

April 3, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Sandeep Rai Rathore was appointed as the new Director General of Police (DGP) on Thursday.

(i) The Election Commission issued an order appointing Sandeep Rai Rathore—who currently serves as the DGP of the Police Training Wing—to the said post. Following this, Sandeep Rai Rathore assumed charge as the DGP.

2. A severe earthquake struck the waters off North Maluku, Indonesia, early Thursday morning. As a result of this natural calamity, a building collapsed, claiming the life of one person.

(i) Centered in the open sea at a depth of 35 kilometers—located 580 km from the coast of the Philippines and 1,000 km from the Sabah region of Malaysia—the earthquake registered a magnitude of 7.6 on the Richter scale.

(ii) Following the tremor, a tsunami warning was issued as sea waves appeared turbulent; however, the warning was subsequently lifted once the situation stabilized.

(iii) In the wake of the main earthquake, approximately 50 aftershocks occurred in succession.

(iv) The Indonesian Meteorological Agency reported that, as a consequence of the earthquake, sea levels rose in five locations, including North Sulawesi. The highest rise was recorded in North Minahasa, where waves surged to a height of 0.75 meters.

3. After a hiatus of nearly half a century, NASA—the U.S. space agency—successfully launched the historic 'Artemis II' spacecraft, a mission designed to carry humans back to the Moon.

(i) This launch took place from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, at approximately 3:54 AM Indian Standard Time on Thursday. Standing as tall as a 32-story building, the colossal SLS rocket soared toward the Moon, carrying four astronauts on board.

(ii) Four astronauts are participating in this pivotal mission: Americans Reid Wiseman (Commander), Victor Glover (Pilot), and Christina Koch (Mission Specialist), along with Canadian Jeremy Hansen (Mission Specialist).

(iii) During its journey between Earth and the Moon, the spacecraft is set to traverse a distance of approximately 4,06,000 kilometers. This marks the longest-distance space voyage ever undertaken by humans in the history of mankind. With this mission, the crew aims to break the record previously set by the 'Apollo 13' spacecraft in 1970.

(iv) During this mission, which is expected to last for about 10 days, the astronauts will orbit the Moon and conduct various experiments within its orbital path. Specifically, the crew will perform a live rehearsal to demonstrate how humans would take manual control of the spacecraft in the event of a failure in its automated control systems.

(v) This marks the first time since 1972 that humans are venturing beyond Earth's orbit into deep space. "This is the first step toward establishing a permanent base for human habitation on the Moon," NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman stated enthusiastically.

(vi) Contribution of Private Companies:

- Private companies—such as those led by prominent American entrepreneurs, including Elon Musk's SpaceX and Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin—are collaborating with NASA to develop lunar landers.
- This mission will serve as a strong foundation for future plans to send humans to Mars.

4. Monthly mobile internet usage in India reached an unprecedented new peak last year.

(i) A research report by Nokia reveals that in 2025, the average user consumed 31 GB of Internet data per month. This represents an 18 percent increase over the 27.5 GB recorded in the previous year, 2024.

(ii) The Dominance of 5G Technology:

- The contribution of 5G services to India's overall mobile internet traffic has risen to 47 percent.
- Nationwide 5G internet usage surged by 70 percent within a single year, reaching a volume of 12.9 Exabytes. Factors such as high-speed internet, the use of AI applications, 4K-quality videos, and a growing interest in online gaming are cited as the primary drivers behind this massive expansion.

(ii) Ranked 2nd Globally:

- Driven by this growth, India has emerged as the nation with the world's second-largest 5G subscriber base.
- Similarly, India ranks second globally in terms of both 5G data consumption and the adoption of 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA). FWA alone accounted for a 25 percent share of total 5G usage.

(iii) The Arrival of Affordable Phones:

- The availability of budget-friendly 5G smartphones—priced under \$100 (approximately ₹9,300)—has increased tenfold in the market.
- More than 90 percent of the smartphones sold last year were equipped with 5G technology. According to a study, out of the approximately 890 million 4G devices currently in India, more than 380 million are 5G-enabled.

