



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 28-03-2026

Mapping Perspective

1. Lebanon

Prelims Perspective

2. IVFRT Scheme
3. India's Forex Reserve

Mains Perspective

4. QS World Ranking
5. India's updated INDC

Lebanon

Syllabus: Prelims Bits – Mapping.

Context:

- Recently, Israel said that its military would take control of southern Lebanon up to the Litani River
- Objective: To create a “security zone”

About Lebanon

- It is situated on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea in Western Asia

Borders

- Northern and Eastern parts: Syria
- Southern part: Israel
- Western part: Mediterranean Sea

Maritime Boundary: The country shares its maritime borders with Cyprus

Capital City: Beirut



Geographical Features of Lebanon

Climate

- Mediterranean climate

- Mild, wet winters
- Hot, dry summers

Mountains

- Major mountain ranges:
 - Lebanon Mountains (Jabal Lubnan)
 - Hermon Ranges

Highest Peak

- Qurnat as Sawda'
 - Height: 10,128 ft. (3,087 m)
 - Located in the Lebanon Mountains

Major Valley

- Bekaa (Al-Biqa)

Rivers

- Litani River
 - Most significant river
 - Irrigates the fertile Bekaa Valley

Resources and Economy

Natural Resources

- Mineral products include: Limestone; Gypsum; Oil; Natural gas; Salt
- Other commodities: Semiprecious gemstones

Economy

- Dominated by services sector: Banking; Tourism

IVFRT Scheme

Syllabus: GS-2: Governance – Schemes and Policies.

Context:

- Recently, the **Union Cabinet approved the continuation** of the *Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration & Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme*.
- The approval is in the backdrop of the **recently enacted Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025**.

About IVFRT Scheme

- The **IVFRT platform** is aimed at:
 - Integrating and streamlining:
 - Immigration processes
 - Visa issuance
 - Foreigners registration
 - Through a **secure, technology-driven framework**
- **Time Period**
 - Approved for **five years**:
 - From **01 April 2026 to 31 March 2031**
- **Background**
 - Originally approved in **2010**
 - The project has undergone:
 - Multiple phases of **expansion**
 - Multiple **extensions**

Objectives of the Scheme

- To create a **comprehensive digital ecosystem** for:
 - Immigration management
 - Visa processing
 - Foreigners tracking
- To ensure:
 - Seamless movement of passengers
 - Enhanced security mechanisms
 - Efficient service delivery

Key Features of IVFRT Scheme

1. Focus Areas

- The scheme will concentrate on three broad areas:
 - Emerging technology innovations
 - Transformation of core infrastructure

- Optimisation of technology-enabled service delivery

2. Adoption of Emerging Technologies

- Modernization of the immigration and visa ecosystem through:
 - Mobile-based services
 - Self-service kiosks
- Aim:
 - Seamless and secure **passenger movement**

3. Infrastructure Upgradation

- Upgrade and expansion of **core infrastructure** across:
 - Immigration Posts
 - FRROs (Foreigners Regional Registration Offices)
 - Data Centres
- Objective:
 - Build a **resilient and scalable system nationwide**

4. Technology & Service Delivery Optimisation

- Introduction of: **Unified digital platforms**
- Revamping of: **Core application architecture**
- Strengthening: **Network frameworks&Deployment frameworks**
- Outcome: Improved **efficiency&Better user experience**

Significance for Governance

- Promotes **Digital Governance and e-Governance reforms**
- Enhances **internal security and monitoring of foreigners**
- Facilitates **ease of travel and tourism**
- Aligns with **modern border management practices**

Conclusion

- The continuation of the IVFRT Scheme reflects India's push towards a **technology-driven, secure, and integrated immigration system**, aligned with evolving legal and security frameworks.

India's Forex Reserve

Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – Forex reserves.

