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Headlines:

- Renewed U.S.–Iran Tensions and Global Energy Security (GS – II: IR)
- Electric Mobility Transition in India: Opportunities and Challenges (GS – III: Environment)
- Delimitation in India: Constitutional Framework, Challenges and Way Forward (GS – II: Polity and Governance)
- Manufacturing-led Growth: Strengthening India's Strategic Self-Reliance (GS – III Economy)
- India's Free Trade Agreements: Expanding Trade and Economic Competitiveness (GS – II: IR)

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1. Renewed U.S.–Iran Tensions and Global Energy Security (GS – II: IR)

Why in News?

- The ceasefire between the United States and Iran has collapsed, leading to renewed military strikes and heightened tensions in the Strait of Hormuz.
- Iran has threatened to restrict energy exports through the strait, raising concerns over global oil supplies and maritime security.

Background

- The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and carries nearly 20% of global oil and LNG trade, making it the world's most critical energy chokepoint.
- Any disruption in this route has immediate repercussions for global energy markets and international trade.

Core Issue

- The escalation highlights the interdependence between geopolitics, maritime security, and energy security.
- It underscores the vulnerability of global supply chains to regional conflicts and the importance of ensuring freedom of navigation.

Key Dimensions

- **Economic:** Rising Brent crude prices may fuel global inflation, increase freight and insurance costs, and disrupt supply chains.
- **Strategic:** Escalation threatens maritime security in key chokepoints, including the Strait of Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb.
- **International Relations:** Prolonged conflict may deepen regional instability and complicate diplomatic efforts in West Asia.

Implications for India

- Higher crude oil prices could widen the Current Account Deficit (CAD) and increase imported inflation.
- Disruptions in shipping may affect India's energy security, trade, and interests in the Gulf region.
- Balancing strategic relations with the U.S., Iran, and Gulf countries remains a key diplomatic challenge.

Challenges

- Preventing disruption of global energy supplies.
- Ensuring freedom of navigation in international waters.
- Managing geopolitical rivalry without wider regional escalation.
- Protecting commercial shipping and critical maritime infrastructure.

Way Forward

- Revive diplomatic dialogue and confidence-building measures.
- Strengthen international cooperation for maritime security.
- Diversify energy sources and expand Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR).
- Accelerate renewable energy adoption to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels.

2. Electric Mobility Transition in India: Opportunities and Challenges (GS – III: Environment)

Why in News?

- The Delhi Government's Electric Vehicle Policy, 2026 mandates that only electric three-wheelers and light commercial vehicles be registered from 2027, while new two-wheeler registrations will shift to EVs from 2028.
- The policy has renewed focus on the pace and challenges of India's transition towards sustainable mobility.

Background

- The transport sector is a major contributor to urban air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Electric Vehicles (EVs) are central to India's clean mobility strategy under initiatives such as the PM E-DRIVE Scheme, FAME, and the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP).

Core Issue

- Achieving large-scale EV adoption requires more than ambitious policy targets.
- It demands a comprehensive ecosystem encompassing charging infrastructure, battery manufacturing, reliable power supply, financing, and consumer confidence.

Key Dimensions of India's EV Transition

- **Environmental:** EVs reduce tailpipe emissions, improving urban air quality and supporting India's climate commitments.
- **Economic:** Lower fuel imports enhance energy security, while EV manufacturing can boost domestic industry and employment.

- **Infrastructure:** Inadequate charging stations and uneven distribution remain key bottlenecks.
- **Technology:** Dependence on imported lithium and other critical minerals poses supply-chain risks.
- **Governance:** Policy stability and coordinated Centre-State implementation are essential for sustained adoption.

Significance for India

- Accelerates decarbonisation of the transport sector.
- Supports Net Zero by 2070, Atmanirbhar Bharat, and the Make in India initiative.
- Reduces dependence on imported crude oil and strengthens energy security.

Challenges

- High upfront cost of EVs.
- Limited charging infrastructure.
- Dependence on imported battery materials.
- Battery recycling and disposal concerns.
- Consumer apprehensions regarding driving range and resale value.

Way Forward

- Expand public and private charging networks.
- Promote domestic battery manufacturing and critical mineral partnerships.
- Strengthen battery recycling and circular economy practices.
- Ensure stable policy incentives and affordable EV financing.
- Integrate renewable energy with EV charging infrastructure.

3. Delimitation in India: Constitutional Framework, Challenges and Way Forward (GS – II: Polity and Governance)

Why in News?

- The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, proposing an increase in Lok Sabha seats and initiating the delimitation process, is expected to be a key agenda item during the Monsoon Session of Parliament.
- The proposed exercise has revived debate on balancing democratic representation with federal equity.

Background

- Delimitation is the process of redrawing the boundaries of parliamentary and Assembly constituencies to ensure equal representation based on population changes.

- The last nationwide delimitation was undertaken using the 2001 Census, while the total number of Lok Sabha seats has remained frozen since 1976, a freeze extended until the first Census conducted after 2026.

Constitutional Framework

- **Article 82:** Readjustment of Lok Sabha constituencies after every Census.
- **Article 170:** Readjustment of State Assembly constituencies.
- **Articles 330 & 332:** Reservation of seats for SCs and STs.
- **Article 368:** Constitutional amendment procedure.
- Delimitation is carried out by an independent Delimitation Commission, whose orders have the force of law and are not subject to judicial review.