(iv) Future Projections:

- In metropolitan areas alone, 58 percent of total internet usage is driven by 5G.
- Nokia projects that by the year 2031, the number of 5G subscribers in India will exceed one billion.
- The company has stated that AI-driven applications and advanced network infrastructures will propel India's digital evolution to the next level.

5. Amidst the fierce competition prevailing among leading players in the Indian telecommunications market, Bharti Airtel has secured the top spot in terms of acquiring new customers.

(i) According to the February statistics released by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), Airtel has achieved a remarkable feat by attracting 5.088 million (50.88 lakh) new subscribers in that month alone.

(ii) The telephony services segment has played a pivotal role in this phenomenal growth experienced by Airtel. The company added 4.85 million users in the wireless telephony segment and 2,31,000 users in the landline telephony segment. Meanwhile, Jio secured the second position by adding 1.741 million

subscribers.

(iii) After 5 Years...:

- Vodafone Idea, which had been experiencing a continuous decline over the past five years, has finally returned to a path of growth after a long hiatus.
- In February, the company added 21,927 new subscribers. Following a loss of approximately 4,11,000 subscribers in January, this modest improvement has instilled a great sense of optimism within the company.

(iv) Overall Scenario:

- The total number of telephone subscribers in the country has risen to 1.3213 billion (132.13 crore). This represents a growth of 0.56 percent compared to the previous month.
- Private sector operators—Airtel, Jio, Vodafone Idea, and Tata Teleservices—have all increased their subscriber bases. Conversely, public sector undertakings—BSNL and MTNL—continue to lose customers.

(v) Internet Services:

- Regarding internet services, the number of broadband subscribers has increased to 105.3 crore.
- In this sector, Jio leads with 51.96 crore users, while Airtel ranks second with 36.4 crore users. Vodafone Idea currently has 12.93 crore users, and BSNL has 2.8 crore users.

6. In the 2025-26 fiscal year, India achieved a historic milestone by exporting defense-related weaponry to foreign nations worth an unprecedented ₹38,424 crore.

(i) Previously, India used to import weaponry from foreign countries such as the United States and Russia. However, this situation has been undergoing a transformation in recent times. India is now indigenously manufacturing its own weaponry and selling it to friendly nations and other foreign countries. Regarding this development, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh shared the following details in posts published on his social media pages:

- In the 2023-24 fiscal year, India exported weaponry to foreign nations worth ₹21,083 crore. Subsequently, in the 2024-25 fiscal year, the value of weaponry exported to foreign countries stood at ₹23,622 crore.
- In the 2025-26 fiscal year, weaponry exports reached a value of ₹38,424 crore. This represents an increase of ₹14,802 crore compared to the exports recorded in the previous fiscal year. In other words, our weaponry exports have surged by over 62 percent when compared to the preceding fiscal year.
- This marks the highest level of exports ever recorded. Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) contributed 54.84 percent to India's weaponry exports, while private sector companies accounted for 45.16 percent. He noted that this massive surge in India's weaponry exports serves as a clear indication of the growing confidence that foreign nations place in India's indigenously manufactured defense equipment and its advanced weaponry production capabilities.

7. Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov met personally with Prime Minister Narendra Modi for consultations.

(i) During the meeting, he recalled Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India last December to participate in the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit.

(ii) A press release issued by the Central Government regarding this matter further stated the following:

- Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov, who is currently on a visit to India, met with Prime Minister Modi and highlighted the progress being made in bilateral relations across various sectors, including trade, economy, and fertilizers.
- In response, Prime Minister Modi expressed satisfaction with the efforts currently underway to implement the bilateral agreements reached during the Annual Summit held at the end of last year.
- It was reported that Prime Minister Modi expressed confidence that bilateral relations between India and Russia would be further strengthened, and stated that he looked forward to discussing various issues with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

8. Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized that the system of Government administration must evolve and adapt with the times in order to effectively advance the objective of prioritizing citizen welfare.

