

Pope Francis dies: Eiffel Tower to go dark; world leaders mourn passing away of 'beacon of hope'

Agency: Pope Francis died on Easter Monday morning at 7:35 am, the Vatican announced. He was 88. The news was confirmed by Cardinal Kevin Farrell, the Vatican camerlengo, who oversees Church operations during a papal interregnum. "At 7:35 this morning, the Bishop of Rome, Francis, returned to the home of the Father," Cardinal Farrell said in a solemn statement. "His entire life was dedicated to the service of the Lord and of his Church." Francis, born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Argentina, made history in 2013 as the first Jesuit pope, the first from the Americas, and the first non-European pontiff in over 1,200 years. His decade-long papacy was marked by his emphasis on mercy, inclusiveness, humility, and a deep concern for the environment and the marginalized. "He taught us to live the values of the Gospel with faithfulness, courage, and universal love, especially for the poorest and most marginalized," Farrell added. Pope Francis had faced ongoing health issues in recent years, including respiratory complications and intestinal surgery. Despite his physical struggles, he continued to lead the Church with a focus on compassion and reform. "With immense gratitude for his example as a true disciple of the Lord Jesus, we commend the soul of Pope Francis to the infinite, merciful love of God, One and Triune," Farrell said.

During his tenure, Pope Francis undertook significant reforms within the Vatican, including efforts to address Ireland's foreign minister Simon Harris called Francis "a beacon of hope and a voice for the voiceless," praising his unwavering commitment to justice, peace, and human dignity. "Pope Francis bore his illness with great dignity and courage," he said. "As so many people in Ireland and as Christians across the world mourn his loss, we find strength in his message of hope, mercy, and compassion, which will

financial transparency and clerical abuse. He also championed environmental causes, most notably through his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which called for global action on climate change. The Pope's health had been a concern in recent years. He was hospitalized multiple times for respiratory issues, including a bout of double pneumonia earlier this year. Despite his ailments, he remained active in his duties, often speaking about the inevitability of death and the importance of preparing for it. The Vatican is expected to announce funeral arrangements soon. The Catholic Church now enters a period of mourning and sede vacante, during which the College of Cardinals will gather to elect a new pope.

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni called the news "deeply saddening," saying, "We are saying goodbye to a great man and a great shepherd." She remembered her personal relationship with Francis, saying, "I had the privilege of enjoying his friendship, his counsel and his teachings, which never failed me, not even in times of trial and suffering."

French President Emmanuel Macron, in a post on X, wrote, "From Buenos Aires to Rome, Pope Francis wanted the Church to bring joy and hope to the poorest. For it to unite humans among themselves, and with nature. May this hope forever outlast him."

Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof remembered Francis as "a man of the people," adding, "With his sober way of life, acts of service and compassion, Pope Francis was a role model for many – Catholics and non-Catholics alike. We remember him with great respect."

Israeli President Isaac Herzog praised the pope's deep compassion and his efforts to build bridges across faiths. Herzog wrote, expressing hope that the pope's prayers for peace in the Middle East would be realized.

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen described Francis as



continue to inspire us to build a better world for all."

Narendra Modi
@narendramodi
Deeply pained by the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis. In this hour of grief and remembrance, my heartfelt condolences to the global Catholic community. Pope Francis will always be remembered as a beacon of compassion, humility and spiritual courage by millions across the world. From a young age, he devoted himself towards realising the ideals of Lord Christ. He diligently served the poor and downtrodden. For those who were suffering, he ignited a spirit of hope.

I fondly recall my meetings with him and was greatly inspired by his commitment to inclusive and all-round development. His affection for the people of India will always be cherished. May his soul find eternal peace in God's embrace.



an inspiration for the entire world, saying, "He inspired millions, far beyond the Catholic Church, with his humility and love so pure for the less fortunate. My thoughts are with all who feel this profound loss. May they find solace in the idea that Pope Francis' legacy will continue to guide us all toward a more just, peaceful and compassionate world."

JD Vance's 'beautiful' message after Akshardham visit

Agency: US Vice

President JD Vance landed in Delhi on Monday for his first official visit to India and visited the famous Swaminarayan Akshardham temple. Accompanied by his Indian-origin wife Usha Vance and their three children, Vance visited an emporium in Janpath where he purchased pottery items and tea bags. In the evening, he will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the government rushes to sign a trade deal under the shadow of tariffs. The US Vice President received a guard of honour at the airport, where he was received by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav. Vance's three children – Ewan, Vivek and Mirabel – were seen wearing traditional Indian attire. At the Akshardham temple, he was left awestruck with the structure and thanked the authorities for their hospitality and kindness in welcoming him to the temple.

