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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 04-03-2026

NATIONAL NEWS

Maharashtra Launches Divyang Sahayak Portal

The Government of Maharashtra launched the Divyang Sahayak Portal in, described as India's first fully integrated online platform for disability welfare schemes.

The portal eliminates paperwork and physical visits, enabling online applications, real-time tracking, automatic approvals, and artificial intelligence-based grievance redressal.

It aims to strengthen implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and ensure faster and transparent delivery of benefits.

The Divyang Sahayak Portal functions as a one-stop digital platform allowing persons with disabilities to search, apply and track schemes without remembering scheme names.

The system uses demographic data to automatically suggest eligible schemes, reducing exclusion errors.

The entire process from application to approval is conducted online, with built-in timelines and service level agreements to prevent delays.

An auto-forward mechanism ensures escalation if officials fail to act within the stipulated time.

The portal includes a real-time application tracking system, integrated grievance redressal mechanism, and dedicated departmental dashboard to enhance transparency and accountability.

The platform uses Application Programming Interfaces to connect with government databases and is integrated with the Unique Disability Identity system.

It is linked with Aadhaar through Meri Pehchan and Direct Benefit Transfer platform, with integration of Permanent Account Number, Goods and Services Tax, bank details, and electronic signature systems

The portal is structured into 11 modules, of which four modules are ready for launch

Varanasi Sets Guinness World Records by Planting 2,51,446 Saplings in One Hour

Varanasi has created a new Guinness World Records milestone by planting 2,51,446 saplings within one hour at the Sujabad Domari area, surpassing China's 2018 record of 1,53,981 saplings.

The plantation drive was conducted over nearly 350 bighas of land, developed as an urban forest.

The record was verified through drone surveillance and digital counting system.

Guinness adjudicator Rishinath officially confirmed the record.

The certificate was presented to Mayor Ashok Kumar Tiwari and Municipal Commissioner Himanshu Nagpal.

The event was coordinated by the Varanasi Municipal Corporation along with multiple government departments and social organisations.

The plantation site at Sujabad Domari has been transformed into an urban forest using the Miyawaki technique, a Japanese afforestation method that promotes dense and fast-growing forests.

A total of 27 native species were planted, including sheesham, Arjun, teak, bamboo, mango, guava, papaya, ashwagandha, shatavari, and giloy.

The forest area has been divided into 60 sectors, each named after prominent ghats of Kashi such as Dashashwamedh, Manikarnika, Kedar, and Lalita.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi Visits Israel

The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, visited Israel at the invitation of Benjamin Netanyahu, accompanied by a high-level ministerial and official delegation (26–27 February 2026).

PM Narendra Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to address the Israeli Parliament (Knesset), highlighting strong India–Israel diplomatic relations.

After the address, he was conferred the ‘Medal of the Knesset’ by Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana, becoming the first Indian PM to receive this honour.

PM Modi dedicated the honour to the long-standing friendship between India and Israel, emphasizing a strategic diplomatic partnership.

During the visit, India and Israel announced the establishment of a Special Strategic Partnership for Peace, Innovation, and Prosperity.

The partnership focuses on strengthening cooperation in defence, security, cybersecurity, trade, and technology

The visit further strengthened India–Israel strategic, technological, and economic collaboration across multiple sectors

BANKING

Sri Lanka’s First Blue Bond Secures Dual Listing on NSE International Exchange

Sri Lanka’s first-ever Blue Bond, an LKR 3 billion issuance by DFCC Bank Plc, has been dually listed on the NSE International Exchange (NSE IX) at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City).

This marks the first Blue Bond admitted for trading within India’s International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)

The bond is primarily listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE), and its dual listing enhances international investor access and visibility.

The dual listing was facilitated under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between NSE IX and CSE at GIFT City to promote cross-border capital market collaboration.

Objective is to enable dual listings, strengthen cross-border financial integration, and promote innovative sustainable finance instruments.

