

Former United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan has died at age 80

Agency
Geneva, Aug 18,

Former secretary general of the United Nations, Kofi Annan passed away on Saturday morning. Annan, a Nobel Peace Prize winner has died at the ripe old age of 80 years. He was born in Ghana in 1938 and served as the seventh Secretary General of UN from 1997 to 2006. Annan was the first among others to rise from within the ranks of the United Nations staff. Annan was the first black African to take up the role of the world's top diplomat. He had also served as the UN special envoy for Syria, leading efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. Annan was a member of The Elders, a group of world leaders, founded in 2007, works for human rights. He became the Chairman of the group in 2013. The UN



Migration Agency tweeted: "Today we mourn the loss of a great man, a leader, and a visionary." Mr Annan died in the early hours of Saturday in Switzerland after a short illness, according to a statement issued by his family. The Nobel Peace Laureate was the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations from January 1997 to December 2006, and became the first black African man to

take on the top job as the world's top diplomat. He was founder and Chairman of the Kofi Annan Foundation, which issued a statement on social media, saying: "It is with immense sadness that the Annan family and the Kofi Annan Foundation announce that Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations and Nobel Peace Laureate, passed away peacefully on Saturday 18th August after a short illness..."

Former LS MP Chennupati Vidya dies of heart attack

Agency
Amaravati(AP), Aug 18

Former member of Lok Sabha, Chennupati Vidya died of heart attack here in the wee hours today due to age-related ailments. She is survived by a son and three daughters, family sources said. Vidya (84) was elected to the Parliament as a Congress candidate from Vijayawada constituency in 1980 and in 1989. In 1980, she defeated former

Union Minister Dr K.L. Rao by over one lakh votes in what was then a sensation. She was the daughter of atheist movement leader Goparaju Ramachandra Rao (GoRa). GoRa established the Atheist Centre in Vijayawada and his entire family was involved in social service through the Centre. Vidya won the Jammnalal Bajaj Award in recognition of her services to women. Meanwhile, Andhra Pradesh

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu expressed grief over the former MP's death. "Vidya rendered exemplary services as an MP. Her work for women empowerment, in particular, was commendable," the Chief Minister said in a statement. He extended sympathies to the bereaved family. Vijayawada MP Kesineni Srinivas (Nani), MLA Gadde Ramamohan and others visited Atheist Centre and paid homage to Vidya.

Amarnath Yatra resumes from Jammu

Agency
Jammu, Aug 18

The Amarnath Yatra resumed today after it was suspended for a day yesterday due to non-availability of adequate number of pilgrims, officials said. The 43rd batch of 306 pilgrims left the base camp here for the holy cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir Himalayas, they said. Meanwhile, the 10-day Budha Amarnath yatra, which began from here to the mountainous shrine of Lord Shiva in Poonch district yesterday, went smoothly with the second batch

of over 1,300 pilgrims leaving the base camp for the yatra. They said while 222 pilgrims, including 47 women, are heading for the Baltal base camp for the yatra from the shortest 12-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district, 84 sadhus have taken the traditional 36-km Pahalgam route in Anantnag district. They will reach the twin base camps later in the day and will join the yatra tomorrow. The yatra was suspended from here to the mountainous shrine of Lord Shiva in Poonch district yesterday, went smoothly with the second batch

commenced from the twin tracks on June 28 and is scheduled to conclude on August 26, coinciding with 'Raksha Bandhan'. Till yesterday, a total of 2,81,227 yatis had paid obeisance at the holy Amarnath shrine. The officials said the second batch of 1,307 pilgrims, including 281 women, left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in 32 vehicles to pay obeisance at the Budha Amarnath temple in Poonch district. The first batch of 943 pilgrims left for the temple from the base camp yesterday.

