



Former House Speaker Rep Nancy Pelosi addresses a news conference on the Equality Act at the Capitol, in Washington



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer leaves 10 Downing Street to attend the weekly Prime Ministers' Questions session in parliament in London



Microsoft's President Brad Smith speaks at a conference on digital resilience during geopolitical volatility in Brussels



Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella speaks at LlamaCon 2025, an AI developer conference, in Menlo Park, California

allovertheworld



Wind turbines used to generate electricity are seen in Burgos, northern Spain, the day after a massive power cut affected the entire Iberian peninsula and the south of France. Electricity was restored to almost all of Spain and Portugal

Kenya's desperate need for more snake antivenom

MALINDI, (KENYA): Writhing in pain on a hospital bed in a Kenyan coastal town, teenage snakebite victim Shukurani Konde Tuva faced the grim reality of his left leg being amputated from above the knee. The 14-year-old was bitten by a puff adder - a venomous snake and the most common snakebite in sub-Saharan Africa - while eating outdoors in his village near the town of Malindi more than a month ago. His family rushed him to hospital two hours away by motorbike, but the antivenom he received did not help. "My son's leg is totally rotten and maggots are even emanating from it. They'll have to cut it," said his distraught mother, Mariamu Kenga Kalume. Some 5.4 million people are bitten by snakes each year globally and roughly half are poisoned by venom, according to World Health Organization (WHO) data.

Evacuation of DR Congo troops from M23 zone begins

GOMA: An evacuation of hundreds of Democratic Republic of Congo troops and police trapped for months in UN bases in Goma after the city was taken by M23 rebels began on Wednesday, the ICRC said. The International Committee of the Red Cross said it was accompanying "a series of convoys" from Goma to the capital Kinshasa carrying the disarmed personnel and members of their families from one of the bases. The evacuation came after lengthy negotiations between United Nations representatives, the DRC government and M23, according to DRC security sources and UN sources. The M23 group had rejected an option to fly the soldiers and police out from Goma's airport, which has been closed since January, a senior M23 member told AFP.

Thai court rejects ex-premier Thaksin special treatment case

BANGKOK: Thailand's top court dismissed a case on Wednesday that accused former premier Thaksin Shinawatra of receiving special treatment when he returned to the kingdom after more than a decade in exile. The case filed by a former lawmaker from the Democrat Party -- longtime foes of Thaksin -- alleged the authorities gave the 75-year-old former leader preferential treatment when he came back to Thailand in August 2023. Thaksin was sentenced to eight years in prison for corruption and abuse of power as soon as he landed in Bangkok and was taken to a detention centre. However, he was transferred to a private room at the Police General Hospital the next day for health reasons and remained there until pardoned by King Maha Vajiralongkorn around six months later and was released on parole.

Sweden arrests teen after triple killing

UPPSALA: Swedish police have arrested a teen suspect after three youths aged from 15 to 20 were killed in a shooting at a hair salon, authorities said Wednesday, amid rising concern over gang violence in the Scandinavian nation. Tuesday's shooting took place in broad daylight in the university city of Uppsala, a day before it hosted the Valborg spring festival, which draws more than 100,000 people for bonfires and celebrations in the streets, many of them students. "One person has been arrested suspected of murder," police commander Erik Akerlund told reporters, with prosecutors saying the suspect was 16. Swedish media reported that at least one of the dead had connections to a criminal gang, though police would not confirm those reports. Uppsala, about 70 kilometres (45 miles) north of Stockholm, is home base for Sweden's two most notorious gangs, Rumba and Foxtro.

Israel deploys army to control fire near Jerusalem

JERUSALEM: Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz ordered troops to deploy on Wednesday to support firefighters battling rapidly spreading wildfires near Jerusalem, calling the situation a "national emergency". The country's Magen David Adom rescue agency reported hundreds of civilians were currently at risk from the fires. Sixteen people were being treated for minor injuries from smoke inhalation, the MDA said, adding the alert level had been raised to the highest level. Police closed the main Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway and evacuated residents along the route as brushfires broke out again in an area ravaged by blazes a week ago.

