

APRIL 5-11, 2026

# SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



# Voyage of pride

NATIONAL  
MARITIME DAY  
APRIL 5

COVER STORY

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With late singer Humane Sagar



With Aseema Panda & Mantu Chhuria

Music director Sakti Prasad Mishra needs no introduction. Over an 18-year career, he has contributed to more than 50 music videos and several mainstream films. Though he began in a leading IT firm, the Koraput-born musician chose to follow his passion for music. Starting as a background composer for stage plays, he steadily rose to prominence in the industry. Widely loved for hits like 'Sukumari' and 'Laja Maina', Shakti now looks forward to his upcoming films 'Smruti' and 'Chauthi Raati'

Movie nights, best vibes

If I'm not working, I like watching movies with my friends, as it helps me relax and enjoy some quality time together.

No days off ever

I don't follow the Sunday-Monday routine; for me every day is a workday. I truly enjoy it, because work means everything to me, and I believe time is extremely valuable.

Together even when apart

Since my family doesn't stay here, whenever I get time I connect with them on a video call, sharing moments and everything happening in our lives.

Ideas flow without pause

As an artist, I am constantly working; either focusing on ongoing projects or creating new music and ideas that will shape and inspire my upcoming creative ventures.

Preserving heritage

Sir, The last week's cover story on Odisha's rich cultural traditions ahead of Utkal Divas was both insightful and thought-provoking. It beautifully highlighted how heritage in Odisha is not confined to monuments but lives through art, storytelling, and performance. The perspectives shared by Jitu Mishra, Prasanta Kumar Das, and Tagari Gain reinforce the idea that preserving culture requires both awareness and active participation. What stands out is the emphasis on connecting younger generations with their roots. Initiatives like heritage walks and traditional art education play a crucial role in ensuring that practices such as Pattachitra and Odissi continue to thrive. At the same time, the reminder to balance creativity with authenticity is particularly relevant in today's rapidly changing cultural landscape. The article rightly underscores that preservation is a shared responsibility. Beyond institutions and experts, local communities and individuals must contribute to safeguarding these traditions. Increased use of digital platforms and public engagement can further strengthen this effort. Such features serve as an important reminder that heritage is not just to be admired but actively protected and passed on.

SOUBHAGYA SAHOO, BHUBANESWAR

LETTERS



A word for readers

Sunday post is serving a platter of delectable fare every week, or so we hope. We want readers to interact with us. Feel free to send in your opinions, queries, comments and contributions to

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WhatsApp This Week

Only on Sunday POST!

Send in your most interesting WhatsApp messages and memes at: features.orissapost@gmail.com And we will publish the best ones

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- People say money is not the key to happiness, but I always figured if you had enough money, you can have a key made.
- Can I have your picture so I can show Santa what I want for Christmas?
- I recently decided to sell my vacuum cleaner, all it was doing was gathering dust.
- The seven ages of man: spills, drills, thrills, bills, ills, pills and wills.



## NATIONAL MARITIME DAY - APRIL 5

On April 5, 1919, SS Loyalty set sail from Bombay for London. At a time when India was still under colonial rule, an Indian-owned ship navigating global waters represented a quiet but determined resistance. The vessel carried passengers and cargo, but more importantly, it carried the aspirations of a nation yearning for self-reliance

# Voyage of pride

A file photo of SS Loyalty on its way to London

OP DESK

On a cool April day in 1919, as colonial India remained tightly bound to British economic control, a quiet but powerful act of defiance set sail from Bombay (Now Mumbai)'s harbour. Cutting through the Arabian Sea was the SS Loyalty, the first Indian-owned ship to voyage to Britain. It was more than a maritime journey—it was a statement of national resolve, an assertion that Indians could command their own destiny on the high seas.

More than a century later, the story of the SS Loyalty continues to echo across India's maritime history, symbolizing courage, enterprise, and the beginning of a new era.

### A colonial sea, a bold dream

In the early 20th century, India's shipping industry was dominated by British companies. Indian merchants and entrepreneurs had little control over maritime trade, despite the country's long coastline and rich seafaring heritage.

