EDITORIALS - 27TH OCT 2026

1. BEYOND KUDANKULAM'S FENCE, A CYBERSECURITY CHALLENGE (GS PAPER II GOVERNANCE, GS PAPER III SECURITY)

This editorial '**Beyond Kudankulam's fence, a cybersecurity challenge**' was published in **The Hindu** on 27th Oct 2026, highlights gaps in protecting **critical infrastructure information** across contractors, subcontractors and commercial data providers.

Kudankulam Breach and Its Significance

- World Leaks claimed nearly **19,000 files**, totalling **14.3 GB** from 2016–2025, including engineering drawings, supplier details, inspection records, meeting minutes and insurance documents.
- **Reliance Infrastructure**, contractor for Kudankulam Units 3–4, confirmed the breach involving data hosted by **Yotta**, which acknowledged ransomware activity on May 29.
- **NPCIL** identified the documents as relating to non-nuclear infrastructure; no public evidence establishes access to isolated reactor or safety systems, while **ransomware claims** require caution.
- The **2019 Dtrack infection** affected the plant's administrative network while its critical network remained isolated; both incidents expose vulnerabilities at the **institutional periphery**.

Supply-Chain Exposure and Governance Gaps

- **Supply-chain security** depends on every entity holding sensitive information; contractors, suppliers, cloud providers and foreign partners may lack safeguards protecting the **main facility**.
- Leaked documents enable **targeted phishing**, contractor identification and discovery of weak entry points; strategic information creates risks even without direct **operational access**.
- **CERT-In's 2022 directions** mandate prompt incident reporting, while **NCIIPC**, established under Section 70A of the IT Act, protects critical information infrastructure; uniform protection across vendors remains uncertain.
- Obligations attached to a **protected system** centre on its operator; externally shared technical data relies largely on contracts, while the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act** generally excludes information without personal data.
- Fragmented **accountability** allows operators, contractors and hosting providers to disclaim responsibility despite leaked documents; expansion towards **6,000 MW** at Kudankulam, alongside smart grids, private participation and commercial clouds, increases exposure.

Reforms for Ecosystem-Wide Protection

- Make **security obligations** follow data across contractors, subcontractors and cloud providers, with defined standards, **liability** and audit requirements embedded in procurement contracts.
- Enforce **data classification** to restrict vendors' information and retention periods; replace annual compliance certificates with **third-party risk assessments** and red-team exercises covering the vendor ecosystem.
- Apply **zero-trust** through verification of every access point; bring CERT-In, NCIIPC, regulators and operators under a **national framework** assigning supply-chain responsibility before breaches.

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Building Continuity of Essential Services After a Cyberattack

- **Service prioritisation:** Restore emergency functions first, as 22 of 27 infected NHS acute trusts maintained urgent care during WannaCry in 2017.
- **Incident containment:** Isolate infected devices and protect critical servers, following CERT-In's ransomware advisory, to prevent wider disruption.
- **Backup readiness:** Maintain tested offline backups, as recommended by CISA's StopRansomware Guide, to recover data without ransom payments.
- **Operational fallback:** Prepare manual procedures, as AIIMS Delhi maintained offline services during its 2022 cyberattack while digital recovery took two weeks.
- **Recovery drills:** Rehearse coordinated responses through exercises such as Bharat NCX 2024, which simulated attacks on IT and operational technology systems.
- **Communication continuity:** Establish alternative channels, addressing WannaCry-era NHS coordination failures caused by unavailable email systems.
- **Institutional learning:** Implement post-incident recommendations, as illustrated by the NHS's 2018 Lessons Learned review containing 22 cybersecurity recommendations.

2. A READY SOLUTION TO TACKLE ANAEMIA (GS PAPER I SOCIETY)

This editorial '**A ready solution to tackle anaemia**' was published in The Hindu on October 27, 2026, and highlights the potential of double fortified salt to reduce anaemia through affordable, nationwide delivery.

Anaemia Burden and Fortification Potential

- **Anaemia** affects over half of Indian women and almost three-fourths of children, contributing to maternal mortality, intergenerational malnutrition, impaired cognition and **productivity losses**.
- The **7X7X7 Anaemia Mukt Bharat strategy** recognises multiple causes through prevention, screening, treatment, dietary diversification and behaviour change, but **double fortified salt** remains underutilised.

- **DFS**, containing iron and iodine, uses near-universal, predictable salt consumption to improve **sustained compliance**, complementing supplementation and dietary diversification.
- **Universal Salt Iodisation** reaches around 95% of households; existing infrastructure supports DFS delivery to an estimated **76 million people** across four States through government safety nets.
- A global review found **anaemia reduction up to 21%**; trials in Bengaluru, Darjeeling and Punjab, alongside implementation in Uttar Pradesh, support improved iron status, consumer acceptability and **cost-effectiveness** when validated specifications are followed.
- DFS costs **₹14–₹20 per person annually**, with an estimated national benefit–cost ratio of **4.2:1**; manufacturing capacity, centralised salt production and laboratory infrastructure support scale and quality monitoring.

