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SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS

31st Mar 2026

TOPICS:-

- 1. Ensuring federalism within delimitation**
(GS Paper II - Polity)
- 2. U.S.-Israel-Iran war puts India's EV gap in focus**
(GS Paper III - Economy)
- 3. Dhaka moves forward, Kathmandu goes back**
(GS Paper II - International Relations)

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1. ENSURING FEDERALISM WITHIN DELIMITATION

(GS Paper II - Polity)

This editorial 'Ensuring federalism within delimitation' was published in **The Hindu** on 31st Mar 2026, highlights the need to **balance population-based delimitation** with demographic performance to protect federal fairness.

Constitutional context and delimitation trigger

- **Article 81** requires seats across States and constituencies to be population-based so far as practicable.
- The earlier population parity of **1951** and **1971** no longer holds because State populations have sharply diverged.
- The **84th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002** froze Parliament and State Assembly seats till the first Census after **2026**.
- Census results are expected by **October 2028**, after which the **Delimitation Commission** will act before the **2029 Lok Sabha** election.

Demographic divergence across States

- The 2002 freeze aimed to reward States pursuing **population stabilisation** through family planning.
- The benchmark used is **Total Fertility Rate** or **TFR** of **2.1**, seen as replacement-level fertility.
- Using **National Family Health Survey** data, nine States had achieved TFR 2.1 or below by **2005**.
- By **2021**, most major States had reached TFR 2.1 except **Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Meghalaya and Manipur**.
- In **NFHS-5 (2019-21)**, States above the national mean still had fertility rates about **45% higher** than early achievers.
- Pure population-based seat distribution after 2026 could therefore disadvantage States that controlled population earlier.

DemPer principle for seat allocation

- The editorial proposes that post-2026 seat allocation should partly reflect **Demographic Performance** or **DemPer**, not just raw population.
- It draws from the **Finance Commission** approach, which combines **population size** with demographic performance in transfers.

- For the current **543 Lok Sabha seats**, no inter-State reallocation is proposed till **2024**.
- **DemPer** should apply only to the additional seats created beyond 543, keeping the population principle dominant.
- Early achievement of TFR 2.1 or less before **2005** should get **10% weight** in State-wise seat estimation.
- Decline in TFR between **2005 and 2021** should get **90% weight** in seat estimation.
- This model lets all States gain seats, while more populous States gain more in absolute numbers without eroding better-performing States' relative share.

Federal rationale and democratic balance

- The proposal treats States as meaningful **political units**, not mere demographic aggregates.
- It seeks to reconcile democratic equality with **federal fairness**, reducing regional resentment from delimitation.
- It preserves incentives for **good governance** and population control instead of penalising successful States.
- Democracy is framed as fair voice, not only numerical dominance; **federal stability** matters alongside electoral arithmetic.
- The editorial rejects viewing delimitation as a simple **north-south** conflict because several northern and western States also contained population growth.
- Examples cited include **Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Goa**, showing demographic transition is not region-specific.

Lok Sabha size and representation

- Average population per seat in **1971** was about **10 to 11.1 lakh**.
- India's population has risen from about **541 million** then to nearly **1.4 billion** now.
- To keep democracy vibrant, the editorial holds that **Lok Sabha** expansion should not stop below **700** seats.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Need for a transparent and consensus-based delimitation process

- **Power legitimacy**: Delimitation redistributes political power, and exercises such as the **Jammu and Kashmir delimitation of 2022** show why acceptance must rest on trust as much as on arithmetic.

- **Consultative need:** A purely technical exercise without prior consultation can deepen regional suspicion, especially when debates on **north-south representation** already carry political sensitivity under the delimitation framework.
- **Inclusive engagement:** Broad participation by States, parties and experts improves acceptability, and the **Delimitation Act, 2002** itself provides for associate members from Parliament and State Assemblies.
- **Method clarity:** Clear public disclosure of criteria, weightage and methodology can reduce fears of hidden bias, much like the **Finance Commission** openly spells out demographic-performance criteria in devolution formulae.
- **Procedural credibility:** Delimitation shapes representation for decades, and the long freeze continued through the **84th Constitutional Amendment** shows why procedural credibility matters.
- **Conflict prevention:** A consensus-based process can prevent rigid regional confrontation, particularly in politically sensitive exercises such as **Assam** and **Jammu and Kashmir**.
- **Fairness principle:** In a federal democracy, procedural fairness matters as much as numerical fairness, just as **Finance Commission transfers** balance population with performance rather than relying on raw numbers alone.