It was in this environment that the Scindia Steam Navigation Company was formed by visionary Indian industrialists. Their goal was audacious: to challenge British monopoly and establish an Indian presence in international shipping.

The acquisition of SS Loyalty, originally a hospital ship during World War I, marked the beginning of this mission. Refitted and repurposed, the vessel was ready to embark on a journey that would change the course of Indian maritime history.

### The historic voyage of 1919

On April 5, 1919, SS Loyalty set sail from Bombay (now Mumbai)

bound for London. The voyage was not merely logistical, it was deeply symbolic. At a time when India was still under colonial rule, an Indian-owned ship navigating global waters represented a quiet but determined resistance.

The ship carried passengers and cargo, but more importantly, it carried the aspirations of a nation yearning for self-reliance. Every nautical mile covered was a step toward breaking economic dependency.

The journey was fraught with challenges—technical, financial, and political. Yet, against all odds, SS Loyalty reached its destination, proving that Indian enterprise could compete on the global stage.

bound for London. The voyage was not merely logistical, it was deeply symbolic. At a time when India was still under colonial rule, an Indian-owned ship navigating global waters represented a quiet but determined resistance.

Leaders and thinkers saw in this voyage a reflection of what India could achieve through determination and unity. The ship's journey aligned with the broader Swadeshi spirit—encouraging Indians to build and sustain their own industries.

In many ways, SS Loyalty was not just a commercial venture; it was a floating emblem of independence. It demonstrated that economic empowerment was a crucial pillar of political freedom.

### A symbol of nationalism

The success of SS Loyalty resonated far beyond

### People behind the voyage

Behind the success of SS Loyalty were individuals who dared to dream big. The founders of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company faced immense skepticism and resistance. Financial constraints, lack of infrastructure, and colonial bias posed significant hurdles.

Yet, their perseverance paid off. The crew of SS Loyalty, comprising Indian seafarers, also played a vital role. Their skill and resilience



ensured the success of the voyage, marking a proud moment for Indian maritime professionals.

This collective effort—of visionaries, sailors, and workers—turned an ambitious idea into a historic achievement.

### A turning point for Indian shipping

The voyage of SS Loyalty marked the beginning of India's modern shipping industry. It paved the way for the growth of Indian-owned shipping companies and inspired future generations to invest in maritime trade.

Over time, India developed a robust shipping network, with ports and vessels connecting it to every corner of the globe. The legacy of SS Loyalty can be seen in today's maritime infrastructure and India's growing presence in global trade.

The ship's journey also led to the establishment of April 5 as National Maritime Day, ensuring that this milestone is remembered and celebrated each year.

### Echoes in modern India

Today, as India aspires to become a global maritime hub, the story of SS Loyalty remains deeply relevant. It serves as a reminder of the power of vision and the importance of self-reliance.

Modern initiatives in port development, coastal shipping, and logistics all trace their roots back to that pioneering voyage. The challenges may have evolved, but the spirit of enterprise and determination continues to guide the sector.

For young Indians, especially those entering maritime professions, SS Loyalty stands as an enduring source of inspiration—a testament to what can be achieved against the odds.



**ODISHA'S ENDURING MARITIME PAST**

Long before modern shipping routes crisscrossed the globe, the eastern shores of India were alive with the sound of waves carrying traders, explorers, and storytellers. Among these coastal regions, Odisha stands out as a historic maritime powerhouse, whose legacy continues to ripple through culture, tradition, and identity.

This symbolic ritual commemorates the ancient sailors, locally known as "Sadhabas", who would set sail for distant lands during this season. As chants fill the air and tiny boats drift across the water, the festival becomes a poignant tribute to courage, adventure, and the spirit of exploration.

**Cultural echoes of the sea**  
Odisha's maritime heritage is deeply woven into its art, literature, and folklore. Traditional songs recount the journeys of traders and their emotional farewells, while temple carvings depict ships and oceanic motifs, reflecting the importance of the sea in everyday life. Even today, coastal communities in places like Puri and Cuttack carry forward these traditions, blending history with contemporary life. The sea is not just a geographical feature—it is a cultural force that shapes identity and memory.