3 Indian-origin people found dead after shooting at US home

PTI, NEW YORK: Three Indian-origin people were found dead after a shooting at a home in the US state of Washington, according to local media reports.

The incident took place on April 24 in Newcastle city.

The dead were identified as Harshavardhana Kikkeri, 44, Shwetha Panyam, 41, and Dhruva Kikkeri, 14, The Seattle Times newspaper reported on Tuesday.

While the deaths of Shwetha and Dhruva were ruled as homicide by the police, Harshavardhana died by suicide, the report quoted the King County

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medical examiner's office as saying.

Neighbours told the KOMO News that a young family lived in the home where the shooting took place.

On the night of the shooting, authorities were called to the townhouse on 129th Street after receiving a 911 call. The KING 5 television station said its crew saw a child being escorted from the home and comforted by investigators.

Unconfirmed reports said Harshavardhana, alongside Shwetha, was the owner of an India-based AI tech company Holoworld.

According to the company's website, it was founded in 2018 by the two, with Harshavardhana serving as the CEO and CTO, and Shwetha as president.

King County sheriff's spokesperson Brandyn Hull said she could not comment on whether the case was

believed to be a murder-suicide.

"We understand many questions remain about the events that took place in Newcastle on April 24," Hull was quoted as saying by Renton Reporter newspaper. "An investigation such as this takes time, and our detectives are working diligently to try and piece together what led to this incident. Until this work concludes, the Sheriff's Office won't have any further updates."

No sign of the deaths' motive or relationships among the deceased was released by the sheriff's office, according to the report.

Chinese astronauts return after 6-month Tiangong mission

PTI, BEIJING: Three Chinese astronauts, including a woman, who spent six months in China's space station returned to Earth safely on Wednesday.

The return capsule of the Shenzhou-19 crewed spaceship, carrying astronauts Cai Xuzhe, Song Lingdong, and Wang Haoze -- China's third female astronaut and a space flight engineer, touched down at the Dongfeng landing

site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

The three were taken out of the capsule one by one by the crew on the ground.

They landed at a new site in the Inner Mongolia region, after poor weather had delayed their return from the Tiangong space station.

On-site medical staff confirmed that the astronauts were in good condition, the

China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) said.

Earlier, the Beijing Aerospace Control Centre issued a return command through the ground station, after which the orbital capsule of the Shenzhou-19 spaceship separated from the return capsule.

It touched down at the Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the CMSA said.

Israeli strikes kill 12 overnight in Gaza, including kids

AP, JERUSALEM: Israeli airstrikes on homes in central Gaza killed at least 12 people including children, Palestinian hospital workers said Wednesday, including two young brothers whose bodies arrived in pieces.

Israel has been striking homes, shelters and public areas daily since resuming the war with Hamas last month. It has cut off the territory's 2 million Pales-

tinians from all imports, including food and medicine, for nearly two months.

UN food stockpiles have run out and aid groups say thousands of Palestinian children are malnourished.

Israel says its blockade aims to pressure Hamas to release hostages taken on October 7, 2023. However, the UN high commissioner for human rights warned this week that starving ci-

vilians as a military tactic constitutes a war crime.

Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza has killed more than 52,000 Palestinians, according to the territory's Health Ministry, including more than 2,200 in the six weeks since Israel shattered the ceasefire. Some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed in the Hamas attacks of Oct. 7, 2023, which started the war.

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GOVT AGREES TO CASTE DATA IN NEXT CENSUS

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs has decided today (30th April 2025) that caste enumeration should be included in the forthcoming Census," he said.

"Considering all these facts and to ensure that the social fabric is not disturbed by politics, caste enumeration should be transparently included in the Census instead of surveys," he said, adding that this will strengthen the social and economic structure of our society while the nation continues to progress.

The surprise announcement by the government on caste census was also seen as an attempt by the BJP to embrace opposition's social justice plank with vigour.

"Better late than never," Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X.

Rahul Gandhi told reporters that he welcomes the government's 'sudden' decision to include caste enumeration in the next census after '11 years of opposing it' but said it should give a timeline for its implementation.