Blue Bonds are a subset of Green Bonds, specifically designed to finance marine conservation, sustainable fisheries, ocean-based economic development, clean drinking water supply, and aquatic pollution control projects.

The issuance aims to support the sustainable use of marine resources while offering attractive returns to investors.

The listing strengthens GIFT City’s position as a global hub for sustainable finance and offshore capital market activities.

The bond allows participation through GIFT City’s offshore regulatory framework, helping diversify the investor base.

Earlier, in June 2025, NSE IX hosted DFCC Bank’s leadership for the listing of its LKR 2.5 billion foreign-currency Green Bonds, Sri Lanka’s first renewable energy-focused capital market debt instrument admitted for trading on the exchange.

West Bengal Approves ₹4,648 Crore Asian Development Bank Funded Projects

The Mamata Banerjee-led West Bengal Government Cabinet approved two major development projects worth ₹4,648 crore in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The projects aim to strengthen secondary education infrastructure and improve child nutrition and early childhood development services in West Bengal.

The funding pattern follows a 70:30 model, where ADB will finance 70% of the cost and the West Bengal Government will provide 30%.

The initiative will introduce smart classrooms using digital screens, interactive teaching tools, and

technology-enabled learning systems to replace traditional blackboard-based teaching.

Smart classrooms will be implemented in districts including South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Hooghly, Howrah, Paschim Bardhaman, Paschim Medinipur, Purba Medinipur, Purulia, Bankura, Jhargram, and Birbhum.

Around 430 state-aided schools will be modernised, including one school per block and two schools from each of the 87 backward blocks of the state.

Infrastructure upgrades will include modern laboratories, digital libraries, sanitation improvements, modern toilets, ramp accessibility for specially-abled students, and upgraded mid-day meal kitchens.

The government will introduce bilingual education, promoting English-medium instruction along with Bengali language teaching.

The project will also promote skill development and vocational training programmes to improve student employability and career readiness.

Nearly 50,000 ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) centres will be upgraded under a ₹2,148 crore ADB-supported project.

Sarvam Ties Up with SBI Life

Indian AI startup Sarvam has entered into a strategic partnership with SBI Life Insurance Company Limited, a subsidiary of the State Bank of India (SBI).

The partnership focuses on the large-scale deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools across SBI Life's nationwide insurance distribution network.

Aim: To enhance customer engagement, improve sales support functions, and move beyond limited AI pilot projects to enterprise-wide implementation.

Sarvam's AI tools will operate on two key platforms:

Samvaad – a conversational AI platform for managing customer-facing interactions.

Arya – a multi-agent orchestration layer that coordinates multiple AI systems to execute tasks and workflows using enterprise data.

Samvaad will handle customer conversations, queries, and communication processes.

Arya will function in the backend, integrating various AI agents to manage automated workflows and data-driven operations.

The AI deployment is expected to benefit over 8 crore customers and support more than 3.5 lakh insurance distributors across India.

IIFL Home Finance Secures USD 300 Million Asian Development Bank Loan

IIFL Home Finance Limited secured a USD 300 million loan agreement from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to expand affordable housing finance access in India.

The financing package represents IIFL Home Finance's first syndicated External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) aimed at addressing India's housing deficit crisis and supporting low-income borrowers, especially women borrowers.

The total loan amount consists of USD 150 million directly from ADB and USD 150 million through parallel loans from global banks including: Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG), Japan, Emirates NBD Bank, UAE, Sampath Bank PLC and Hatton National Bank PLC

The funds will be used to provide mortgage loans to women in low-income communities, particularly in urban, peri-urban, and economically backward states of India.

India faces an estimated housing shortage of 31 million units by 2030, which mainly affects low-income households lacking formal income documentation for traditional housing loans.

At least 25% of the loan proceeds will be used to finance green-certified affordable housing projects, promoting sustainable construction practices.

The loan agreement supports financial inclusion, sustainable housing development, and women empowerment in housing finance access.