6.0 quake shakes Costa Rica near Panama; no major damage

Agency
San Jose, Aug 18

A strong earthquake shook southern Costa Rica near the border with Panama, toppling items from store shelves and knocking out power in places, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or major damage. The US Geological Survey reported that the quake that occurred last evening had a magnitude of 6.0 and struck at 5:22 pm local time at a depth of about 12 miles (19 kilometers). Its epicentre was about 12

miles (19 kilometers) north of the town of Golfito. Ellery Quesada, a journalist with Channel 9 in Palmar Norte, near the epicenter, told The Associated Press that it was felt strongly in the region. "We have reports that in Puerto Jimenez the power was out and some power poles toppled," Quesada said by phone, adding that aftershocks were felt in the minutes afterward. The USGS recorded at least one subsequent tremor of magnitude 4.9. Photos circulating on social media showed shattered wine

bottles and other products lying on shop floors in Palmar Norte. Costa Rica's National System for Monitoring Tsunamis ruled out a tsunami alert. In neighboring Panama, civil defense officials said via Twitter that the quake was felt strongly in the border provinces of Chiriqui and Bocas del Toro there were no immediate reports of damage. Panamanian media reported that it was felt at a stadium in the city of David where a youth baseball championship game was being played, but play was not halted.

PM announces immediate relief of Rs 500 cr to flood-hit Kerala

Agency
Thiruvananthapuram, Aug 18

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced today an immediate financial assistance of Rs 500 crore to the rain-battered Kerala, after reviewing the flood situation in the state. Modi also announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh per person to the next of kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 to those seriously injured from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF), a Prime Minister's Office (PMO) statement said. "The prime minister announced a financial assistance of Rs 500 crore to the state. This is in addition to Rs 100 crore announced by Home Minister Rajnath Singh on August 12," it said. After a high-level review meeting in Kochi, the prime minister made an aerial assessment of the damage caused due to floods in some of the affected areas of the southern state. He was accompanied by Governor P. Sathasivam, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Union Minister K J Alphons

and officials during the aerial survey in the worst-hit Aluva-Thrissur regions. Expressing grief over the unfortunate deaths and damage caused to property due to floods, the prime minister observed that rescue of people who are still marooned remains the topmost priority. Vijayan later tweeted that the prime minister has sanctioned Rs 500 crore as immediate relief. "As per the initial estimate, the state has suffered a loss of Rs 19,512 crore. The actual loss can be ascertained after the water recedes in the affected areas. The state has sought an immediate assistance of Rs 2,000 crore," he said. Modi, who reached the state capital last night, proceeded to Kochi in the morning and reviewed the flood situation during a meeting with Vijayan and the state government officials. The prime minister's visit comes a week after Home Minister Rajnath Singh visited the state and conducted an aerial survey of the flood-hit areas.

Modi also assured the state government that relief materials, including food grains and medicines, would be provided, as requested. Insurance companies have been asked to hold special camps for assessment and timely release of compensation to the affected families and beneficiaries under social security schemes and directions have been issued for early clearance of claims under the Fasal Bima Yojana to agriculturists. The prime minister also directed the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to repair the main national highways damaged due to the floods on a priority basis. The central public sector undertaking like the NTPC and the PGCIL have been asked to render all possible assistance to the state government in restoring power lines. Villagers, whose 'kutcha' houses have been destroyed in the devastating floods, would be provided the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin homes on a priority basis.

Under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme 5.5 crore person days have been sanctioned in the labour budget 2018-19. Any further request for incurring the person days would be considered as per the requirement projected by the state. Under the Mission for the Integrated Development of Horticulture, farmers would be provided assistance for replantation of damaged horticulture crops. The prime minister also complimented the state government for the efforts made in meeting the challenges of the unprecedented situation, the PMO statement added. Meanwhile, rains lashing several parts of the state since this morning is causing concern as it could hamper the rescue and relief operations. As per information from the control room of the State Disaster Management, since August 8, 194 persons have lost their lives so far and 36 are missing. Over 3.14 lakh people have been moved to relief camps.

