eighty-year-old Manabendra Batabayal, a resident of the Bandar area, said he has not seen such pollution in the Kirtankhola all his life.

Saidur Rahman Rintu, owner of Sundarban Navigation Company, said, “Throwing waste into rivers has now decreased to a great extent... We are trying to prevent it. We have talked with BIWTA about installing waste reservoirs at river ports across the country.”
Launch owners are ready to pay the city corporations for proper waste management, said Saidur, also vice president of the Launch Owners’ Association.
BIWTA Deputy Director Huda said they are constructing waste reservoirs for plastic and solid waste at river ports.
Abdul Halim, director of the Barishal Divisional Office of DoE, said his department would organise a views-exchange programme with the Launch Owners’ Association, and would then conduct mobile courts to fine pollution.
The Barishal City Corporation should look after the canals and rivers in its jurisdiction and hold mobile courts or issue directives against pollution, environmentalists said.
But the city corporation has no plans to save the river from pollution, said an official.
PBI clears SI
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raped by Khairul and police informer Qamruzzaman in Laxmanpur area of Sharsha upazila.
The following day, the victim filed a case accusing four people, including the SI.
Police on September 4 picked up Qamrul, Omar Ali, and Abdul Latif over the incident.

S Korea’s #MeToo initiator slams top court

AFP, Seoul
The woman who started South Korea’s #MeToo movement yesterday slammed the nation’s highest court for quashing her abuser’s conviction last month, saying the ruling effectively silenced whistleblowers and victims of sexual violence.
Seo Ji-hyun said she was groped by her superior Ahn Tae-geun at a funeral in 2010, and that he had her transferred from Seoul to a provincial position after she filed an internal complaint, blighting her career as a prosecutor.
She suffered in silence for years until she went public in a 2018 television interview, a rare move in a still conservative society where female victims of sexual assault are often reluctant to come forward for fear of shaming.
It triggered a flood of similar accusations against powerful men in fields ranging from art and literature to politics and religion that grew into a South Korean #MeToo movement.
Some top male South Korean figures including former presidential contender Ahn Hee-jung and once-celebrated theatre director Lee Yoon-taek have since been jailed.
But Seo’s abuser, Ahn Tae-geun, walked free last month after his conviction for abuse of power was quashed by the country’s top court, which ordered a retrial.
Ahn’s release “practically paves the way for any companies or

organisations to demote or fire internal whistle blowers as they please,” Seo told reporters in Seoul yesterday.
It could be used to “discourage any potential... victims of workplace sexual assaults from coming forward and speaking truth”, she said.
Seo, who has been on leave since 2018, is to join the justice ministry this year.
“I’m still afraid of retaliation, because my abuser used to be the most powerful figure within the prosecution and those who follow him still remain” influential in the organisation, she said.
Ahn -- who was separately fired for corruption in 2017 -- could not be charged with sex abuse because the one-year statute of limitations had expired.
Originally he had been jailed for two years for abuse of power in January last year, a verdict an appellate court upheld in July.
But the supreme court said it was difficult to conclude one of Ahn’s actions -- asking a prosecutor to write a document related to Seo’s transfer to a provincial post -- was a form of power abuse.
Some have called Seo a “gold digger” after she went public with her accusation, she said, adding prosecutors who tried to silence her had been promoted to higher posts.
But she had had the support of “many people to sow the seeds of change”, she said.