2. U.S.-ISRAEL-IRAN WAR PUTS INDIA'S EV GAP IN FOCUS

(GS Paper III - Economy)

This editorial 'U.S.-Israel-Iran war puts India's EV gap in focus' was published in **The Hindu** on 31st Mar 2026, highlights how **China's deeper electric vehicle adoption** has reduced its **fuel-shock exposure** while India remains more vulnerable to oil disruptions.

Oil shock and differential vulnerability

- The **U.S.-Iran war** triggered a sharp rise in crude and refined fuel prices, exposing the different energy vulnerabilities of **India** and **China**.
- The **OPEC** basket price rose about **67%** between **February 27** and **March 27**, pushing up petrol, diesel and LPG costs.
- The war also heightened supply risks through the **Strait of Hormuz**, through which about one-fifth of global oil supply normally passes.

- In **FY25Q1**, China received **5.4 million barrels/day** of crude through the Strait, while India received **2.1 million barrels/day**.
- Though both depend on imported oil, China's faster **EV** adoption has reduced transport-sector exposure, while India remains fossil-fuel dependent.

Scale of the India-China EV gap

- In **March 2026**, new-energy vehicles formed **52.9%** of passenger car sales in **China**, against only **6%** EV share in India's new car registrations.
- In absolute **four-wheeler** sales, China sold about **64 lakh** EVs in **2024**, while India sold only about **72,845** in **2026**.
- In the **two- and three-wheeler** segment, China sold over **72 lakh** EVs in **2024**, while India sold about **4.27 lakh** in **2026**.
- China began electrification earlier, so its EV stock is far larger across vehicle categories.
- China's electric car fleet reached about **2.3 crore** by **2024**, compared with about **3.96 lakh** in India in **2026**.
- China had about **6.8 crore** electric two- and three-wheelers in use, while India had about **23 lakh**.
- India's total EV stock stood at about **27.3 lakh**, still far below China's levels.

Infrastructure and ecosystem asymmetry

- Charging access reflects the gap, with India having about **14 electric cars per public charger** as of **February 2026**, against **9** in China by end-**2025**.
- This indicates stronger charging availability in China, which has supported faster passenger-EV adoption.
- The gap also extends to **manufacturing, supply chains** and ecosystem depth, not just vehicle sales.
- Electricity demand from EVs also shows the disparity, with **China** at **490 GWh**, **India** at **3.2 GWh**, and the **world** at **840 GWh** in **2024**.

Segment-wise adoption pattern

- India has made visible progress mainly in **electric three-wheelers**, where penetration was **16%** in **2023**, against **8%** in China.
- In **two-wheelers**, India's EV penetration was **5%**, far below China's **35%**.
- In **four-wheelers**, India stood at **2%**, against **38%** in China.
- In **electric buses**, India's penetration was **7%**, while China reached **50%**.
- The pattern shows India's transition is concentrated in selected segments, while China has achieved broader ecosystem-wide adoption.

Crisis implications and policy message

- Higher **EV adoption** makes countries less exposed to sudden petrol and diesel price spikes because a larger transport share runs on electricity.
- The recent fuel-price surge across Asia has strengthened the case for faster transition to **electric mobility**.
- The shift is already visible in markets, with **Bloomberg** reporting stronger EV demand across Asia after the Iran oil shock.
- Chinese firms such as **BYD** reportedly saw higher showroom traffic as consumers moved away from fossil-fuel vehicles.
- India has advanced in **electric three-wheelers**, but low adoption in cars and buses and weak charging infrastructure limit crisis resilience.
- As long as petrol, diesel and LPG remain the transport backbone, geopolitical shocks in **West Asia** will continue to hit Indian households directly.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Need to treat EV transition as a core pillar of energy security

- **Oil vulnerability:** India's dependence on imported crude makes electrification strategically necessary, much as recent oil-route disruptions through **West Asia** have exposed transport-sector vulnerability.
- **Shock absorption:** Higher **EV** adoption can better cushion households and firms from fuel-price spikes, which is why deeper electrification creates a stronger buffer than fossil-fuel dependence.
- **Import reduction:** Faster electrification can gradually reduce oil dependence, just as wider use of **electric buses** and other EV segments lowers diesel use in daily mobility systems.
- **Strategic resilience:** Disruptions around **West Asia** and the **Strait of Hormuz** reinforce that transport systems tied mainly to petroleum remain exposed to external shocks.
- **Sectoral urgency:** Low EV penetration in **cars and buses** keeps India more exposed, even though policy support under **FAME** has helped expand electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers and buses.
- **Economic stability:** Lower fuel vulnerability can ease inflationary pressure and transport costs, since oil shocks quickly feed into **diesel-dependent logistics** and household budgets.