The last nationwide census was completed in 2011 and the next decadal one was to commence in April 2020 but got delayed due to the pandemic.

The first caste enumeration in independent India was conducted in 2011 and was known as the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011.

The census during the British rule between 1881 and 1931 included caste enumeration, but post-independence the government decided in 1951 not to include caste in the census, except for the SCs and STs.

RAHUL WANTS TIMELINE FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Prime Minister Narendra Modi decided to say there are only four castes, but "suddenly" decided to announce this.

Rahul Gandhi was flanked by Congress general secretaries Jairam Ramesh and K C Venugopal, Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khara AICC national coordinator SC, ST, OBC and Minorities department K Raju and OBC department head Anil Jaichind.

"We wholeheartedly welcome this decision but demand a clear implementation timeline," Gandhi asserted, demanding an announcement of a date and also budget allocation for it.

Asked if the timing of the decision was related to the Bihar Assembly polls, Gandhi said, "No, I don't think so. I don't think that is why this decision has been taken in a hurry. I don't need to comment when they took it, how they took it, now they have taken it. We are happy that they have taken it, and now this needs to be taken forward."

Refusing to speculate on the timing of the government's decision, Gandhi said he is interested in how this census will be done, as if one does not ask relevant questions, it would turn out to be meaningless.

"We want an open census where you ask all stakeholders how it is to be done, he added.

Gandhi claimed that Telangana serves as a model state for caste census and stressed that it should be a people's census, not a bureaucrats' census.

Gandhi said, having successfully conducted a comprehensive caste census in the state, "We suggest the national census incorporate some of its effective approaches".

He offered the government help in designing the caste census, asserting that the design is very important.

There is a model of Bihar and Telangana in conducting the caste census, but there is a huge difference between them, he said. He said the caste census is the first step, and the central question that it will answer is what is the share of Dalits, Adivasis and OBCs.

"But, we have to go beyond that. We need to know their participation in institutions and in the power structure, that is the next step.

"Having successfully pressured the government to conduct a caste census, we'll continue to push for and put pressure on the government to remove the 50 per cent cap. Additionally, we demand the implementation of Article 15(5), which pertains to reservations in private educational institutions, a law that already exists. We urge the government to implement it promptly," he said.

Gandhi said he is very proud of every Congress member, worker, and every single person who has fought for the caste census. He said the Congress ran a grassroots campaign for the caste census across the country, the result of which is this decision of the government.

"Caste census is the first step, it is a way to open the door. After that, the work of development will start. According to the information we are getting from the caste survey in Telangana, you will not find people from Dalit, OBC and Adivasi communities in management or higher positions in the corporate structure. That means 90 per cent of India has no participation there," he said.

"But if you look at the list of gig workers, you will find people from Dalit, OBC and tribal categories in it. That means two types of streams are being created in the country. One is wages, poverty, unemployment, where people from Dalit, OBC and tribal classes are included. On the other hand, there are some elite people in the second stream, including Ambani-Adani, who are controlling the entire system," he said.

In such a situation, the first step to change this entire process is a caste census, Gandhi added.

"We had said in Parliament that we will not rest until we get the caste census done and we will also break the wall of 50 per cent limit on reservation," he said.

Earlier, Narendra Modi used to say that there are only four castes, but suddenly he announced that caste census would be conducted, Gandhi said.

His comments came within hours of the government announcing that caste enumeration would be included in the forthcoming census exercise in a "transparent" manner.

LAKHS PAID TO DAILY WAGERS IN TURTLE ZONE RAISES CORRUPTION STINK

The estimate was submitted by Range Forest Officer Rajesh Naik to the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Wildlife & Eco Tourism (South).

The work, according to the estimate, spanned 16 locations under the division and the total allocated money for wages was Rs 30,99,933.

However, a Right to Information (RTI) reply dated April 28, 2025, casts doubt on these claims. In response to a query about who is responsible for maintaining cleanliness on beaches frequented by nesting turtles, Public Information Officer Ankit Kumar (IFS) stated that the work is handled by staff from Karnataka Commercial and Industrial Corporation (KCIC), a private firm contracted by the Goa government.