- A week-long (April 2 to 8) national special initiative, titled 'Sadhana Saptah,' has been undertaken to enhance the capacity of the Indian Civil Services. Its key features include improving the skills of Government employees, fostering technological advancement, and prioritizing the well-being of citizens.
- Government Employees Must Evolve: "With the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI), technological changes across the globe will accelerate even further. A competent administrator and government employee must possess a deep understanding of technology and data; for it is precisely this understanding that will serve as the foundation for making critical decisions," he stated.

9. The Central Government has announced a tax exemption on the import of key petrochemical products until June 30.

(i) The Central Government has taken this measure with the objective of preventing disruptions in the supply of petrochemical products—caused by the impact of the conflict in West Asia—and ensuring that consumers remain unaffected.

(ii) Consequently, various manufacturing sectors that rely on petrochemical products—such as plastics production, packaging, textiles, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, automotive components, and other manufacturing-related industries—will benefit.

(iii) At the same time, it has been reported that this tax exemption is expected to result in a revenue loss of up to ₹1,800 crore for the Government.

10. The renowned painting 'Yashoda and Krishna' by the celebrated artist Raja Ravi Varma was sold at an auction for Rs.167.20 crore.

(i) The auction for this artwork was held in Mumbai on Wednesday. During the event, the oil painting fetched an unprecedented price—the highest ever recorded for an artwork at auction. Previously, the record was held by M.F.Husain's painting 'Gram Yatra,' which sold for Rs.118 crore; Raja Ravi Varma's painting has now surpassed that record.

(ii) It was estimated that the painting 'Yashoda and Krishna' would fetch a price between Rs.80 crore and Rs.120 crore at the auction. However, businessman Dr. Cyrus S. Poonawalla acquired the artwork for a sum exceeding these expectations.

(iii) Painted in the 1890s, the artwork beautifully portrays the affectionate bond between the child Krishna and his mother, Yashoda. It is regarded as one of the finest masterpieces by Raja Ravi Varma, who hailed from the royal family of Travancore in Kerala.

11. A Full Bench of the Madras High Court ruled that the Governor is bound by the State Cabinet's decision regarding premature release and commutation of sentences, and that the Governor does not possess the authority to reject such a Cabinet decision.

(i) John David was sentenced to life imprisonment in connection with the murder of Navarasu, a student at Annamalai University. The Governor rejected a petition seeking John David's premature release. Challenging this decision, John David's mother, Esther, filed a Habeas Corpus petition in the Madras High Court.

(ii) The Bench, led by Justice S.M. Subramaniam, which heard the case, held that the Governor's rejection of the Tamil Nadu Government's recommendation for premature release was erroneous, as the Governor lacks the authority to do so. Consequently, the High Court delivered a verdict directing the Governor to reconsider the recommendation for John David's premature release.

12. Analysis of custodial torture in India

(i) Legislative and Statistical Background (2010–2021)

- 2010 Prevention of Torture Bill: A bill to prevent torture was passed by the Lok Sabha in 2010 but lapsed after the Rajya Sabha failed to discuss it.
- 2016–2021 National Data: According to a report provided by the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs in Parliament in 2021, 11,419 deaths occurred in police custody in India between 2016–17 and 2020–21.
- Daily Fatality Rate: This data indicates that, on average, more than five people die every single day in India due to police torture.
- 2017 Law Commission Draft: In 2017, the Law Commission of India prepared a draft bill to prevent torture and recommended its enactment, but it remains pending in the Law Ministry's files.
- Lack of Convictions (2018–2021): National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data reveals that between 2018 and 2021, not a single police officer was punished or convicted for a death occurring in police custody.

(ii) The Sathankulam Incident (June 2020)

- The Arrest (June 19, 2020): Jayaraj (58) and his son Bennix (31), who ran a mobile shop in Sathankulam, Thoothukudi, were taken into custody for allegedly violating COVID-19 lockdown hours.
- Custodial Torture: While at the Sathankulam police station, the father and son were subjected to extreme physical violence throughout the night.
- Fatal Outcome: After being remanded to judicial custody, both Jayaraj and Bennix died within days at the Kovilpatti Government Hospital due to the severity of their injuries.