Core Issue

- The proposed delimitation seeks to realign parliamentary representation with demographic changes while ensuring fair representation across States.

Key Dimensions

- **Democratic Representation:** Upholds the principle of "one person, one vote, one value."
- **Federalism:** Population-based seat allocation may alter the political weight of States with lower population growth.
- **Governance:** Increased representation can improve legislative responsiveness and constituency management.
- **Women's Reservation:** Delimitation is a prerequisite for implementing the Women's Reservation Act.

Significance

- Strengthens representative democracy.
- Enhances electoral equity and governance efficiency.
- Facilitates implementation of constitutional reforms.

Challenges

- Regional concerns over equitable representation.
- Balancing population-based representation with federal principles.
- Administrative complexity of nationwide delimitation.
- Need for broad political consensus.

Way Forward

- Ensure a transparent and consultative delimitation process.
- Balance demographic representation with cooperative federalism.
- Strengthen public awareness and stakeholder consultations.

- Implement delimitation through an independent and evidence-based approach.

4. Manufacturing-led Growth: Strengthening India's Strategic Self-Reliance (GS – III Economy)

Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet approved Semicon 2.0 (₹1.27 lakh crore), the Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (₹62,500 crore), National Investment Policy for Urea (NIPU-2026), and major highway projects to strengthen India's manufacturing ecosystem and strategic sectors.
- These initiatives reinforce India's push towards Atmanirbhar Bharat, industrial competitiveness, and resilient supply chains.

Background

- Global geopolitical tensions and supply chain disruptions have highlighted the need for domestic manufacturing in critical sectors such as semiconductors, electronics, fertilizers, and infrastructure.
- India aims to transform from an import-dependent economy into a global manufacturing hub through targeted industrial policies.

Core Issue

- Manufacturing is central to achieving sustained economic growth, technological leadership, employment generation, and strategic autonomy.
- Policy support seeks to deepen domestic value addition while integrating India into global value chains.

Key Dimensions

- **Technology & Innovation:** Promotes indigenous semiconductor design, fabrication, and electronics manufacturing.
- **Industrial Competitiveness:** Enhances domestic production capacity and reduces dependence on imports.
- **Infrastructure:** Highway expansion improves logistics efficiency and lowers transportation costs.
- **Energy & Food Security:** Expansion of domestic urea production reduces import dependence and supports agricultural sustainability.
- **Employment & Investment:** Encourages private investment, MSME participation, high-skilled jobs, and innovation-driven manufacturing.

Significance for India

- Strengthens technological sovereignty and supply-chain resilience.
- Boosts exports, industrial growth, and regional development.

- Enhances energy and food security while supporting the Make in India and Digital India initiatives.

Challenges

- Dependence on imported technologies and critical minerals.
- High capital requirements and long gestation periods.
- Infrastructure and skilled workforce gaps.
- Global market competition and technology transfer constraints.

Way Forward

- Increase investments in R&D and advanced manufacturing.
- Strengthen domestic component and raw material ecosystems.
- Improve logistics through PM Gati Shakti and the National Logistics Policy.
- Foster industry-academia collaboration and skill development.
- Ensure stable policy support and ease of doing business.

5. India's Free Trade Agreements: Expanding Trade and Economic Competitiveness (GS – II: IR)

Why in News?

- The India–U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Double Contribution Convention (DCC) have come into force, marking a new phase in bilateral economic cooperation.
- The agreement is expected to enhance market access, boost exports, facilitate skilled mobility, and strengthen India–U.K. trade and investment ties.

Background

- Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) are key instruments of India's trade strategy to expand exports, diversify markets, and integrate with Global Value Chains (GVCs).
- Recent FTAs with countries such as the UAE, Australia, EFTA, and now the U.K. reflect India's shift towards comprehensive economic partnerships covering goods, services, investment, and innovation.

Core Issue

- CETA seeks to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers, improve market access, promote investment, and deepen cooperation in services, technology, and innovation.
- The Double Contribution Convention (DCC) exempts eligible temporary workers from paying social security contributions in the host country for up to 60 months, reducing employment costs and improving labour mobility.

Key Dimensions

- **Trade & Exports:** Greater market access for textiles, agriculture, engineering goods, and MSMEs.
- **Services:** Expands opportunities in IT, financial, education, healthcare, and professional services.
- **Manufacturing:** Encourages value addition and strengthens India's integration into global value chains.
- **Investment:** Enhances investor confidence through a predictable trade framework.
- **Strategic Relations:** Reinforces the India–U.K. Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Significance for India

- Improves export competitiveness and employment generation.
- Strengthens MSMEs and domestic manufacturing.
- Enhances skilled workforce mobility.
- Supports Atmanirbhar Bharat through export-led growth and technology collaboration.

Challenges

- Compliance with stringent quality and sustainability standards.
- Addressing non-tariff barriers and rules of origin.
- Enhancing MSME competitiveness.
- Ensuring effective implementation and utilisation of FTA benefits.

Way Forward

- Strengthen export infrastructure and logistics.
- Improve product quality and standards compliance.
- Build MSME awareness on FTA opportunities.
- Diversify export baskets and deepen global value chain integration.
- Accelerate negotiations with other major trading partners.