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Don't permit Mokedatu project: all-party meet

1. A meeting of all legislature parties in Tamil Nadu, including the BJP, unanimously passed a resolution, urging the Union government not to accord permission to Karnataka for building a dam across the Cauvery at Mokedatu.
2. The resolution said no construction must be undertaken at Mokedatu without the permission of the downstream States as per the Supreme Court's ruling.
3. The parties observed that the project would affect the water supply for the farmers of Tamil Nadu. The project, which goes against the Supreme Court's judgment, is a "challenge" to the Constitution, the resolution said. Hence, all the departments of the Union government concerned should not grant any permission for the project.
4. Through another resolution, the parties extended their support to the State government's measures to prevent Karnataka from building the dam. The meeting also resolved to send an all-party team with copies of the resolutions to the Union government.

Both Houses to function simultaneously

1. For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in March 2020, sessions of both Houses of Parliament — the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha — will be held simultaneously, ending the two-shift routine followed since September last.
2. Mr Birla said while the high percentage of fully vaccinated members was a relief, there would be no laxity in following COVID-19 protocols. All members would be expected to wear masks both inside the House chamber and outside.
3. The only difference this time would be that the members would sit in their respective chambers. In the last two sessions, to maintain social distancing, the Rajya Sabha met in the morning and the Lok Sabha in the afternoon.
4. Mr Birla said the new Parliament building, which was under construction as part of the Central Vista, would be in place in time. "The construction is about 10 days behind the schedule, but will be completed soon," he noted.



Wildfires rage as heatwave stifles western U.S., Canada

1. The western United States and Canada were suffering under scorching temperatures to start the week, with heat warnings still in place and authorities struggling to reign in wildfires in both countries.
2. Sweltering conditions hit much of the Pacific seaboard and as far inland as the western edge of the Rocky Mountains on Saturday and Sunday, in a dramatic, prolonged heatwave expert attribute directly to climate change.
3. The U.S. National Weather Service (NWS) had warned the dangerous temperatures will continue in the region for the early part of the week, forecasting highs of up to 115 degrees Fahrenheit (46 Celsius) in southern California.
4. Canadian meteorologists predicted highs approaching 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 Celsius) — well above seasonal norms — would continue in parts of western Canada on Monday.

G-secs: RBI unveils retail direct scheme

1. The RBI announced the unveiling of a scheme under which retail investors will be allowed to open retail direct gilt accounts (RDG) directly with the central bank.
2. This account can be opened through a dedicated online portal, which will provide registered users access to the primary issuance of government securities and to NDS-OM.
3. The scheme is a one-stop solution to facilitate investment in government securities (G-secs) by individual investors, the regulator said.

Inflation remains above 6% in June

Fuel and light inflation touches 12.7%, oils, fats and eggs lead to food price spike.

Highlights:

1. After touching a six-month high in May, retail inflation remained virtually unchanged in June at about 6.3%, staying out of the central bank's comfort zone for the second month in a row.



2. Economists expect the Reserve Bank of India to revisit its inflation estimate of 5.1% for 2021-22 and stressed that the lack of fiscal policy action to cool prices could precipitate a faster unwinding of RBI's growth-supporting approach to interest rates.
3. With petroleum product prices continuing to soar, fuel and light inflation hit 12.7% in June from 11.9% in May. Food inflation, which had flared up from just 2% in April to 5% in May, rose further, led by a 34.8% inflation rate for oils and fats and 19.4% for eggs.
4. Inflation measured by the Consumer Price Index declined by just four basis points from May's 6.30%, as per the National Statistical Office. One basis point equals 0.01%.

Wild elephant dies of anthrax

1. Anthrax has claimed the life of a wild elephant in a reserve forest area near Anaikatti in the Coimbatore district. The blood smear samples collected from the carcass had the presence of *Bacillus anthracis*, the bacterium that causes anthrax, senior officials said.
2. With the test confirming the death by anthrax, the Forest and Animal Husbandry Departments will take measures to contain the spread of the infection.
3. The Department has asked frontline workers to monitor other elephants which had been roaming with the deceased elephant.
4. Anthrax is endemic to elephant habitats. Cross-infection may happen as heads of cattle and wild animals use the same grazing areas and water bodies on forest fringes.