(iii) Legal Proceedings and Government Steps (2020–2026)

- **Judicial Intervention:** The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court took suo motu notice of the incident, leading the Tamil Nadu government to transfer the investigation to the CBI.
- **Accused Officers:** Ten police personnel, including Inspector Sridhar and Sub-inspectors Balakrishnan and Raghu Ganesh, were arrested and charged. One accused officer (Paul Durai) died during the trial due to illness.
- **The Verdict (March 2026):** On March 23, 2026, the Madurai First Additional Sessions Court, led by Judge C. Muthukumar, found the nine remaining accused police officers guilty.
- **Sentencing Delay:** Although the verdict was delivered, the announcement of the specific punishment was initially scheduled for March 30 but was delayed to April 6, 2026, to allow for reports on the officers' mental states and assets.
- **CBI's Demand for Death Penalty:** On April 2, 2026, the CBI argued before the court that the officers should receive the maximum punishment of death, describing the incident as an "extremely rare" case of inhuman cruelty.

(iv) Institutional Critiques and Proposed Remedies

- **Failure of Safeguards:** The Judicial Magistrate who ordered the remand and the Medical Officer who issued the fitness certificate both failed to notice or record the victims' severe injuries.
- **Legislative Apathy:** Despite recommendations from the Supreme Court, Law Commission, and NHRC, the Indian Government has yet to pass a dedicated law to hold police officers personally accountable for torture.
- **The "Essential Review":** As long as there is no specific law making police officers and their accomplices legally responsible for torture, NCRB data will continue to show zero punishments for such crimes.

13. Alternate Energy is Essential

(i) Chronological Context of Energy as a Weapon

- **1970:** Since this period, crude oil and natural gas have been used as tools of geopolitical leverage; for instance, Russia began using gas supplies to influence Europe.
- **1973:** Middle Eastern oil producers significantly reduced supply to force a change in U.S. foreign policy.
- **1973 Consequences:** Petrol and diesel prices quadrupled, causing global economies to stall completely.
- **2015 (Nepal):** When India disrupted crude oil imports to Nepal, the nation responded by significantly increasing its number of electric vehicles (EVs). Consequently, Nepal's oil import dependency is now decreasing.
- **2022:** Gas supplies were again used as political leverage during international conflicts.
- **2026 (Recent Weeks):** Before the recent attacks on Iran, crude oil traded at approximately \$68 (₹6,295) per barrel. Following the hostilities, prices surged to over \$100 (₹9,258).

(ii) Facts Regarding Global Oil Vulnerability

- **The Hormuz Chokepoint:** Approximately 20% of global crude oil trade passes through the narrow Strait of Hormuz. Any threat to close this waterway causes immediate price spikes even before actual supply disruptions occur.

- The Dependency Ratio: Three-quarters of the world's population lives in countries that must import crude oil to meet their transportation and industrial needs.
- The China Model: In Beijing, 50% of newly registered cars last year were electric, and EVs now make up 12% of the city's total vehicle population.
- The Cuba Shift: Facing reduced oil supplies due to U.S. pressure, Cuba imported 34 times more solar panels from China this year compared to the previous year.

(iii) Strategic and Scientific Advantages of Alternate Energy

- Resilience in War: Energy experts note a significant difference in infrastructure vulnerability. While one missile can disable a massive coal-fired power plant, it would require 40 missiles to destroy a distributed wind farm of equivalent capacity.
- Geographic Flexibility: Unlike oil, which is tied to specific sea lanes like Hormuz, components for alternate energy (solar panels and wind turbines) can be transported via multiple routes.
- Local Production: Alternate energy allows for significant electricity generation within a country's own borders using a relatively small land area, enhancing national energy security.

(iv) Conclusion and Remedies

- Electrification of Transport: The primary way to reduce global crude oil demand is the electrification of the transport sector.
- Strategic Necessity: The transition to renewable energy is described not just as an environmental choice, but as a vital survival strategy to protect a nation's economy from the unpredictable nature of global "crude oil politics".