Delivery Gaps and Priorities

- **FSSAI standards** exist, and DFS inclusion is mandated in PM POSHAN and ICDS; **PDS** coverage remains uneven despite reaching around 800 million beneficiaries, largely because implementation depends on States.
- Wider adoption requires a **central flagship scheme** ensuring nationwide, last-mile access, backed by dedicated financing, stronger **quality assurance**, commercial availability and consumer awareness.
- **Regulatory safeguards** must align DFS with sodium-reduction goals and screening for thalassaemia and sickle cell disease; rice-fortification experience can inform **implementation and monitoring**.

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Structural Determinants of Persistent Anaemia

- **Gender discrimination:** Unequal food allocation undermines women's nutrition, as UNICEF India's *Who Eats First?* documents women and girls eating last and least.
- **Early marriage:** Adolescent pregnancy combines maternal nutritional demands with continuing growth, a double burden identified in NHM's adolescent anaemia handbook.
- **Reproductive burden:** Short birth intervals restrict nutritional recovery; SRS 2020 recorded intervals below three years in 47.6% of births, reinforcing Mission Parivar Vikas's relevance.
- **Dietary deprivation:** Cereal-heavy diets limit iron absorption; NHM identifies high phytate intake and inadequate vitamin C consumption as contributing factors.
- **Poor sanitation:** Intestinal worms aggravate anaemia, underpinning National Deworming Day, launched in 2015 for children aged 1–19 years.
- **Healthcare exclusion:** Irregular antenatal access delays detection; PMSMA offers free care every month's ninth day, with extended sessions for high-risk pregnancies.

- **Educational disadvantage:** Limited schooling compounds nutritional vulnerability; WHO identifies uneducated, poorer and rural populations as disproportionately affected by anaemia.

3. LULA'S RETURN IS DRAMATIC, HIS CHALLENGES FORMIDABLE (GS PAPER II INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS)

This editorial '**Lula's return is dramatic, his challenges formidable**' was published in **The Indian Express** on 27th Oct 2026, highlights **Brazil's political divisions**, Lula's governance challenges and implications for Global South cooperation.

Electoral Significance and Domestic Challenges

- Lula of the Workers' Party overcame a first-round deficit against Flávio Bolsonaro, winning approximately **52% votes** and a historic **fourth term**, interrupting Latin America's right-wing surge.
- The narrow victory reflects deep **polarisation** and resilient **Bolsonarism**, suggesting the movement has outgrown Jair Bolsonaro despite his house arrest for allegedly plotting a coup after the 2022 defeat.
- Despite near-historic low **unemployment**, slowing growth, affordability pressures, high interest rates and mounting **household debt** complicate economic management.
- A **conservative majority** in Congress and over a dozen **right-wing governors** constrain reforms, requiring governance across entrenched political divisions.
- Bolsonarism combines **ideological conservatism** with anxieties about the state and religion, requiring Lula to reach **beyond his traditional base**.

Geopolitical Implications for India and the Global South

- Lula's victory denies Trump an ally in Latin America's largest economy; deeper China ties and resistance to **US tariffs** sustain Brazil's **Global South orientation**.
- Continued Brazilian engagement supports **BRICS and IBSA**, advancing India's interest in **multipolarity** and developing countries' demands for greater influence over global institutions.

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Opportunities for Sectoral Cooperation Between India and Brazil

- **Agricultural innovation:** Advance tropical farming and climate-resilience research through the ICAR–Embrapa agricultural research MoU signed in July 2025.

- **Biofuel collaboration:** Expand ethanol technology exchanges through the 2020 Bioenergy Cooperation MoU and its Joint Working Group, inaugurated in August 2021.
- **Pharmaceutical partnerships:** Expand affordable medicine and API production, building on Indian firms' Brazilian operations and July 2025 bilateral commitments.
- **Defence production:** Develop industrial partnerships through the Defence Industrial Cooperation Focus Group, whose inaugural meeting occurred in March 2024.
- **Clean-energy investment:** Expand renewable technology partnerships through the July 2025 Renewable Energy Cooperation MoU to support energy transition.
- **Digital cooperation:** Develop public-service pilots and capacity building under the July 2025 digital solutions MoU.
- **Space applications:** Expand satellite cooperation, building on PSLV-C51's launch of Brazil's Amazonia-1 earth-observation satellite on February 28, 2021.