**A legacy that endures**  
While modern shipping has transformed the nature of maritime trade, Odisha's connection to the sea remains unbroken. Its ports continue to contribute to India's economy, while its traditions keep the stories of ancient mariners alive. Odisha's maritime legacy is not confined to history books—it lives in festivals, in songs, and in the enduring relationship between people and the sea. It is a reminder that long before globalization became a buzzword, the shores of Kalinga were already connected to the wider world, sailing confidently into the unknown.

**Ancient mariners of Kalinga**  
Odisha, known in ancient times as Kalinga, was once a thriving hub of seafaring activity. Its strategic location along the Bay of Bengal enabled maritime trade with distant lands such as Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka, and even parts of the Roman world. Skilled sailors from Kalinga navigated the open seas using wind patterns and celestial guidance, exporting spices, textiles, ivory, and precious stones. Ports like Tamralipti played a crucial role in facilitating this exchange, making the region a gateway to international commerce. These voyages were not merely economic ventures—they also carried culture, religion, and ideas, contributing to the spread of Indian influence across Asia.

**Boita Bandana: A living tradition**  
One of the most vivid reminders of Odisha's maritime past is the festival of Boita Bandana, celebrated during Kartik Purnima. On this day, people gather near rivers and coastlines to float miniature boats made of paper, cork, or banana stems.

**Remembering a legacy**  
As waves continue to lap against India's shores, the legacy of SS Loyalty sails on in memory and meaning. It is not just a chapter in history but a continuing narrative of ambition and resilience. The ship may no longer traverse the oceans, but its story remains anchored in the nation's consciousness. Every year, when National Maritime Day is celebrated, it is this voyage that

takes centre stage—a reminder of a time when a single ship carried the hopes of millions. In retracing the journey of SS Loyalty, one rediscovers a defining moment in India's path to self-reliance. It was a voyage that proved a simple yet powerful truth: that even under the weight of colonial rule, the spirit of a nation could rise, set sail, and chart its own course across the world's oceans.

**THE MILESTONES**

**India's maritime history stretches across millennia, reflecting its evolution from an ancient trading civilization to a modern global shipping power. Here are five important milestones that capture this remarkable journey:**

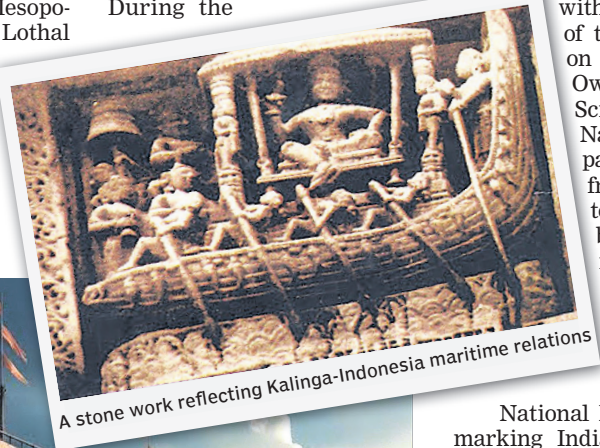
**Indus Valley maritime trade (c. 2500 BCE):** One of the earliest milestones dates back to the Indus Valley Civilization, where archaeological evidence shows active maritime trade with Mesopotamia. The port city of Lothal is believed to have one of the world's earliest dockyards. This highlights India's early expertise in shipbuilding, navigation, and overseas

commerce. **Kalinga's overseas expeditions (Ancient period):** The ancient kingdom of Kalinga (present-day Odisha) was a major maritime power. Its sailors, known as Sadhabas, traded with Southeast Asia, spreading Indian culture, religion, and art. This era is still remembered through the festival of Boita Bandana, symbolizing voyages across the Bay of Bengal.

**Chola naval dominance (10th–12th Century):** During the

reign of the Chola Dynasty, India witnessed one of its strongest naval expansions. Under rulers like Rajendra Chola I, powerful fleets were sent across Southeast Asia, including expeditions to Sri Vijaya (modern Indonesia). These missions established India as a formidable naval and cultural force in the region.

