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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 13-03-2026

NATIONAL NEWS

Indian Railways Launches SHINE App

Indian Railways launched the SHINE App on International Women's Day (8 March 2026) to strengthen workplace safety for women employees.

SHINE stands for Sexual Harassment Incident Notification for Empowerment.

The app enables women employees to report incidents of sexual harassment confidentially through the Human Resources Management System (HRMS) used by railway staff.

Through the Employee Self Service portal, women employees can register complaints directly, which are automatically forwarded to designated committees responsible for handling such cases.

The initiative aims to simplify and speed up the complaint reporting process while ensuring complaints reach the appropriate authorities without delay.

A unique feature of the SHINE app is that it also supports complaints on behalf of individuals who are not permanent railway employees.

These include visitors, contractual workers, students and other individuals interacting with railway workplaces.

This broader coverage ensures that workplace safety measures extend beyond regular employees and provide protection to all individuals associated with the railway system.

The system has been designed to ensure confidentiality and faster handling of complaints by the designated authorities.

Once a complaint is submitted, it is received directly by the committee responsible for addressing workplace harassment cases, enabling faster action and better monitoring.

The initiative aligns with the Vishaka vs State of Rajasthan (1997) judgement of the Supreme Court of India, which introduced the Vishaka Guidelines to prevent sexual harassment at workplaces.

These guidelines require organisations to establish Internal Complaints Committees, maintain confidentiality and create mechanisms to investigate workplace harassment complaints.

NCB Dismantles Pan-India Drug Trafficking Network "Team

Kalki”

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) dismantled a major pan-India drug trafficking network named “Team Kalki” that operated through darknet marketplaces and encrypted messaging platforms.

The network had allegedly been active since January 2025 and distributed narcotic drugs across India using courier and parcel delivery services.

Acting on intelligence gathered over the past three months, the NCB conducted a targeted operation in New Delhi, which led to the dismantling of the network.

Investigators monitored suspicious online activities, traced shipments linked to the group and carried out a coordinated crackdown to expose the network.

During the operation, authorities seized 13 domestic parcels suspected to contain narcotic substances.

Additionally, two international parcels originating from the Netherlands were intercepted and linked to the same trafficking network.

Officials also seized multiple electronic devices and traced a cryptocurrency wallet associated with the racket.

The network used darknet marketplaces to sell narcotics online while maintaining anonymity.

Communication between traffickers and buyers was carried out through the encrypted messaging application Session, which enables secure and anonymous communication.

Preliminary investigation suggests that the network dispatched more than 1,000 drug consignments since January 2025 through courier and parcel services.

The operation highlighted the growing use of digital tools, encrypted apps and anonymous online platforms by drug traffickers to evade traditional law enforcement surveillance.

Mizoram Legislative Assembly Passes Resolution to Include Mizo Language in Eighth Schedule of the Constitution

The Mizoram Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a resolution seeking the inclusion of the Mizo language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

The resolution was introduced by Vanlalthlana, Education Minister of Mizoram, and received support from all members of the Assembly.

The initiative aims to secure official national recognition for the Mizo language and promote its linguistic development.

During the Assembly discussion, Lalduhoma, Chief Minister of Mizoram, appreciated the efforts of the Mizo Language Development Board (MLDB) for initiating the proposal.

The board conducted consultations with various stakeholders before the resolution was introduced in the Assembly.

The unanimous adoption of the resolution reflects strong political consensus in Mizoram to preserve and promote the Mizo language and cultural identity.

Some members raised concerns that including the Mizo language in the Eighth Schedule might affect the Scheduled Tribe status of the Mizo community.

The Chief Minister clarified that these concerns are unfounded, as the Mizo community is recognised as a Scheduled Tribe under the Scheduled Tribe Order of 1950, and this legal status will remain unchanged.

During the discussion, the Chief Minister also suggested exploring the possibility of declaring the entire state of Mizoram as a Scheduled Area under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

He noted that a similar arrangement exists in Meghalaya, where Sixth Schedule provisions apply across the state.

At present, the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India recognises 22 official languages.

If the Mizo language is included in the Eighth Schedule, it would receive greater government support for development, academic research, translation work and use in official examinations and administrative communication.

INTERNAIONAL NEWS

India and Uzbekistan Launch Pharma-Nutraceutical Corridor

India and Uzbekistan jointly launched a structured pharmaceutical and nutraceutical corridor to expand access to the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) and the wider Eurasian healthcare market, valued at USD 7–10 billion.