Imran Khan - A cricketer who struggled for 22 years to become Pakistan's PM

Agency
Islamabad, Aug 18

Cricketer-turned politician Imran Khan struggled for 22 years to fulfil his dream of becoming Pakistan's Prime Minister to transform the corruption affected country into an Islamic welfare state. Khan took oath as Pakistan's 22nd Prime Minister after leading his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) to the victory in the elections and subsequently proving his majority in the National Assembly. The 65-year-old flamboyant

former captain, described as one of Pakistan's greatest cricketers who transformed his shaky team into champions in the 1992 Cricket World Cup, emerged as an inspiring leader in politics too. The Oxford-educated Pashtun launched Tehreek-e-Insaf, which means the movement for justice, in 1996, but struggled to break the dominance of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) - the two main political parties that dominated Pakistan's

political scene when the powerful military was not ruling the country. Khan became a Member of Parliament in the 2002 elections. He was again elected to the National Assembly in the 2013 elections, when his party emerged as the second largest in the country by popular vote. One year after elections, in May 2014, Khan alleged that the polls were rigged in favour of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz led by then prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

In August 2014, Khan led a rally of his supporters from Lahore to Islamabad, demanding Sharif's resignation and investigation into alleged electoral fraud. Within a month, Khan entered into an alliance with influential Pakistani-origin Canadian cleric Tahir-ul-Qadri with both pressing for dismissal of the Sharif government. The violent protests ended after Khan and Qadri entered into an agreement with the Sharif government to set up a judicial commission to probe the allegations of poll rigging.

Panel probing Jaya's death summons AIIMS doctors

Agency
Chennai, Aug 18

The Justice A R Muralidhar Commission of Inquiry, probing the circumstances leading to former Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa's death, has summoned three doctors of AIIMS, who examined her at the Apollo Hospital here, to appear before it on August 23 and 24. The commissioned has summoned G C Khilnani of the Department of Pulmonology, Anjan Tripathy, Professor of Anaesthesiology, and Nitish Nayak, professor at the Department of Cardiology.

Summons have already been served on them and they have accepted it, the sources added. So far the commission's 75 witnesses and seven others who had voluntarily petitioned the panel have been examined. Of them, over 30 have been cross-examined by counsels for V K Sasikala, the jailed aide of late AIADMK supremo Jayalalithaa. It may be recalled that the examined witnesses include over a dozen doctors (government and Apollo Hospital), retired and serving government officials and police officers. In September 2017, the Tamil Nadu government

constituted the panel under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952. The panel's terms of reference was to inquire into the circumstances leading to the hospitalisation of Jayalalithaa on September 22, 2016, and treatment provided by the hospital till her demise on December 5, 2016. The Commission had invited all those having "personal knowledge and direct acquaintance" in the matter to furnish information to it. Following Jayalalithaa's death, suspicion on the circumstances leading to her demise was raised by

several people, including the present Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam and his followers. Then a rebel party leader, Panneerselvam and his followers had demanded a probe into her death, either a judicial inquiry or a CBI probe. After unification of the factions led by Chief Minister K Palaniswami and O Panneerselvam, the government notified constituting the panel. The probe was a key precondition put forth by the Panneerselvam panel for the merger. DMK Working President M K Stalin had battled for a CBI probe as well.

Army jawan killed in encounter

Agency
Srinagar, Aug 18

An Army jawan was killed in an encounter with militants in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir today, the police said. Security forces launched a cordon and search operation at Kachloo village in

Handwara area of Kupwara district following information about presence of militants there, a police official said. The official said as the security forces were carrying out searches, the militants opened fire on them, resulting in injuries to one soldier.

The injured jawan was evacuated to 92 Base Hospital of the Army here but he succumbed to injuries, the official said. The slain jawan was identified as Ram Babu Sahai. The operation was called off as security forces found nothing incriminating during the searches, the official said.