



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 24-03-2026

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Malawi

Syllabus: Prelims Bits – Mapping.

Context:

- India and Malawi held a **high-level bilateral meeting** during the Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 in New Delhi.
- Focus: **Strengthening cooperation in the energy sector** (hydropower, solar energy).

Background/Context

- Malawi is a **landlocked multiparty republic** in Southeastern Africa.
- Known as the “**Warm Heart of Africa**” due to hospitable culture.
- Located along the **East African Rift Valley**, shaping its terrain and water systems.
- Capital: **Lilongwe**.



Key Features/Provisions/Data

- **Boundaries:** Zambia (W), Tanzania (N), Mozambique (E, S).
- **Major Physical Features:**
 - Lake Malawi (Lake Nyasa):
 - Covers ~20% area, 3rd largest in Africa, biodiversity hotspot.

- **Shire River:** Only outlet → joins **Zambezi River**; key for hydropower.
- **Mulanje Massif:** Highest peak **Sapitwa (3002 m)**.
- **Highland Plateaus:** Nyika, Viphya → agriculture.
- **Economy:** Agriculture-driven (tobacco, tea, sugar).

Significance/Implications

- **Strategic for India-Africa relations** (South-South cooperation).
- **Energy Potential:**
 - Hydropower via Shire River basin.
 - High **solar irradiation** → renewable energy expansion.
- Enhances India's role in **climate-friendly development partnerships**.
- Biodiversity importance: Lake Malawi National Park.

Challenges/Issues

- **Landlocked disadvantage** → high transport costs.
- Heavy dependence on **rain-fed agriculture**.
- **Energy deficit** despite resource potential.
- Climate vulnerabilities: droughts, floods.
- Inequality between **large estates vs subsistence farmers**.

Way Forward

- Expand **India–Malawi cooperation** in solar, grid infrastructure.
- Promote **sustainable agriculture + irrigation systems**.
- Develop **regional connectivity** via SADC frameworks.
- Strengthen **climate resilience and biodiversity conservation**.

Prelims Facts

- Malawi lies in **Southeastern Africa (Rift Valley region)**.
- **Lake Malawi** → one of the **African Great Lakes**.
- **Shire River = only outlet** of Lake Malawi.
- UNESCO Site: **Lake Malawi National Park**.
- Highest peak: **Sapitwa (Mulanje Massif)**.

World Water Day

Syllabus: Prelims Bits

Context:

- Prime Minister conveyed greetings on **World Water Day (March 22)**, highlighting water conservation and sustainable management.

Background

- Observed annually since **1993** by the **United Nations**.
- Concept proposed at **1992 Rio Earth Summit (UNCED)**.
- Linked with **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6**: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030.

Key Features / Provisions / Data

- **Theme 2026: *Water and Gender***
- Focus on role of **women & girls** in water collection, management, and governance.
- Global water scenario:
- ~**2.2 billion people** lack safely managed drinking water (UN data).
- India: ~**600 million people** face high water stress (NITI Aayog).

Key Indian initiatives:

- **Jal Jeevan Mission (2019)** – piped water to rural households.
- **Atal Bhujal Yojana** – groundwater management.
- **Namami Gange Programme** – river rejuvenation.

Significance / Implications

- Promotes **water security** and sustainable usage.
- Highlights **gender inequality** in water access and burden.
- Encourages **community participation** and policy reforms.
- Supports **climate resilience** and ecosystem conservation.

Challenges / Issues

- **Water scarcity & over-extraction** (groundwater depletion).
- **Pollution** of rivers and aquifers.
- **Inequitable access**, especially in rural/tribal areas.
- Gender burden: women spend disproportionate time fetching water.
- Weak **institutional coordination**.

Way Forward

- Promote **Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)**.
- Strengthen **women's participation** in water governance.
- Enhance **rainwater harvesting & watershed management**.
- Use **technology (IoT, GIS)** for monitoring water resources.

- Behavioral change via campaigns like **Jal Shakti Abhiyan**.

Constitutional / Institutional Linkages

- **Article 21** – Right to life includes access to clean water (judicial interpretation).
- **Directive Principles (Article 48A)** – Protection of environment.
- **73rd & 74th Amendments** – Local water governance (Panchayats & Municipalities).

