

April 23, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Voting for the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly elections began on Thursday (April 23) at 7:00 AM and will continue until 6:00 PM. Extensive security arrangements have been made across Tamil Nadu in this regard.

(i) A total of 57.3 million voters is expected to cast their votes in the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. Among them, 1.4 million are first-time voters, and 398,000 are above 85 years of age. Across the state, 75,064 polling stations have been set up. A total of 4,023 candidates is contesting in 234 constituencies.

2. U.S. President Donald Trump has announced that the ceasefire with Iran will be extended indefinitely to facilitate the next round of peace talks to be held in Pakistan.

(i) Earlier, on the 8th of this month, the United States had announced a two-week ceasefire in its conflict with Iran. That two-week period was set to end on Wednesday.

3. In the United Kingdom, a historic bill has been passed in Parliament to prevent future generations from taking up smoking. The bill imposes a lifetime ban on cigarette sales to those born on or after 2009.

(i) Currently, the legal minimum age to purchase cigarettes is 18. Under the new law, this age limit will increase every year. As a result, today's children will never gain the legal right to buy cigarettes throughout their lifetime.

(ii) The law, which will come into effect after receiving approval from King Charles, also grants the Government authority to regulate not only cigarettes but also other tobacco products and e-cigarettes.

(iii) It also includes provisions to control flavourings added to tobacco products and regulate attractive packaging designed to appeal to young people.

(iv) Towards a smoke-free society!

- In the UK, approximately 80,000 deaths occur each year due to smoking. According to the country's health department, smoking remains the leading cause of preventable deaths and health issues.
- Health Secretary Wes Streeting stated that "children in Britain will now be protected from tobacco for life and will grow up as the first smoke-free generation."

(v) A global example:

- Compared to the 1970s, the number of smokers in the UK has decreased by two-thirds, yet 13% of the population still smokes.
- While New Zealand previously introduced a similar law and later withdrew it, the UK's bold step is expected to serve as a model for other countries in eliminating tobacco use.

4. In the South American country of Peru, there has been a significant delay in the release of vote-counting results from the general election held on the 12th. Amid this situation, the head of the country's election authority, Piero Corvetto, has resigned.

(i) In his resignation letter, he stated: "There were certain shortcomings in the electoral procedures. However, no irregularities occurred in the voting process."

(ii) He emphasized that his resignation was necessary to ensure the credible conduct of the second round of the presidential election scheduled for June 7, and to help resolve the confusion prevailing in the current political situation. He also stressed that pending election complaints must be investigated impartially.

(iii) Due to the unusual delay in vote counting, several candidates who contested the election have raised allegations of malpractice.

(iv) With approximately 94% of votes counted, Keiko Fujimori, the leading candidate from the conservative party, is in first place with 17% of the vote. However, there is still uncertainty over who will emerge as the second candidate to face her in the June election. The country's election commission has announced that complete results will be declared by May 15.

5. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has announced that the Online Gaming Promotion and Regulation Rules will come into effect from May 1. The Ministry has also released the corresponding guidelines. Speaking on this, IT Secretary S. Krishnan said:

(i) Except for online gambling games that are already banned, other online games are not required to be mandatorily registered. The rules allow for voluntary registration of such games.

(ii) There is no compulsion to classify a game as either an online gambling game or an online social game at the time of application.

(iii) The rules clearly outline user-related features. While the law prohibits online gambling games, it aims to promote electronic games and online social gaming.

(iv) The Ministry had sought public feedback on this law in October 2025, and now the rules for the Online Gaming Promotion and Regulation framework have been finalized. These rules will come into force from May 1.

6. In Manipur, normal life has been severely disrupted as a total shutdown protest continues across most districts.

(i) In the northeastern state of Manipur, tensions between the Meitei community and the Kuki tribal groups continue, with extremist elements from both sides repeatedly carrying out attacks.

(ii) On April 7, in Bishnupur, where the Meitei community is predominant, two children were killed in a bomb attack on a house allegedly carried out by Kuki militants.

(iii) Condemning this incident, a total shutdown protest has been ongoing for the fourth consecutive day in five valley districts dominated by the Meitei community.

(iv) Since the violence began in 2023, 58,821 people have been displaced in Manipur. The state Home Department has stated that 173 Government relief camps are currently functioning to accommodate them.

7. April 21 – National Civil Services Day

8. The first anniversary of the Pahalgam terrorist attack was observed on Wednesday (April 22). On this occasion, President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, among others, paid tribute.

(i) President Droupadi Murmu stated that "India remains firmly committed to defeating terrorism in all its forms."

(ii) Pahalgam, a popular tourist destination often referred to as "Mini Switzerland," is located in the Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir. On April 22, 2025, a brutal shooting carried out by three Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists killed 26 people, including 25 tourists and one horse-riding worker.

(iii) In retaliation for this attack, on May 7, the Indian Armed Forces carried out precision strikes under the operation named "Operation Sindoor" in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, targeting terrorist infrastructure. The subsequent military confrontation between the two countries ended within four days following a request from Pakistan.

(iv) The first anniversary of the Pahalgam attack was observed with tight security arrangements across Jammu and Kashmir.

9. History of World Book Day and the enduring impact of literature.

(i) History of World Book Day

- World Book Day is celebrated annually on April 23. It was officially established during UNESCO's 28th conference held in Paris from August 25 to November 16, 1995.
- April 23 was chosen because it marks the death anniversary of three world-renowned authors in the year 1616: Miguel de Cervantes, William Shakespeare, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega.
- The concept of a day to celebrate books first emerged in Spain, where it is a tradition for men and women to exchange books and roses on this day.
- The day is now observed in more than 100 countries. It also honors other authors born or deceased on this date, such as Maurice Druon and Vladimir Nabokov.
- International Children's Book Day has been celebrated since 1967 on April 2, the birthday of the famous children's author Hans Christian Andersen.

(ii) Significance and Benefits of Books

- Books are characterized as the gateway to new worlds, treasure houses of knowledge, and the pinnacle of human imagination.
- They serve as a bridge connecting the present generation with the wisdom of the past while providing insights into the future.
- Reading books expands vocabulary, improves thinking skills, and allows individuals to experience different cultures and civilizations without traveling.
- Books are fundamental to our culture; they promote understanding, tolerance, and the spreading of knowledge across generations.

(iii) Historical Facts About Authors and Literature

- William Shakespeare:
 - He wrote 37 plays that explored the depths of human emotions such as love, greed, jealousy, and sadness.
 - His education was rooted in "small Latin and less Greek," but his works became the pillars of the English language.
 - In the Tamil context, 34 of his 37 plays have been translated into Tamil.

- Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar, the father of Tamil drama, adapted Shakespearean works like Hamlet (Amaladityan), Macbeth (Makapathi), and Othello.
- Swami Vipulananda wrote Mathanga Sulamani, a treatise on Shakespeare's plays, comparing them to Tamil literary grammar.
- Miguel de Cervantes: A Spanish writer famous for the classic masterpiece Don Quixote.
- Inca Garcilaso de la Vega: A Peruvian author and historian recognized as a pioneer in the literature of the Americas.

(iv) Insights from Scholars and Intellectuals

emphasising the value of a reading habit:

- Socrates: "Tell me your friend, and I will tell you who you are".
- James Allen: Modified this to say, "Tell me the books you read, and I will tell you who you are".
- Isaac Newton: Stated that "a book is equal to a hundred friends".
- John Milton: Described the person who preserves a book for the next generation as the "true morning star of humanity".
- Mahatma Gandhi: When asked what he would do if he received one crore rupees, he replied, "I will build a library," highlighting that libraries are the best investment for social improvement.