Context:

- The Reserve Bank of India stated that India's forex reserves remain adequate to cushion external shocks, despite heavy foreign investor outflows (\$12.1 billion in March) weakening the rupee to record lows
- Forex reserves stand at **\$710 billion (near peak of \$728 billion)**, but headline figure needs closer examination to assess true strength

Components of India's Forex Reserves

- **Four Elements:**
 - Foreign Currency (FX) Assets
 - Gold Holdings
 - Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)
 - Reserve Tranche Position with IMF

Minor Components: Limited Immediate Use

- **Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)**
 - Valued at **\$18.7 billion**
 - Based on basket of global currencies
 - Serve as a buffer that can be exchanged during crises
- **IMF Reserve Tranche Position**
 - Worth **\$4.8 billion**
 - Functions as an emergency credit line with the IMF

Major Components: Real Strength of Reserves

- **Foreign Currency (FX) Assets**
 - Valued at **\$556 billion**
 - Primary tool for RBI to manage currency volatility
 - Most liquid and usable component
- **Gold Holdings**
 - Valued at **\$131 billion**
 - Acts as long-term store of value

- Not easily deployable for routine currency defence
- **Inference:**
 - Though total reserves appear large, **FX assets are most relevant for short-term rupee defence**, but even this requires further adjustments

Dual Strategy for Defending the Rupee

- RBI uses a **balanced approach combining spot and forward interventions** to stabilise rupee while managing liquidity and interest rate pressures

Spot Market Intervention

- RBI sells FX in spot market → immediate impact
- **Effects:**
 - Strengthens/stabilises rupee
 - Reduces rupee liquidity
 - Leads to higher domestic interest rates

Forward Market Intervention

- RBI sells FX in forward market (future delivery)
- **Effects:**
 - Defends rupee without immediate reserve depletion
 - Avoids tightening of rupee liquidity
 - Prevents upward pressure on interest rates

Adjusted Reality of Forex Reserves

- RBI's **net forward sales of \$68 billion** reduce effective reserves to **below \$500 billion**
- With continued rupee pressure, gap may have widened further
- **Concern:** Reserve adequacy (import cover) nearing **2013 Balance of Payments stress levels**

RBI's Policy Dilemma

- RBI sold **\$94 billion FX since October 2024**, yet rupee weakened sharply → limits of intervention amid global pressures and capital outflows
- Analysts warn rupee could fall to **97–98 per dollar** if conditions persist
- Rising oil prices + investor exits → increasing import bill

Way Forward (Analytical Insight)

- Possible need for **controlled depreciation of rupee** to conserve reserves during prolonged crisis
- Balancing act between:
 - Currency stability
 - Forex reserve conservation
 - Domestic liquidity & interest rate management

QS World Ranking

Syllabus: GS-2: Governance – Education sector.

Context:

- The **Indian Institute of Management–Kozhikode (IIM-K)** has achieved a **global milestone**:
 - Broke into the **Top 100** of the **QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026** for the **first time**.

About QS World University Rankings

Publishing Authority

- Published annually by:
 - **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)** – a global higher education consultancy.

Purpose

- Evaluates universities **globally** based on:
 - Academic excellence
 - Employability
 - Research output
 - Global engagement

Key Parameters

- Academic reputation
- Employer reputation
- Employment outcomes
- Overall institutional performance

Methodology Framework

Lens (Broad Thematic Categories)

- A **collection of indicators** linked by a common theme.
- Represents **major dimensions of university performance**.

Five Lenses

- Research and Discovery
- Employability and Outcomes
- Global Engagement
- Learning Experience
- Sustainability

Indicator

- A **specific area of performance**.
- Examples: Citations per Faculty; Employer Reputation
- Institutions are: Scored on each indicator; Ranked accordingly
- Contributes to **overall rank**

Metric

- A **detailed calculation within an indicator**
- Used to generate: **Precise and quantifiable scores**

Key Highlights (2026 Rankings)

India's Performance

- **120 new entries** recorded this year.
 - India ranks **4th globally** for fresh appearances:
 - USA – 287
 - China – 181
 - UK – 159
- India now has the **4th-largest presence**:
 - After **USA, China, UK**

Subject-wise Achievements

- **Computer Science**

- **6 Indian institutions** in **global Top 100**
- All have **improved from last year**

Top Performing Indian Institutions

Highest Global Rank (21)

- **Indian Institute of Technology (ISM), Dhanbad**
 - Strong performance in:
 - **Mineral and Mining Engineering**
 - Has **retained its global stronghold**
- **Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad**
 - Entered **Top 25 globally** in:
 - Business and Management Studies
 - Marketing

Significance

- Reflects:
 - **India's improving global academic footprint**
 - Rising emphasis on:
 - Research output
 - Employability
 - Specialized subject excellence
- Important for:
 - Education sector reforms
 - Global rankings & indices (Prelims + Mains)
 - Knowledge economy and human capital development

India's updated INDC

Syllabus: GS-3: Environment – Climate Change

Context:

- India has unveiled updated NDCs for 2035 under the UNFCCC, in line with Paris Agreement obligations.

