

April 22, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. In a tragic explosion that occurred during firecracker manufacturing in Thrissur district of Kerala, 13 people lost their lives.

(i) It is reported that around 40 people were working at the fireworks manufacturing unit located in Mundathikode village at the time of the accident, and most of them sustained injuries.

(ii) The Thrissur Pooram festival is scheduled to be celebrated this Sunday (April 26) at the Vadakkunnathan Temple. In preparation for the event, firecrackers were being intensively manufactured in a temporary storage facility set up by the temple administration, when the sudden explosion occurred.

2. In Myanmar, following the military's seizure of power in 2021, which led to a civil war against democratic forces, the country's leader Min Aung Hlaing has invited armed rebel groups for peace talks in an effort to resolve the conflict.

(i) He urged all groups to participate in the negotiations by July 31.

(ii) However, the National Unity Government—a coalition of anti-military resistance groups—has rejected the peace offer, calling it a “sham.” It stated that their armed struggle, in coordination with the People's Defense Forces, will continue until democracy is restored.

(iii) On the other hand, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, which is also part of the same coalition, has welcomed the president's initiative for peace talks.

3. Spain and Ireland have urged that the long-standing trade and political agreement between Israel and the European Union, in force since 2000, be temporarily suspended.

(i) This demand was raised during the EU Foreign Ministers' meeting held in Luxembourg on Tuesday (April 21).

(ii) The two countries argued that such action is necessary in protest against the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the occupation of the West Bank, and Israel's new death penalty law. However, there are divisions within EU member states on this issue. Countries like Germany and Italy have opposed taking such strict measures against Israel.

(iii) Germany's Foreign Minister, Johann Wadephul, stated that a solution can only be achieved through dialogue with Israel and that canceling the agreement in the current situation would not be appropriate.

(iv) Countries like the Netherlands have suggested applying pressure on Israel to change its policies rather than completely terminating the agreement.

4. Tim Cook, who has successfully led Apple Inc. for the past 15 years, has announced that he will step down as CEO on September 1.

(i) He will be succeeded by John Ternus, who currently serves as the head of the company's hardware engineering division.

(ii) Tim Cook, who took over as CEO in 2011 following Steve Jobs, led the company to unprecedented heights. It has been announced that he will transition from the CEO role to serve as the company's

Chairman. This leadership change has been unanimously approved by Apple's board of directors.

(iii) A period of remarkable achievements:

- Under Tim Cook's leadership, Apple's market value grew dramatically from \$350 billion to \$4 trillion.
- Beyond the iPhone, he successfully introduced products such as Apple Watch, AirPods, and Vision Pro, along with services like Apple Music and Apple TV+.

(iv) Background of John Ternus:

- John Ternus, the newly appointed CEO, has been with Apple since 2001 and brings over 25 years of experience within the company.

5. The 6th Asian Beach Games will begin on Wednesday (April 22) in China. A 31-member team from India will participate in the event.

6. At the Laureus World Sports Awards this year, tennis players were chosen as the best sportsman and sportswoman.

(i) The award for Best Sportsman was won by Spanish tennis star Carlos Alcaraz, while the Best Sportswoman award went to Belarusian tennis player Aryna Sabalenka.

(ii) These prestigious awards are presented annually by the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, headquartered in London. The award ceremony honoring outstanding athletes, teams, and performances of 2025 was held in Madrid.

(iii) India in nominations: Notably, the India women's national cricket team, which won the World Cup for the first time, was nominated in the Best Team category.

(iv) Breakthrough of the Year: Lando Norris (Great Britain – Formula 1).

7. Global success of the co-operative model, particularly focusing on Amul's recent financial milestones and its expansion into international markets.

(i) Analysis of Amul's Success (2025–2026)

- In the 2025–26 fiscal year, Amul's sales of dairy products crossed ₹1 lakh crore (\$10.75 billion).
- This represents an 11% increase in growth compared to the previous 2024–25 period.
- Amul products are now sold in cities with populations over 50,000 across the United States and Europe.
- In 2024, Amul partnered with the Michigan Milk Producers Association to begin marketing its fresh milk products across 35 states in the USA.

(ii) Historical Evolution of Amul

- 1946 (Origins): Founded in Kaira (Kheda), Gujarat, by dairy farmers from two villages who were protesting against middlemen.
- The organization began by collecting only 250 liters of milk per day.
- 1955: Established a major milk processing plant in Anand, Gujarat.
- 1957: The brand name "Amul" was officially created.