The trade corridor was formalised through a partnership between the Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan, Nutrify Today (Bengaluru-based nutraceutical platform), and Pharma Eurasia (Tashkent-based trade and exhibition platform).

The Indo–CIS Pharma-Nutraceutical Corridor serves as a policy-backed platform to promote regulatory alignment, trade facilitation, investment, and commercial engagement between India and the CIS/Eurasian region.

The commercial launch of the corridor will take place at Pharma Eurasia 2026, scheduled for 20–22 May 2026 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

The operational focus of the corridor includes regulatory harmonisation, supply chain digitisation, investment facilitation, joint ventures, R&D collaboration, and trade matchmaking to enable seamless market entry and commercialisation.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

AquaAirX Launches India's First Amphibious Surveillance Drone 'AVATAAR'

AquaAirX Autonomous Systems, a Bengaluru-based deep-tech startup, introduced 'AVATAAR (Amphibious Vehicle for Autonomous Tactical Aerial & Aquatic Reconnaissance)', India's first amphibious drone capable of operating in both air and underwater.

The AVATAAR drone is designed to support Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions in maritime and coastal environments.

Dual-Domain Operation: The drone can fly like a conventional aerial drone, land on water, and then dive underwater to continue its mission, enabling real-time maritime monitoring.

The drone can transition between air and underwater environments within seconds, allowing seamless multi-domain operations without external assistance.

Key Sensors and Systems include Imaging Sonar, Doppler Velocity Logger (DVL), Acoustic Communication Modem, LED lights, Cameras, and Ultra-Short Baseline (USBL) Navigation System for underwater navigation and real-time data collection.

The system also features Artificial Intelligence (AI)-assisted navigation and mission control software for automated surveillance and inspection missions.

The drone has achieved Technology Readiness Level 6 (TRL-6), meaning a functional prototype has been successfully tested in operational environments.

The drone's structure is made from corrosion-resistant carbon fiber and coated with specialized protective materials to protect sensors and electronics from harsh maritime conditions and saltwater corrosion.

It uses an acoustic communication modem to maintain reliable underwater communication links.

The USBL navigation system enables precise underwater positioning and can create 3D maps of underwater structures, helping in inspection of submerged infrastructure.

Applications include coastal surveillance, monitoring maritime activity, underwater infrastructure inspection, and search-and-rescue operations.

BANKING

IRDAI Approves Allianz Jio Reinsurance and Kiwi General Insurance

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) granted Certificates of Registration (CoR) to Allianz Jio Reinsurance Limited (AJRL) and Kiwi General Insurance Limited to commence insurance operations in India.

The approvals were granted during the 134th Board Meeting of IRDAI, held in Hyderabad, Telangana.

Allianz Jio Reinsurance Limited (AJRL) is a 50:50 Joint Venture (JV) between Allianz Group (Munich, Germany) and Jio Financial Services Limited.

AJRL will operate as a domestic reinsurer, providing risk coverage to insurance companies in India.

Apart from the state-owned General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re), Valueattics Re is the only other domestic reinsurer in India.

Kiwi General Insurance Limited is backed by WestBridge Capital, an American private equity firm, along with Neelesh Garg, former CEO of Tata AIG General Insurance Company Limited.

Kiwi General Insurance will provide general insurance services in India under the IRDAI regulatory framework.

With this approval, the total number of general insurers in India has increased to 35, including 7 Standalone Health Insurers (SAHIs).

It is the first instance where a majority stakeholder in a health insurance company (WestBridge Capital) has been permitted to establish a general insurance company in India.

During the meeting, IRDAI also discussed the regulatory framework following the enactment of the Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Act, 2025 (SBSR Act).

The SBSR Act was notified on 21 December 2025 and came into force on 5 February 2026, introducing amendments to India’s insurance laws.

PhonePe Introduces ‘RuPay On-The-Go’ National Common Mobility Card

PhonePe Limited launched the RuPay ‘On-The-Go’ Card, a National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) designed for contactless payments across public transport systems in India.

The RuPay ‘On-The-Go’ Card supports the Government of India’s ‘One Nation One Card’ initiative, which aims to create a single interoperable transit payment system.

The card enables contactless tap-and-pay transactions at NCMC-enabled services such as metro, buses, trains, toll plazas, and parking facilities.

It supports offline payments without internet connectivity, allowing fast and seamless transactions for commuters.

The prepaid card stores value directly on its chip with a maximum balance limit of ₹2,000.

It allows offline transactions up to ₹500, ensuring quick and secure payments in public transport systems.

The card can be issued instantly after One-Time Password (OTP) verification.

Users can purchase or recharge the card using Unified Payments Interface (UPI), cash, or debit/credit cards.