**Maiden voyage of SS Loyalty (1919):** A defining modern milestone came with the voyage of the SS Loyalty on April 5, 1919. Owned by the Scindia Steam Navigation Company, it sailed from Mumbai to London, breaking British dominance in shipping. This event is now commemorated annually as



A stone work reflecting Kalinga-Indonesia maritime relations

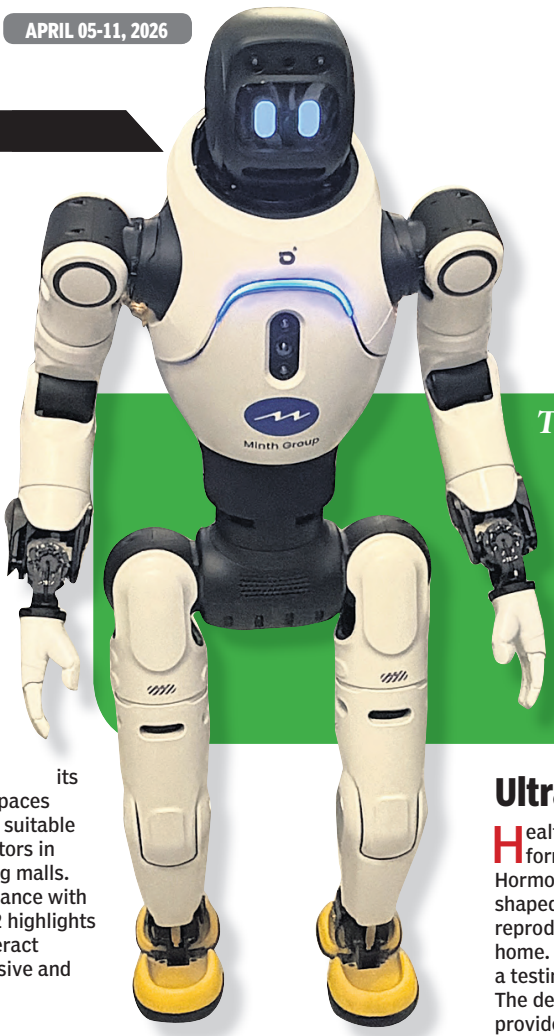


An AI-reimagined image of Chola Navy

National Maritime Day, marking India's entry into modern global shipping. **Sagarmala and Modern Maritime Growth (21st Century):** In recent years, India has focused on transforming its maritime infrastructure through initiatives like the Sagarmala Programme. This program aims to modernize ports, improve logistics, and promote coastal economic zones. It reflects India's ambition to become a leading maritime hub in global trade.

# BIZARRE BUT BRILLIANT

## Agibot X2



Robotics company Agibot introduced an impressive humanoid robot called the Agibot X2 that combines advanced engineering with cultural expression. Unlike many robots that move stiffly or awkwardly, the X2 demonstrates graceful movements by performing traditional tai chi routines and dance sequences. Its sophisticated motion-control system allows the robot to move with remarkable fluidity, closely resembling human body movements. This ability is not merely for entertainment; such technology could eventually help robots assist in physical therapy, wellness programs, or interactive public demonstrations. The robot can also map its surroundings and navigate spaces autonomously. This makes it suitable for roles such as guiding visitors in hotels, museums, or shopping malls. By blending cultural performance with cutting-edge robotics, the X2 highlights how machines may soon interact with humans in more expressive and engaging ways.

*Technology has always pushed the boundaries of imagination. From robots that mimic human movements to smart gadgets designed for very specific needs, innovation today often arrives in the most unexpected forms. At global tech showcases like the Consumer Electronics Show (CES), inventors regularly unveil devices that make people pause, laugh, and then marvel at their usefulness. Some inventions appear strange at first glance, yet they reveal how creative engineering can transform everyday experiences. Here are five of the most unusual yet fascinating innovations making waves in the tech world*

## Ultra4 Hormone Monitor

Health technology is also evolving in unusual forms. One example is the Mira Ultra4 Hormone Monitor created by Mira. This egg-shaped device allows individuals to track key reproductive hormones from the comfort of home. The process is simple: a user urinates on a testing wand and inserts it into the monitor. The device analyzes hormone levels and provides insights through an accompanying app. It measures four key hormones—FSH, LH, E3G, and PdG—which help determine fertile windows and reproductive health patterns. Beyond fertility tracking, the monitor can also help users better understand conditions such as Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD), perimenopause, and menopause. Although its shape might seem unusual, the device represents a growing trend toward personalized health monitoring at home.



