

April 15th news:

International:

US, France, UK retaliate after Syria chemical attack, launch strikes

US, British and French forces pounded Syria with air strikes early on 14th April in response to a poison gas attack that killed dozens of people last week, in the biggest intervention by Western powers against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. US President Donald Trump announced the military action from the White House. As he spoke, explosions rocked Damascus.

British Prime Minister Theresa May and French President Emmanuel Macron said their forces had joined in the attack. With more than 100 missiles fired from ships and manned aircraft, the allies struck three of Syria's main chemical weapons facilities, US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Joseph Dunford said.

The Syrian conflict pits a complex myriad of parties against each other with Russia and Iran giving Assad military and political help while fractured opposition forces have had varying levels of support at different times from the West, Arab states and Turkey.

The strikes risked raising tension in an already combustible region but appeared designed not to trigger a military response from Russia and Iran.

They seemed unlikely to have much impact on the balance of power in Syria's seven-year-old civil war, in which Assad's government has steadily gained the upper hand against armed opponents since Russia intervened in 2015.

Trump had tough words for Assad and his suspected role in last week's chemical weapons attack. "These are not the actions of a man. They are crimes of a monster," he said.

National:

PM launches first health center of Ayushman Bharat Yojana from red zone

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 14th April inaugurated the first Health and Wellness Centre in Chhattisgarh's restive Bijapur district to mark the launch of first phase of national Ayushman Bharat Yojana.

Under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, the government aims to set up 150000 wellness centres by 2022 that will leverage on comprehensive primary health care for preventive, promotive and curative care.

The centre has been set up in Naxal-infested Jangla village, which is one among the 115 aspiration villages identified by NITI Aayog that lacks specific development parameters.

In the second phase of the scheme, a health insurance cover of Rs 500,000 would be provided to 500 million people across the country. Modi said the insurance cover would provide strength to the poor and deprived classes in the society.

Modi also inaugurated the Van Dhan Yojana, which aims at empowering tribal communities, besides dedicating the Bhanupratappur-Gudum railway line to the nation by flagging off a train between Dalli Rajhara and Bhanupratappur.

The rail line, a major part coming under the Naxal-infested region, would also be used to evacuate rich minerals from Rowghat and Kanker areas.

Dharmendra Pradhan launches LPG scheme for BPL in Telangana

Union petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched LPG connections scheme for below poverty line families on 14th April. Pradhan also said by the next year-end, over 2 million new gas connections will be provided in the state. He also announced that beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Housing for the rural poor) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (food scheme) will also be covered under the PMUY.

Sports:

India wins 17 medals including 8 Gold on penultimate day

At the Commonwealth Games, India bagged two more gold medals on 14th April.

Boxer Vikas Krishan won gold in 75 kg category and Manika Batra created history by becoming the first Indian woman table tennis player to win a singles gold at the Commonwealth Games.

Sharath Kamal and G Sathiyam settled for Silver in men's doubles. In all, India won eight gold, three silver and one bronze on the penultimate day of the games on 14th April

In Boxing events M C Mary Kom began the day by winning a gold medal defeating Northern Ireland's Kristina O'Hara in the 48-kg final. Mary Kom also became first Indian woman boxer to win a Commonwealth Gold.

Gaurav Solanki joined the top-fininishers' group in the first set of finals, when he picked up the Gold in 52 kg. Amit Panghal (49kg) and Manish Kaushik (60kg) settled for Silver medals after losing closely-contested bouts.

In shooting, Sanjeev Rajput won the gold medal in the men's 50 metre rifle 3 positions event with a games record at the Belmont Shooting Centre.

In Athletics, Neeraj Chopra on 14th April became the first Indian javelin thrower to claim a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games, pulling off a season's best effort of 86.47 metres in the final.

The day's other gold came through Somveer when he won the men's Freestyle wrestling event in 86 kg division. Vinesh Phogat added Gold in Wrestling by winning the women's 50 kg freestyle event. With a haul of 25 Gold, 14 Silver and 15 Bronze, India have maintained their third spot in the medal standings.