According to the reply received on April 28, "a total of eleven Marine Rescuers are employed by this Division paid Rs 545 per day." The approved estimate - labelled No 158/2024-25 - details multiple deployments, including Rs 2,04,120 for the engagement of eight daily wage labourers to clean mangroves along a 3-km stretch of the Galgibaga river in Canacona from December 19, 2024, to February 28, 2025. This, despite the fact that mangroves are not turtle nesting habitats, according to departmental insiders.

Additional payments listed in the estimate include Rs 10.16 lakh for labour deployed across five locations - Galgibaga, Talpona, Cortalim, Madkai and Kundaim rivers - and Rs 9.18 lakh for 31 workers tasked with beach cleaning and day watch duties at beaches including Cavlossim, Mobor, Zalor, Arrossim, Majorda, Galgibaga, Talpona, Colva and Betalbatim. Another group of 26 labourers was reportedly engaged for stranded marine animal rescues at 16 beaches.

Forest Department staff stationed along the coastline expressed surprise at the developments. "This is news

to us. We've never seen any department staff engaged in beach or mangrove cleaning," said one official, who also questioned the rationale of deploying labour in mangrove areas unrelated to turtle activity.

Cavlossim Sarpanch Dixon Vaz echoed the sentiment, stating, "I know beach cleaning has been outsourced to a private agency, and their workers are regularly on duty. I'm not aware of any involvement by Forest Department personnel in cleaning activities."

When approached for clarification, Range Forest Officer Rajesh Naik responded tersely: "I have been told by my department that all answers related to your RTI have been furnished. What is the purpose of your investigation?"

AMAL CLOONEY MAY FACE US ENTRY BAN

While Clooney is not a formal prosecutor in the matter, her advisory role could become grounds for future visa denial under legislation passed by the US Congress in 2019. The law authorises sanctions or visa bans on individuals involved in ICC efforts to investigate or prosecute US citizens or allied officials without US consent.

George Clooney, Amal's husband of 11 years, is an American citizen, and the couple owns multiple properties in the US. They also share two children. If the visa restrictions were applied, it could complicate Amal's travel to the United States and her ability to be with her family or attend work-related events.

The US has historically had a tense relationship with the ICC, particularly when the court investigates actions by American allies such as Israel. The potential impact on Amal Clooney has raised concerns among legal and diplomatic circles, particularly regarding the intersection of international law, human rights advocacy, and geopolitical tensions. Neither Amal Clooney nor the US State Department has officially commented on the report as of Tuesday.

APPLE DIALS INDIA AS CHINA CALL DROPS, AMID US TARIFFS

Foxconn contributed \$1.3 billion and Tata supplying the remainder.

The Foxconn facility is expected to be fully operational by December 2027 and will eventually create up to 50,000 jobs. With five iPhone production units soon to be operational in India, Apple is significantly reducing its reliance on China, which currently accounts for over 75% of global iPhone output.

FAR FROM SMART: E-BUSES NEITHER DISABLED-FRIENDLY NOR DIGITALLY EFFICIENT

Drivers also noted a key operational issue with the lack of conductors. One driver said, "In the absence of conductors, drivers are saddled with the task of receiving payments using POS machines and issuing tickets if the passenger is not carrying a smart phone or does not use UPI. This adds to his workload. Passengers do not care about the driver's problems. They are only interested in reaching the destination."

As a result, more than ten drivers have reportedly quit due to excessive work pressure.

Despite these concerns, officials seem more focused on the bottom line than on commuter needs. At a press conference, Rodrigues pointed to rising monthly earnings -- from Rs 6.49 lakh in July 2024 to Rs 27.24 lakh by March 2025. He added that digital payments now account for 34% of total revenue, a move seen as progress towards a cashless ecosystem.

He maintained, "The Smart City mission is very clear. The buses will be conductor-less and payment will be digital. It will reduce cost of operation. Employing a conductor costs Rs 10 per kilometre on an average."

The question, however, remains if profit should come at the expense of inclusivity and employee dissatisfaction.