## W1 Robot

Robots inspired by science fiction are slowly becoming reality. The W1 Robot from Zeroth Robotics resembles the beloved character from the animated film WALL E. Designed as a family companion, the robot combines home security and outdoor utility. Equipped with AI-powered monitoring, the W1 can patrol homes, provide 360-degree surveillance, and send alerts if smoke or unusual activity is detected. Interestingly, the robot is also marketed as an adventure companion. It can follow users during camping trips, carry equipment, take photos, and even supply portable power for small electronics. While the concept may seem quirky, it demonstrates how robotics is expanding beyond industrial tasks into everyday life.



## Smart Nugget Ice Maker Pro

Even kitchen appliances are becoming smarter. Smart home brand GoveeLife introduced the Smart Nugget Ice Maker Pro, a countertop device designed to produce ice quickly while minimizing noise. The appliance uses AI-driven technology called NoiseGuard to monitor internal conditions and prevent loud mechanical sounds. If the system detects a situation that could cause noise, it automatically initiates a defrost cycle to keep operations quiet. The machine can produce fresh ice in as little as six minutes and generate up to 60 pounds of ice per day. While an AI-powered ice maker might sound excessive, it reflects the growing integration of artificial intelligence into everyday household gadgets.

*From dancing robots and hormone-tracking gadgets to stair-climbing vacuums, these inventions prove that technological progress often arrives in surprising forms. What initially appears strange may eventually become part of everyday life.*

*As innovators continue experimenting with artificial intelligence, robotics, and smart devices, the line between unusual ideas and practical solutions will only grow thinner. After all, today's weird invention might become tomorrow's essential technology.*

## Roborock Saros Rover

Robot vacuum cleaners are already common in many homes, but one innovation is pushing their capabilities further. Chinese company Roborock has introduced the Roborock Saros Rover, a robotic vacuum designed to climb stairs. Traditional robot vacuums struggle with multi-level homes, but this device uses special wheeled legs and advanced spatial sensing to navigate steps. With its 3D awareness technology, the vacuum can clean each stair while moving upward or downward. If successfully commercialised, the concept could redefine home cleaning automation by eliminating one of the biggest limitations of current robotic vacuums.



# Alia sparks fresh buzz

Alia Bhatt recently sparked fresh speculation about her international fashion calendar after hinting at a "busy May" during a Zoom interaction with fans. When asked whether she would attend the Cannes Film Festival or the Met Gala this year, the actor responded playfully, saying, "Let's just say it's going to be a busy May," instantly drawing attention to her possible return to major global red carpets in 2026.

The remark also brought her past appearances into focus. Bhatt made her debut at the Met Gala in 2023 wearing a gown by Prabal Gurung, marking her entry onto one of fashion's most prestigious international stages. She returned in 2024 in a striking custom creation by Sabyasachi, which gained widespread attention for blending Indian aesthetics with global couture.

For the 2024 theme "Sleeping Beauties," Bhatt wore a mint-green saree adorned with intricate floral embroidery, semi-precious gemstones, and a dramatic 23-foot train. Styled with soft makeup, coral blush, a loose updo, and statement emerald and diamond jewellery, the look became one of the evening's most talked-about ensembles.

Her absence from the 2025 event made the recent comment even more intriguing, fuelling speculation about a possible return.

Beyond fashion, Bhatt continues to remain busy with film projects such as Alpha and Love & War while expanding her presence as a producer and entrepreneur.

AGENCIES



# Malavika's Mumbai moment

Actress Malavika Mohanan, who is now working on director Thiagarajan Kumararaja's upcoming film *Pocket Novel*, has now disclosed what recently made her fall in love with Mumbai a little more.

The actress has confessed that a sunset boat ride in Mumbai has made her fall in love with the city a little more now.

Taking to her Instagram page to update her followers on how the month of March had been for her, the actress wrote, "March was a mixed bag for me. The biggest highlight?"