- **Transition logic:** Clean mobility must be seen not only as climate policy but also as strategic policy, and schemes like **FAME India** were designed to support both adoption and manufacturing ecosystem development.

3. DHAKA MOVES FORWARD, KATHMANDU GOES BACK

(GS Paper II - International Relations)

This editorial ‘**Dhaka moves forward, Kathmandu goes back**’ was published in **The Indian Express** on 31st Mar 2026, highlights the **contrasting post-uprising political trajectories** of **Bangladesh and Nepal**, marked by institutional rebuilding in Dhaka and due-process concerns in Kathmandu.

Shared uprising, divergent outcomes

- In recent months, **Bangladesh** and **Nepal** saw youth-driven popular uprisings that toppled entrenched leaders.
- **Sheikh Hasina** fell in **August 2024** and **K P Sharma Oli** in **September 2025**.
- Both movements were driven by anger against economic failures, nepotism, corruption and erosion of democratic processes.
- Both countries then moved from **Gen-Z-led** revolts to interim governments and early general elections this year.
- The divergence emerged after elections, with **Tarique Rahman** appearing more stable in Bangladesh than **Balendra Shah** in Nepal.

Nepal’s reversal and institutional strain

- Prime Minister **Tarique Rahman** carried huge popularity in Nepal but also inherited high expectations.
- His key test is restoring the credibility of a State whose authority had weakened among the people.
- Within 24 hours of taking office, his government arrested former Prime Minister **K P Sharma Oli** and former Home Minister **Ramesh Lekhak**.
- The arrests related to the crackdown on the **Gen Z** protests, in which at least **70 people** were killed.
- While State response during the protests was brutal, due process issues clouded the arrests.

- The absence of a court warrant to arrest **Oli** and **Lekhak** was troubling.
- Shah's hasty move raised fears that he and the **Rastriya Swatantra Party** may use parliamentary strength to target political opponents.
- As leader of both supporters and non-supporters, Shah risks weakening governmental legitimacy if institutional integrity is not upheld.
- Failure to respect **due process** could also erode public trust in the justice process itself.

Bangladesh's relative consolidation

- In contrast, since taking office, **Rahman** appears to have prioritised stability, law and order, and institutional rebuilding over vendetta politics.
- His government has sought to re-establish ties across sections of society, unlike the **Muhammad Yunus-led interim government**.
- Under the interim phase, **Awami League** supporters and minorities were targeted.
- Unity became the dominant message in Rahman's first weeks in office.
- He emphasised unity in his **Independence Day** speech on **March 26**.
- He also continued the **Awami League** practice of commemorating "**Genocide Day**", marking the Pakistan army's 1971 atrocities.

Democratic lesson for the region

- The new leaders in **Nepal** and **Bangladesh** now have an opportunity over the next few years to reinvigorate democracy.
- Nepal's case shows that post-uprising legitimacy depends not only on electoral victory but also on procedural restraint.
- Bangladesh's trajectory suggests that inclusion and institutional repair can stabilise a post-revolt transition.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Regional implications of political instability in India's neighbourhood

- **Neighbourhood security:** Instability in **Bangladesh** and **Nepal** can directly affect India's security environment because both share long, sensitive land borders with India.
- **Border sensitivity:** Unstable transitions can complicate migration management, local tensions and border administration, especially in regions such as **Assam** and **north Bengal**.

- **Connectivity impact:** Political turbulence can slow regional trade and transit cooperation, including platforms such as the **BBIN** framework.
- **China factor:** Political uncertainty in the neighbourhood can widen opportunities for external influence, especially from **China**, in strategically important neighbouring States.
- **Democratic interest:** India has a clear stake in stable, constitutional and inclusive political transitions across South Asia because domestic instability often spills across borders.
- **Policy challenge:** India must support regional stability while avoiding the image of direct interference in the domestic politics of neighbouring countries.
- **Regional order:** Governance quality in neighbouring States shapes the wider environment for trust, cooperation and regional integration in South Asia.