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DIED: Twelfth president of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj, in Calcutta, August 10, at age 97. Hundreds of thousands of devotees paid tribute as he was cremated at the Mission's global headquarters in Belur Math on the banks of the River Hooghly. Popularly addressed as "President Maharaj" by disciples, Swami took charge of the Mission in 1989. Known for his wit, wisdom and strict adherence to discipline, he authored Thoughts on Spiritual Life. His successor was to be named by the Mission's board of trustees in early September.

PERISHED: Over two hundred Hindu pilgrims, their porters and local villagers in the Himalayas August 18 when incessant rains caused a huge landslide and flash flood in the Kali River. The pilgrims were headed across the Chinese border in Tibet toward the sacred Mount Kailas. On August 19 three other landslides hit the area, killing 37 more. Struggling through rains and fog, rescuers had recovered only 43 bodies and found 18 survivors by August 23. Among the bodies was that of famous Odissi dancer Protima Gauri Bedi, founder of the prestigious Nrityagram dance village outside Bangalore. She was on her way to Lake Manasarovar at the foot of Kailas. It is said that one of the most auspicious ways to die is while on pilgrimage to Kailas.

MURDERED: Swami Mahesh Anand of the Chinmayanand Ashram in Mumbai July 9. He was 65. Police suspect robbery may be the motive behind his being stabbed in his room with a kitchen knife. It was apparent the ashram had been plundered as well. Located on a picturesque hillock abutting Powai lake, the lake area is often host to anti-social elements after nightfall.