Prelims Facts

- Date: **March 22**
- First observed: **1993**
- Linked SDG: **SDG 6**
- Rio Conference: **1992, Brazil**
- Key body: **UN-Water (coordination mechanism)**

Shaheen Falcon

Syllabus: Prelims Bits – Species in news.

Context:

- A pair of **Shaheen falcons** was recently found nesting in a **multi-storey residential complex under construction in Kochi**.
- Indicates increasing interaction between wildlife and urban habitats.

Background/Context

- The **Shaheen Falcon (*Falco peregrinus peregrinator*)** is a **non-migratory subspecies** of the Peregrine falcon.
- Traditionally associated with **cliffs and rocky terrains**, but now adapting to **structures resembling natural cliffs**.



Key Features/urban /Provisions/Data

- **Physical Traits:**
 - Distinct **dark vertical stripe (malar stripe)** on face.
 - **Sexual dimorphism:** females larger than males.
- **Habitat:**
 - Prefers **rocky cliffs, hill ranges, and pinnacles.**
 - Increasingly observed in **urban high-rise structures.**
- **Distribution:**
 - Found across the **Indian subcontinent**, including **Andaman & Nicobar Islands.**
- **Food Habits:**
 - Primarily **avian predators**; also consume small mammals, reptiles, insects.
- **Hunting Ability:**
 - Known for **stoop dive**, reaching speeds **>300 km/h** (fastest animal).

Significance/Implications

- **Urban Ecology Indicator:**
 - Reflects **adaptability of species** to anthropogenic environments.
- **Biodiversity Conservation:**
 - Highlights importance of **urban biodiversity conservation strategies.**
- **Ecosystem Role:**
 - Acts as a **top predator**, maintaining ecological balance.

Challenges/Issues

- **Urban Threats:**
 - Collision with buildings, disturbance from human activity.
- **Habitat Loss:**
 - Decline in natural cliff habitats.
- **Pollution & Toxins:**
 - Bioaccumulation (historically impacted peregrines globally).

Way Forward

- Promote **urban wildlife-friendly infrastructure** (nesting spaces, restricted disturbance).
- Strengthen **public awareness and citizen science monitoring**.
- Integrate biodiversity in **Smart City Mission** planning.
- Ensure enforcement under **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.

Prelims Facts

- **Scientific Name:** *Falco peregrinus peregrinator*
- **Family:** Falconidae
- **Fastest Animal:** Peregrine falcon (>300 km/h dive)
- **Habitat Shift:** Natural cliffs → urban skyscrapers
- **Legal Protection:** Schedule IV (Peregrine falcon generally protected under WPA, 1972)

US Tariff Reset

Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – Trade and tariffs.

Context:

- The **U.S. Supreme Court** struck down tariffs imposed under **IEEPA**, forcing the U.S. to shift its tariff strategy.
- The U.S. has imposed **temporary 10% global tariffs (Section 122)** and is pursuing **Section 301 investigations**.
- This has created uncertainty in global trade agreements, including the **India–U.S. trade deal**.

Background/Context

- **IEEPA (1977)** allowed the U.S. President to regulate trade during national emergencies.
- Its invalidation weakened the legal basis of prior “reciprocal tariffs”.
- The U.S. is transitioning to **Trade Act, 1974 provisions** (Sections 122 & 301).

Key Features / Provisions / Data

- **Section 122:**
 - Temporary tariffs (max 150 days) → currently **10% global tariff (till July)**.
- **Section 301:**

- Enables **country/sector-specific tariffs** without Congressional approval.
- Targets:
 - Excess industrial capacity
 - Export distortions
 - Forced labour concerns
- **India–U.S. trade:**
 - India's **trade surplus: ~\$58 billion (2025)**.

Significance / Implications

- **Shift to unilateralism:** Reduced reliance on WTO dispute mechanisms.
- **Erosion of trade agreements:**
 - Countries made concessions (15–20% tariffs earlier) now redundant.
- **Strategic trade pressure:**
 - Even partners face future tariff risks.
- **Supply chain disruptions:**
 - Higher tariffs → cost escalation, protectionism.