"Thank you so much for your hospitality and kindness in welcoming me and my family to this beautiful place. It is a great credit to India that you built a beautiful temple with precision and care. Our kids in particular loved it. God bless," he said in a message.

Vance and his family then visited the Central Cottage Industries Emporium in Janpath where they purchased papier-mache items, honey, tea bags and pottery items. "They really enjoyed and they appreciated our showroom. They purchased pottery and papier-mache items and tea bags," the showroom's manager,



Meera Soman, told news agency ANI. Store manager Vinay Agrawal said the emporium was thrilled and happy to see Vance and his family. "They bought some papier-mache items, small gift items for the kids and some brass items. They visited all the counters in the showroom. Central Cotton Industry is one of the temples of art and craft. It is not an ordinary shop. Central Cotton Industry is a very big organisation in Asia and deals with hand-to-man handicrafts. She (Usha Vance) really liked the art and craft," he said.

Showroom manager Meetu Wazirani said the couple spent around 40-45 minutes at the showroom and appreciated the goods at the emporium. "They really appreciated the goods. They were very humble and soft-spoken. She bought whatever the kids said," she added.

Security has been stepped up across Delhi ahead of the high-level visit. Senior officials from the Pentagon and the State Department also accompanied him on the four-day trip, which includes meetings and cultural engagements in Delhi, Jaipur, and Agra. Trump's second-in-command will be meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday evening and hold talks focusing on finalising

a bilateral trade agreement and deepening strategic and economic ties amid escalating trade tensions between Washington and Beijing. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval are expected to be part of the talks led by PM Modi, PTI reported. The Ministry of External Affairs said PM Modi and Vance would "review the progress" in relations and "exchange views on regional and global developments of mutual interest". "We are very positive that the visit will give a further boost to our bilateral ties," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told reporters last week. The Vances will travel to Jaipur on Tuesday, April 22, and visit the historic Amer Fort and other cultural sites. Later in the day, the Vice President will address a gathering at the Rajasthan International Centre, expected to include diplomats, policy experts, and government officials.

His remarks will focus on the broader trajectory of India-US ties under the Trump administration. The following day, they will travel to Agra and visit the Taj Mahal and Shilpgram, an open-air emporium of Indian handicrafts, before returning to Jaipur later that evening.

Ex-Karnataka top cop was having lunch when wife stabbed him

Agency: Murdered former Karnataka Director General of Police (DGP) Om Prakash was stabbed while he was at the dining table having lunch. According to sources, Om Prakash was in the middle of his meal, with two types of fish on his plate, when his wife Pallavi allegedly initiated an argument and suddenly stabbed him with a knife. There was a lunch plate near his body, sources said. From the crime scene, police recovered two knives and a broken bottle believed to be used in the murder. Investigators suspect that both Pallavi and Kriti may have been involved in the killing. Following the attack, the duo allegedly wrapped Om Prakash's body in a bedsheet. Sources said that the mother and daughter then locked themselves in a room. Pallavi later reportedly called the police and informed them of the murder. She then reportedly surrendered and confessed to the crime. When the police first arrived at the scene, the daughter, Kriti, refused to come outside and reportedly locked inside the room. She did not respond to the police's calls; eventually, the police broke open the door and took Kriti into custody. The police also took possession of the mobile phones belonging to the deceased and the two accused. Meanwhile, the police also recorded statements of three individuals, in connection with the case. According to the sources, Pallavi, during the initial interrogation, claimed she killed Om Prakash in self-defence. She reportedly alleged that

250 Gurdaspur cops shifted in a day to 'fight drugs'

Agency: The district police chief has shifted 250 police personnel in a day, with scores of them having served at the same place for the past several years. The transfers have been effected by SSP Aditya under a two-pronged strategy aimed at the "long-pending" rationalisation of the force and enhancing the intensity of its fight against the scourge of heroin in the border district. The move is unprecedented as never before have so many officials been shifted in one go. More transfers are reportedly on the cards. A majority of these police personnel have been sent

to each of the 12 police stations in an attempt to strengthen the force there. The remaining have been sent to the Police Lines. Three SHOs, too, have been shifted. They are Gurmeet Singh (Gurdaspur City), Onkar Singh (Behrampur) and Mohan Lal (Purana Shala). The in-charge of the Jaura Chhattian police post has also been removed. The SSP impounded the cars of two policemen — an ASI and a constable — for allegedly violating traffic rules. During a check, the officer came across the vehicles which had been modified by bending rules.