Filming for *Pocket Novel* and being directed by Thiagarajan Kumararaja."

She then went on to explain how she spent quite a while in Chennai as she had to shoot for the film.

"I spent most of the month in Chennai for the shoot. And while the work itself was incredible, being away from home for so long hit me harder than I expected," she explained.

"Got back to Mumbai a few days ago, after being away for most of the month, and went for a lovely sunset boat ride a couple of days back. That evening, along with having missed home terribly, made me fall in love with Mumbai a little more," she wrote.

IANS



# Isha recalls spooky experience

On the 22nd anniversary of *Krishna Cottage*, actor Isha Koppikar reflected on her experience of working on the film, recalling several unusual incidents that occurred during its production. Speaking about the shoot, she said the atmosphere on set often felt eerie and occasionally went beyond the scripted horror of the film.

Koppikar remembered one particular incident while preparing for a scene meant to scare her co-actors. She was getting ready in her vanity van when she was called to the set. However, when she arrived, her co-actors already appeared frightened and assumed she had been trying to scare them. According to her, she had not stepped out of the van yet, leaving everyone confused about what had actually unsettled them.

She added that such experiences were not isolated and occurred multiple times during the filming process. Over time, the cast and crew stopped trying to find explanations and simply continued with their work.

The actor also spoke about feeling an unusual sense of being watched while filming, especially after the camera stopped rolling. Despite the unsettling moments, she looks back on the project fondly, saying the film offered a unique and memorable experience beyond just performance.

AGENCIES



# Akki's funny take on sports

Known for his discipline and love for sports, host Akshay Kumar found himself in the company of professional football defender Dalima on the recent episode of the quiz reality show *Wheel of Fortune*.

Akshay used the platform to humorously highlight how men can sometimes react dramatically on the football field, further delivering a hilarious critique of the acting skills often seen in men's football.

While interacting with Dalima about her career as a professional defender, Akshay shared that he closely follows both men's and women's football. However, he couldn't resist pointing out a stark difference in how players handle injuries.

He remarked that the players in the men's team sometimes are overly dramatic even with minor scratches. "Itni acting karte hain! Thodi si scratch lagti hai aur aise girte hain jaise pata nahi kya ho gaya. Lagi nahi hoti hai unko, lekin aisi lagne ki acting karte hain, My God!"

Turning his attention to Dalima's husband, who was present to support her, Akshay offered some unconventional marital advice. Drawing a parallel between Dalima's role on the field and her husband's role at home, he added, "Dalima toh professional defender hai, lekin aapko shaadi mein isse bhi bada defender banna hai!"

The comment left the couple and the audience in splits.

IANS



DV Ramana

# BONDING THROUGH BALLOTS

**ALUMNI CAN PLAY VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN VARIOUS TYPES OF CAREER ADVISORY SERVICES. THEY CAN OFFER SUMMER INTERNSHIPS, MENTOR BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS, PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO DO RESEARCH, AND ALSO PROVIDE PLACEMENT SUPPORT. THEY CAN DESIGN AND DELIVER PROGRAMMES THAT COMBINE ACADEMIC RIGOUR WITH PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE**

I recently witnessed an inspiring democratic exercise in the election of office bearers of the alumni association of one of the well-known colleges in Odisha. The participation, fairness, and collective spirit underscored that the true strength of democracy often lies in the committed actions of a group of people coming together with purpose and trust. For many present, including myself, it felt no less significant than participating in a general election.

## A new beginning

This may not be an election of MPs or MLAs, but it was significant because it took place after more than a decade. For a long time, like many alumni bodies across the country, the alumni association of the college had remained informally managed. Elections and other democratic practices were conspicuous by their absence. The current formal electoral process revived institutional engagement, accountability, and collective ownership among the alumni.

Inclusiveness of the process was palpable right from the commencement of initial conversations. Alumni, old and new, came forward to share their views and paved the way forward. Each one brought not only their personal achievements but also a vision for the college that had shaped their life. Conversations were followed by campaigns for the contesting candidates.