- 1966: The iconic "Amul Girl" mascot was introduced as the brand's identity.
- 1970 (White Revolution): Under the leadership of Verghese Kurien, the National Dairy Development Board launched "Operation Flood".
- 2000: Amul was recognized as the largest milk marketing body in the world.
- 2010: Became India's primary food product exporter, reaching over 50 nations.
- Today, Amul collects 350 lakh (35 million) liters of milk daily, encompassing 18,600 village co-operative societies.

(iii) Other Co-operative Societies

While Amul has achieved global status, other Indian state co-operatives are also significant players:

- Aavin (Tamil Nadu).
- Nandini (Karnataka).
- Vijaya (Andhra Pradesh).
- Mother Dairy (Delhi).

(iv) Comparative Advantages of the Co-operative Model

- Elimination of Middlemen: By directly connecting millions of producers to consumers, the model ensures that the maximum profit returns to the farmers.
- Farmer Welfare: The co-operative provides members with subsidized cattle feed and veterinary medical aid, which individual farmers could not afford on their own.
- Economic Stability: Unlike seasonal crops, dairy co-operatives provide farmers with a stable daily income throughout the year.
- Technological Sharing: Amul is now sharing its processing technology with milk co-operatives in other countries to establish international trade links.
- Resilience: The model proves that a co-operative founded on unity, self-confidence, and a lack of political interference can successfully compete with multinational corporate giants.

(v) It is a mistake for other state co-operatives like Aavin or Nandini to view Amul's growth as a threat or a barrier to their own success. Instead, they should view Amul's entry into the global market as a blueprint. The "victory" of Amul is a victory for the co-operative spirit itself, proving that local farmers can dominate the international stage when they work together under a professional and unified structure.

8. Analysis of the global state of democracy, its historical roots, and the current challenges facing major nations.

(i) Historical Origins of Democracy Worldwide

Democracy is not a modern invention but a system that evolved over thousands of years.

- Democratic ideas were shaped by thinkers across various civilizations over millennia.
- For most of history, absolute monarchies ruled with total power, leading to the suppression of free speech, religious freedom, and the imposition of forced labor.
- 18th-Century Birth of "Electoral Democracy":
 - The American Revolution (late 18th century) established the foundational principle that power resides with the people and that a Government must operate with the consent of the governed.

- The French Revolution followed, ending monarchical and feudal systems while promoting the core values of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which spread democratic thought globally.
- 20th-Century Expansion:
 - Post-WWII: Many Asian and African colonies, including India in 1947, gained independence and adopted democratic systems.
 - Post-Cold War: The collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the 20th century led to a surge in nations transitioning to democracy.

(ii) Analysis of International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) about the current trends

- IIDEA Established in 1995, headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden.
- Objective: It works to strengthen democratic institutions and improve election processes worldwide.
- Structure: It consists of 35 member nations. In 2026, India's Chief Election Commissioner holds the chairmanship of this organization.
- Key Findings: Their research shows that one in three voters globally now lives in a country where the quality of elections is declining.

(iii) Present Scenario: Impact on Specific Countries

Since 2010, a trend of democratic "backsliding" has emerged, characterized by media restrictions and the weakening of judicial independence.

- Hungary: Under Viktor Orbán (beginning in 2010), the constitution was amended without opposition input. The Government brought the media and judiciary under state control, turning the nation into an "Electoral Autocracy". Orbán lost the general election in April 2026 after five terms.
- Turkey: The nation has seen a significant centralization of power through a shift to a Presidential system. This has been accompanied by the suppression of opposition parties and media, as well as interference in the judiciary.
- United States: Once seen as the global model, the quality of its democracy is declining due to falling faith in election integrity, violence following election results, and the politicization of public service.
- India: While it remains the world's largest democracy with high voter turnout, studies suggest a decline in democratic quality. Concerns include:
 - Pressure on media houses.
 - The use of anti-terror laws against dissenters and investigative agencies to target opposition leaders.
 - The practice of influencing voters with money and gifts, which compromises the purity of the electoral process.
 - An erosion of secularism, a fundamental democratic pillar.

(iv) Modern Threats and Global Trends

- Digital Manipulation: The unregulated use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital platforms is increasingly sabotaging election integrity by manipulating public opinion.
- Out of 71 recognized democratic nations, 46 have regressed to the status of "flawed democracies" over the last 15 years.
- Social Impact: The rise of political discrimination based on religion, race, and language is identified

as a primary threat that could undermine national unity and democratic stability.