The card was initially launched at Hyderabad Metro ticket counters in Hyderabad, Telangana, in partnership with L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad) Limited (LTMRHL).

The RuPay 'On-The-Go' Card is fully interoperable and can also be used in NCMC-enabled transport systems in cities such as Delhi, Mumbai (Maharashtra), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), and Bengaluru (Karnataka).

DEFENCE

NATO Launches 'Cold Response' 2026 Arctic Exercise

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) commenced its biennial Arctic military exercise named 'Cold Response 2026' across Northern Norway and Finland.

The exercise duration is from March 2026 till March 19, 2026, focusing on the role of civilians in supporting military operations.

The exercise is part of Arctic Sentry, aimed at bolstering NATO's presence in the polar region.

Nearly 25,000 troops from 14 NATO countries are participating, including 4,000 troops from the USA and Denmark.

Norway declared 2026 as the year of 'total defence', emphasizing readiness of civilians, businesses, and public institutions to face war and other crises.

The exercise integrates civilian support with military preparedness, highlighting joint operations and crisis management.

India–Japan Joint Military Exercise Dharma Guardian 2026 Concludes

The 7th edition of the India–Japan joint military exercise Dharma Guardian 2026 concluded at Chaubattia after a two-week training period from 24 February to 8 March 2026.

The exercise involved joint operational drills and training between the Indian Army and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF).

The focus of the exercise was on counter-insurgency (CI) and counter-terrorism (CT) operations, along with urban warfare and combat training in complex terrain.

Exercise Dharma Guardian is conducted alternately in India and Japan since 2018 to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation.

A key highlight was Exercise ASAHI SHAKTI, a 48-hour validation exercise simulating counter-terrorism operations including cordon-and-search, ambushes, heliborne operations, and hostage rescue drills.

The drills incorporated modern surveillance technologies such as drones to enhance coordination and operational effectiveness.

The exercise aimed to strengthen coordination, operational skills, and interoperability between the two countries' armed forces.

The 6th edition of the India-Japan Joint Military Exercise Dharma Guardian 2025 was conducted at the East Fuji Manoeuvre Training Area in Japan from February 24 to March 9, 2025.

SPORTS

BCCI Announces ₹131 Crore Cash Reward for Team India

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced a ₹131 crore cash reward for Team India after winning the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026.

India national cricket team defeated New Zealand national cricket team in the final held at Narendra Modi Stadium on 8 March 2026.

The reward will be distributed among players, coaching staff, support staff and selectors.

With this victory, India won its third T20 World Cup title, becoming the most successful team in the tournament's history.

India also became the first team to successfully defend the ICC Men's T20 World Cup title.

In the final match, India scored 253/5, which became the highest total ever recorded in a T20 World Cup final.

India secured a commanding 96-run victory over New Zealand.

Apart from the BCCI reward, India also received the official prize money from the International Cricket Council (ICC).

The champion's prize money for the tournament was USD 2.34 million (around ₹21.5 crore).

New Zealand, as the runners-up, received USD 1.17 million (around ₹10.75 crore).

Sanju Samson was awarded the Player of the Series, while Jasprit Bumrah received the Player of the Match award in the final.

The ₹131 crore reward announced by BCCI is ₹6 crore higher than the ₹125 crore reward announced after India's T20 World Cup victory in 2024.

The ₹131 crore announcement stands as one of the largest cash rewards given by the BCCI for a national team victory.

IMPORTANT DAYS

National No Smoking Day

National No Smoking Day 2026 is observed on March 11, 2026, which falls on the second Wednesday of March each year.

The day aims to encourage smokers to quit tobacco by providing support, resources and awareness about the health benefits of quitting smoking.

World No Tobacco Day 2026 is expected to focus on the theme “Unmasking the appeal – countering nicotine and tobacco addiction.”

The observance was first introduced in 1984 in the United Kingdom, originally held on Ash Wednesday, and later adopted as an annual event on the second Wednesday of March.

The initiative is widely associated with campaigns supported by organisations such as the British Heart Foundation, which promote awareness about the dangers of smoking and tobacco use.

The primary objective of National No Smoking Day is to help individuals overcome nicotine addiction and adopt healthier lifestyles.

Various public awareness campaigns, counselling services and community support activities are organised to help smokers quit tobacco.

Research indicates that around one in ten smokers may attempt to quit smoking on this day, highlighting its impact as a global awareness initiative.

The observance is different from World No Tobacco Day, which is observed annually on May 31 to highlight the health risks associated with tobacco use.