The candidates used banners, posters, emails, and phone messages to be in touch with the voters. Interestingly none of the candidates used political slogans. Invariably, they stressed on the importance of strengthening alumni networks, helping current students, and improving the brand equity of the college. Such close interaction between the candidates and the alumni of different batches from different professions has demonstrated that the alumni associations are a tapestry of memories of the college days and mutual respect.

## The voting day

The election day was a scene of camaraderie and enthusiasm. The college management did its best to conduct the event orderly and peacefully. The members of the associ-



ation too did their bit by maintaining discipline. The excitement was there all over the place. Candidates and their supporters were present to extend all types of support to the voters.

It was a celebration of democracy. People from all walks of life walked in to participate in the democratic process. The voters were the who's who of the city: serving ministers, opposition leaders, senior government officers, academicians, entrepreneurs, artist, sports persons, and social workers. Independent of their positions and professions they all strictly followed the guidelines provided by the college management. It was not any material incentives nor do any political ambitions that attracted them back to college

campus. Deep-seated commitment and hope to strengthen their alma mater was visible and audible in the lively conversations in the makeshift waiting places under the open sky.

## The power of alumni

All stakeholders need to reflect on the role and relevance of the alumni: jointly and individually. The association and the college both need to acknowledge that each and every member is an asset for the college and the students. Some of the top universities and colleges have extensively benefited from alumni contributions, financially and otherwise.

Alumni can play very important role in various types of career advisory services. They can offer summer internships, mentor both students and teachers, provide opportunities to do research, and also provide placement support. They can design and deliver programs that combine academic rigor with practical knowledge.

One of the tangible contributions of the alumni can be in the form of establishing a college level corpus fund. Several community relevant programs of well known global universities are

being funded by the alumni. Harvard University has the largest corpus, built through contributions from its alumni. In India, IITs, IIMs, and Xaviers have successfully tapped funds from their illustrious alumni. The management school of IIT-Kharagpur, students hostels of Saint Xavier, Kolkata, and several angel funds at IIT-Delhi and IIT-Mumbai are some of the examples of alumni's contribution. The creation of a dedicated corpus fund ensures sustainability and enables long-term planning.

Close association with the alumni helps in creating and strengthening the brand equity of the college too. Their achievements contribute directly to the public perception of the college, which may help in attracting talented faculty members and good students, resulting in better NIRF ranking.

## The road ahead

Well begun is half done. It is now time for the new office bearers of the association to take steps to meet the expectations of the voters. To start with, they need to reach out to the alumni who are spread all over the globe. Create a comprehensive database and make extensive use of digital technology to work toward the promised vision. The vision is to build a strong alumni community, connect with the current students for meaningful engagement, and work proactively with the management.

Any association is as good as its governance. The new team should create transparent and inclusive processes that will build trust and legitimacy. It is hoped that the team will adhere to the words of Mahatma Gandhi, who said, "Democracy is the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic, and spiritual resources of all sections of the people in the service of the common good."

I would like to conclude with a well-known quote by Khalil Gibran: "Yesterday is but today's memory, and tomorrow is today's dream." Let the alumni dream big and boldly, working to make their college one of the top institutions in the country.

*The writer is a professor at XIMB. Views are personal*



# NORMANDY'S HIDDEN BATTLEFIELD



Normandy beach in France in 1944

Scientists have discovered that nearly four per cent of the sand on shores of Normandy in France is made up of microscopic shrapnel: remnants of one of the most decisive military operations in history, the D-Day Landings

On a quiet morning along the windswept coastline of Normandy, located in northwest France, the beaches appear serene: soft stretches of sand kissed by gentle waves, dotted with tourists and memorials. But beneath this calm surface lies a hidden story of violence, sacrifice, and history etched into every grain. Scientists have discovered that nearly four percent of the sand on these shores is made up of microscopic shrapnel: remnants of one of the most decisive military operations in history, the D-Day Landings.

### Day that changed the war

On June 6, 1944, Allied forces launched a massive invasion of Nazi-occupied France. Known as D-Day, the operation marked a turning point in World War II. More than 150,000 troops stormed the beaches of Normandy, supported by an overwhelming barrage of naval and aerial bombardment.