- Targets reflect progression over earlier commitments and aim to reconcile climate ambition with developmental priorities and energy security.

Key Highlights of India's 2035 NDC Targets

1. Expansion of Non-Fossil Energy Capacity

- Target: 60% of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources by 2035.
- Current status: ~52% achieved (2025); earlier target was 50% by 2030.
- Sources include: Solar, wind, hydro, biomass, nuclear.
- Indication: Early achievement of 2030 target, showcasing rapid renewable expansion.

2. Reduction in Emissions Intensity

- Target: 47% reduction in emissions intensity of GDP (from 2005 levels) by 2035.
- Current progress: 36% reduction achieved (2005–2020); 2030 target is 45%.
- Reflects emphasis on energy efficiency and low-carbon growth.

3. Enhancement of Carbon Sink

- Target: 3.5–4 billion tonnes CO₂ equivalent carbon sink.
- Current progress: ~2.3 billion tonnes achieved by 2021 (2.5–3 bn tonnes by 2030).
- Focus: Afforestation, reforestation, ecosystem restoration.

Understanding NDC and Climate Governance

What are NDCs?

- Voluntary climate action plans under Paris framework, updated every 5 years with increasing ambition, reflecting national circumstances and capabilities.

India's NDC Evolution

- 2015: First NDC (targeting 2025)
- 2022: Updated NDC (targets for 2030)
- 2026: Third NDC (targets for 2035)

Global Context

- Based on Global Stocktake (GST) findings (initiated 2021), world is not on track for 1.5°C goal.
- India's targets shaped by equity and CBDR-RC principle, developmental needs and energy security; India is on track or ahead in several parameters.

Significance of India's Climate Strategy

- **Leadership of Global South:** India positioned as climate leader among developing countries despite historical responsibility of developed nations.
- **Balancing growth with sustainability:** Focus on energy access, industrial growth, climate mitigation; reflects “climate justice” approach.
- **Strategic autonomy:** NDCs are self-determined, aligned with domestic priorities like energy security and affordable power.

Main Pillars of India’s Climate Strategy

Institutional Framework

- Operationalized through NAPCC (nine national missions) and SAPCC.

Implementation through Schemes

- Jal Jeevan Mission
- National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture & Sustainable Habitat
- MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative)
- National Disaster Management Plan
- Soil Health Card
- PMKSY, etc.

People-Centric Approach

- Based on “**Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE)**” principle → mass movement for sustainable living.
- Example: ‘Ek Ped Maa Ke Nam’ as people-driven climate action.

Challenges and Concerns

- **Modest ambition:** Targets seen as under-ambitious relative to current progress (e.g., 60% non-fossil capacity).
- **Capacity vs generation gap:** 52% capacity but only ~25% actual generation due to intermittency.
- **Land & infrastructure constraints:** Land acquisition issues, transmission bottlenecks.
- **Forest cover limitations:** ~24.6% vs target 33% (National Forest Policy).
- **Global inequities:** Developed nations rolling back commitments; unilateral measures like carbon border taxes.

Way Forward

- **Renewable ecosystem:** Invest in grid infrastructure, storage technologies, green hydrogen.
- **Bridging capacity-generation gap:** Improve efficiency; promote hybrid systems (solar + wind + storage).
- **Strengthening carbon sink:** Expand agroforestry, urban forestry, community conservation.
- **Climate finance:** Push for international finance, technology transfer, green bonds.
- **Policy reforms:** Streamline approvals; strengthen climate governance frameworks.

Conclusion

- India's 2035 NDCs reflect a measured yet pragmatic escalation in climate ambition rooted in equity and developmental realities.
- While on track to meet/exceed targets, concerns remain on adequacy amid global climate crisis.
- India's role crucial in shaping a just, inclusive, and sustainable global climate order as a voice of Global South.