Implications for India

- Risk of **Section 301 scrutiny** (solar, steel, petrochemicals).
- **Uncertainty in trade negotiations:**
 - Agreements may not ensure tariff stability.
- **Comparative advantage affected:**
 - Depends on future U.S. tariff design.

Challenges / Issues

- **Policy unpredictability** in U.S. trade regime.
- **Weakening multilateralism** (WTO sidelined).
- **Trust deficit** in trade agreements.
- **Global value chain disruptions.**

Way Forward

- **For India:**
 - Diversify export markets.

- Boost competitiveness (PLI, logistics reforms).
- Negotiate **binding dispute resolution mechanisms**.
- **Global level:**
 - Strengthen **WTO-based rules**.
 - Ensure transparency and predictability in tariffs.

Prelims Facts

- **IEEPA (1977)**: U.S. law for economic measures during emergencies.
- **Section 122 (Trade Act, 1974)**: Temporary tariffs (≤ 150 days).
- **Section 301**: Allows unilateral trade retaliation.
- **USTR**: United States Trade Representative (key trade authority).
- **WTO Principle**: Most Favoured Nation (MFN) – non-discriminatory trade.

Conclusion

- The U.S. tariff reset reflects a **strategic shift toward flexible unilateral trade policy**.
- While legally robust, it **undermines predictability and multilateralism**, posing challenges for India's trade strategy.

Prarambh initiative

Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – Direct Tax.

Context:

- The Union Minister for Finance recently launched **PRARAMBH 2026**, a nationwide awareness campaign on the **Income Tax Act, 2025**.
- The initiative precedes the Act's implementation from **1st April 2026**.

Background/Context

- The **Income Tax Act, 1961** is being replaced by the **Income Tax Act, 2025** to simplify tax laws and improve compliance.
- Need for **taxpayer awareness** due to structural and procedural changes in the new regime.
- Aligns with the vision of **Viksit Bharat (Developed India)** and improved tax governance.

Key Features/Provisions

- **PRARAMBH (Policy Reform and Responsible Action for Mission Viksit Bharat):**
 - Nationwide **multi-channel campaign** (print, TV, radio, digital, social media).
- **Taxpayer-centric resources:**
 - Guidance notes, brochures, FAQs, tutorial videos.
 - Engagement via **MyGov Quiz platform**.
- **Multilingual Outreach:**
 - Content in **10 regional languages** + English & Hindi.
- **AI-enabled support:**
 - Chatbot '**Kar Saathi**' for real-time assistance.
- **Income Tax Website 2.0:**
 - Enhanced usability, simplified navigation, faster services.

Significance/Implications

- **Improved Tax Compliance:**
 - Reduces ambiguity and litigation.
- **Digital Governance Push:**
 - Integration of AI tools and digital platforms.
- **Financial Inclusion:**
 - Multilingual approach increases accessibility.
- **Ease of Doing Business:**
 - Simplified tax processes benefit individuals and firms.

Challenges/Issues

- **Digital Divide:**
 - Limited access in rural/low-literacy regions.
- **Awareness Gaps:**
 - Behavioral resistance to new systems.
- **Data Privacy Concerns:**
 - AI chatbot handling sensitive financial data.
- **Implementation Capacity:**

- Ensuring seamless transition to the new Act.

Way Forward

- Strengthen **last-mile outreach** via CSCs and local institutions.
- Conduct **capacity-building programs** for taxpayers and officials.
- Ensure **robust cybersecurity frameworks**.
- Continuous **feedback-based policy refinement**.

Relevant Constitutional/Institutional Linkages

- **Article 265**: No tax shall be levied or collected except by authority of law.
- **CBDT (Central Board of Direct Taxes)**: Apex body for direct tax administration.
- Platforms: **MyGov, Income Tax Department portal**.

Prelims Facts

- **Income Tax Act, 2025**: Replaces 1961 Act; effective **April 1, 2026**.
- **Kar Saathi**: AI-based tax assistance chatbot.
- **PRARAMBH**: Awareness campaign, not a regulatory reform.
- **CBDT** operates under the **Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance**.