Agency: As advance polling for Canada's federal elections concludes on Monday, leading up to the final voting day on April 28, a series of unsettling incidents within the past 24 hours has spotlighted the delicate tensions simmering within the Indian diaspora and Indo-Canada relations. The vandalism of a gurdwara and a Hindu temple in Surrey later in the day, starkly underline these frictions. Adding to the charged atmosphere, Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre's Saturday visit to Brampton's Guru Nanak Mission Centre (GGNMC)

has drawn attention to the complex interplay of cultural, religious, and political dynamics within the communities. The vandalism of the gurdwara and the temple with pro-Khalistani and anti-India graffiti coincided with the Khalsa Parade, where "wanted" posters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar were paraded. While this has attracted significant criticism, it speaks volumes about the simmering tensions and attempts to polarise communities. Social media is teeming with videos showing Khalistani activists, with flags, asking Indians (read Hindus) to "go back to their country". Mocha Bezirgan, who describes himself as an "anti-corruption and anti-terrorism investigative journalist", wrote on X: "Happening now: World's largest Khalsa Day Parade in Surrey, B.C. Chants of 'Kill Modi Politics' echo throughout the parade route, accompanied by Sikh hymns and martial arts demonstrations..." The event attracted politicians of all shades, with Conservative and NDP leaders Poilievre and Jagmeet Singh attending in person. Liberal leader Mark Carney was notably absent. The event saw participation from over 5,50,000 people, and many have criticised the open display of Khalistani and anti-India sentiments amidst the glorification of the alleged Air India bombing mastermind.

Supreme Court body recommends 7 high court judges transfer for inclusivity

Agency: The Supreme Court collegium has recommended the transfer of seven high court judges, including four from the Karnataka High Court, in a bid to enhance inclusivity and strengthen the administration of justice across the judiciary. The collegium, headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, took the decision during its meetings held on April 15 and April 19. In a resolution issued after the meetings, the collegium stated, "With a view to infuse inclusivity and

diversity at the level of high courts and to strengthen the quality of administration of justice, the Supreme Court collegium in its meetings held on 15th April, 2025 and 19th April, 2025 has recommended transfer of the judges of high courts." Among those recommended for transfer from Karnataka High Court are Justice Hemant Chandangoudar to Madras High Court, Justice Krishnan Natarajan to Kerala High Court, Justice Neranahalli Srinivasan Sanjay Gowda to Gujarat High Court, and Justice

Dixit Krishna Shripad to Orissa High Court. The collegium also proposed the transfer of two Telangana High Court judges: Justice Perugu Sree Sudha to Karnataka High Court and Justice Kasoju Surendhar, also known as K Surender, to the Madras High Court. Additionally, Justice Kumbhajadala Manmadha Rao of the Andhra Pradesh High Court has been recommended for transfer to the Karnataka High Court.



Gurdwara, Hindu temple vandalised with pro-Khalistan, anti-India slogans in Canada

Ahead of the Khalsa Parade, the Indian diaspora in Canada awoke to the news of vandalism of the gurdwara and the temple in Surrey with hate graffiti. While both incidents are under police investigation, the Khalsa Diwan Society, which runs the gurdwara, blamed the vandalism on a small group of Sikh separatists advocating for Khalistan. "This act is part of an ongoing campaign by extremist forces that seek to instil fear and division within the Canadian Sikh community. Their actions undermine the values of inclusivity, respect, and mutual support that are foundational to both Sikhism and Canadian society," the statement said. Incidentally, the management of the

gurdwara promotes Sikh-Hindu unity and has kept Khalistani ideologues at bay. Around 3 am., Lakshmi Mandir in Surrey was also vandalised with the same kind of graffiti. According to reports, CCTV footage with the temple management shows two men vandalising the walls. This was the third time the temple had been vandalised. Daniel Bordman, a journalist, wrote on X: "I went to the Lakshmi Mandir in Surrey that was vandalized last night by Khalistanis. This is the third time it has been vandalized. I spoke to management and the devotees, and they do not feel like the police or the political establishment cares at all." Poilievre's Saturday visit to Brampton's GGNMC has also sparked controversy as this centre is viewed to be pro-Khalistani, having dubbed Nijjar a "martyr". Poilievre was accompanied by his close but controversial associate, MP Tim Uppal. Tim's wife is said to be associated with the World Sikh Organisation, and his brother, Raymanpreet Singh Uppal, was charged in 2014 but later acquitted in a drug case. While these incidents have undoubtedly shaken communities, it is crucial to recognise the broader context in which they occur. The Sikh diaspora in Canada is diverse, with a vast majority dedicated to peaceful co-existence, cultural preservation, and community development. The actions of a few hardliners must not weaken multicultural ties.