The Asian Development Bank acted as the Mandated Lead Arranger and Bookrunner for this financing package.

The initiative strengthens India's efforts to promote affordable housing development and climate-friendly construction financing in the housing sector.

Gnani.ai Partners with Razorpay

Indian AI firm Gnani.ai partnered with fintech company Razorpay to launch an Agentic Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered collections platform.

The new platform enables real-time completion of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) payments during live customer calls, improving digital payment efficiency.

The system integrates ai's agentic AI technology directly with Razorpay's Model Context Protocol (MCP) server, an AI-native layer linked to Razorpay's payment infrastructure.

The platform can assess customer payment intent, generate a payment link or UPI collect request, and track and confirm payment status within the same call.

It supports both one-time UPI payments and mandate-based recurring UPI payments, enhancing automated collection mechanisms.

Future upgrades will include support for card payments and digital wallets, expanding multi-channel payment options.

The system supports multiple Indian languages, promoting regional inclusivity in digital financial services.

The platform ensures secure, compliant, and AI-driven transaction processing, aligning with India's digital payment ecosystem

Central Bank of India Partners with Canara Robeco Asset Management Company

Central Bank of India (CBI) signed a Distribution Agreement with Canara Robeco Asset Management Company Limited (CRAMC) to offer a wide range of Mutual Fund (MF) products to its customers.

The partnership aims to enhance wealth creation opportunities for retail and institutional investors across the bank's branch banking and digital platforms.

Through this agreement, CBI will distribute MF schemes managed by Canara Robeco AMC, allowing customers to invest in diversified equity, debt, and hybrid mutual fund products.

The agreement ensures regulatory compliance and transparency as per Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements Regulations, 2015.

The collaboration strengthens financial inclusion, retail investment penetration, and digital wealth management services through the banking network.

AWARDS & PRIZES

2025 Airport Service Quality Award for Best Airport

Mangaluru International Airport won the 2025 Airport Service Quality Award for Best Airport at Arrivals – Globally, presented by Airports Council International World.

This marks the second consecutive year (2024 and 2025) that the airport has secured this global recognition.

Only six airports worldwide were selected in this category in 2025.

The award is based entirely on real-time passenger feedback under the Airport Service Quality framework, making it one of the most credible benchmarks in the aviation industry.

The arrivals category evaluates immigration services, baggage delivery, cleanliness, ambience, signage, and overall passenger comfort.

In 2025, 100 airports globally were recognised across various categories under the Airport Service Quality programme.

Mangaluru International Airport is managed by Adani Airport Holdings Limited, India's largest private airport operator.

Operational improvements through digital initiatives, process optimisation, passenger-centric infrastructure, and coordination with government agencies contributed to smoother arrivals experience.

The Airport Service Quality Awards are organised annually by Airports Council International World, representing airports globally.

The awards will be formally presented at the Airport Experience Summit 2026 in Istanbul, Türkiye, scheduled from 31 August to 4 September 2026, with the ceremony on 2 September 2026.

A total of 195 awards will be presented worldwide in 2026, recognising excellence in airport operations and passenger service quality.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Hearing Day

World Hearing Day 2026 will be observed globally on 3 March 2026 to raise awareness about prevention of deafness and hearing impairment and to promote ear and hearing care worldwide.

The day is observed across countries to encourage early detection, timely intervention, and accessible hearing healthcare services.

In the late 1816, Laurent Clerc helped establish one of the earliest recorded permanent institutions for deaf students in the United States, marking a significant milestone in deaf education.

In 1870, at the Second International Congress on Deaf Education in Milan, Italy, educators adopted oral teaching methods and discontinued the use of sign language in formal instruction.

The World Health Organization initiated the observance in 2007 as International Ear Care Day to raise awareness about preventing deafness.

In 2016, the observance was officially renamed as World Hearing Day to expand its focus on comprehensive hearing care and prevention strategies.

World Wildlife Day

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