In the days leading up to the landings, Allied forces dropped over 5,000 tons of bombs on German defenses along the coast. The objective was clear: weaken fortifications, disrupt communications, and pave the way for troops to advance inland. The bombardment reshaped not only the battlefield—but the very landscape itself.

### A landscape forged in fire

Explosions tore through bunkers,



The beach in present times

Nearly 160,000 Allied soldiers landed along a 50-mile stretch of north-western France on the morning of June 6, 1944, a day known as D-Day. There, German forces, positioned in fortified bunkers along steep bluffs and hidden ravines, rained down relentless gunfire on the advancing troops, turning the shoreline into one of the most brutal battlegrounds of the invasion

cliffs, and artillery positions, sending fragments of metal flying in every direction. These shards—once parts of bombs, shells, and military equipment—rained down across the beaches.

Over time, nature began its slow work. Waves rolled in, tides shifted, and winds swept across the coast. The jagged pieces of shrapnel were gradually broken down, smoothed, and buried. Decades later, what remains are microscopic particles embedded within the sand. To the naked eye, the beaches look unchanged. But under a microscope, they reveal a startling truth: the sands of Normandy are, in part, composed of war itself.

### Science meets memory

Researchers studying the beaches have used advanced techniques to analyze sand composition. Their findings are both fascinating and haunting. Tiny metallic fragments—oxidized, rounded, and worn by time—tell a story that history books alone cannot capture.

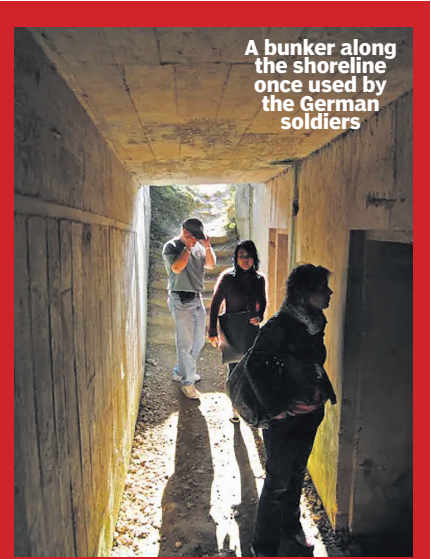
These particles serve as physical evidence of the immense scale of the bombardment. Each grain carries a fragment of the past, a silent witness to the chaos and destruction of that day.

What makes this discovery particularly powerful is its permanence. Unlike monuments or museums, which are constructed to remember, the sand itself has become a natural archive of history.

### The beaches that remember

Today, beaches like Omaha, Utah, Juno, Gold, and Sword are places of reflection. Visitors walk along the shoreline, often unaware that beneath their feet lie remnants of battle. Yet, in a profound way, the land remembers. The presence of shrapnel in the sand blurs the line between past and present, reminding us that history is not confined to textbooks—it is embedded in the world around us.

The beaches are no longer sites of conflict, but they are far from ordinary. They are living memorials, where every wave and grain of sand carries echoes of courage and loss.



A bunker along the shoreline once used by the German soldiers



A cemetery near the beach contains the graves of over 9000 American soldiers

### Nature's quiet transformation

There is something deeply symbolic in how nature has transformed instruments of war into part of the landscape. What was once destructive has been softened, reshaped, and absorbed into the environment.

This transformation does not erase the past—it preserves it in a different form. The shrapnel, now indistinguishable from ordinary sand, becomes a metaphor for healing and continuity.

At the same time, it raises questions about how we remember history. Do we need visible reminders, or is it enough that the past lingers quietly beneath the surface?

### A tale beneath our feet

The discovery that a portion of Normandy's beaches is made of wartime debris adds a new dimension to our understanding of D-Day. It reminds us that history is not just something we read or commemorate—it is something we inhabit.

As visitors stand on these shores, watching the tide come in, they are connected to a moment that shaped the modern world. The sand beneath them is not just sand; it is a mosaic of memory, sacrifice, and resilience.

In the end, Normandy's beaches tell a story that words alone cannot fully express. It is a story written in grains of sand, forged in the fires of war, and carried forward by the rhythms of the sea—a quiet, enduring testament to one of history's most pivotal days.

OP DESK