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Headlines:

- Lula Wins Fourth Presidential Term in Brazil
- CEC's Removal and Independence of the Election Commission of India
- Kudankulam Data Breach: Cybersecurity Beyond Physical Infrastructure
- Double Fortified Salt: A Scalable Solution to Anaemia
- From Climate Targets to Energy Justice: Rethinking Global Climate Governance



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1. Lula Wins Fourth Presidential Term in Brazil

GS Paper II – International Relations (IR)

Why in News?



Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva won Brazil's presidential runoff on 25 October 2026, securing a historic fourth presidential term with 51.79% of valid votes against Flávio Bolsonaro's 48.21%.

Brazil's Political System

- **System:** Federal presidential constitutional republic.
- **President:** Head of State and Head of Government.
- **Election:** Direct popular election; a runoff is held if no candidate secures more than 50% of valid votes in the first round.
- **Tenure:** Four years; one consecutive re-election is permitted.
- **Constitutional reference:** Article 82 of Brazil's Constitution specifies the presidential term.
- **Lula's tenure:** Previously served from 2003–2010 and 2023–2026; his latest victory gives him a fourth, non-consecutive term.

Key Dimensions

Democratic Resilience

- Lula's comeback after trailing in the first round highlights voter mobilisation and electoral competition.
- The result reflects Brazil's political polarisation and the importance of democratic participation.

Sovereignty and Foreign Interference

- Lula's assertion that Brazil is nobody's "backyard" underscores strategic autonomy.
- Concerns over external influence and digital misinformation highlight challenges to electoral integrity.

Global South and BRICS

- Brazil is a founding BRICS member and an influential voice in South–South cooperation.
- Priorities include multipolarity, climate action and reform of global governance institutions.

India–Brazil Relations:

- **Economic Relations:** Bilateral trade reached US$15.21 billion in 2025, with India exporting US$8.35 billion and importing US$6.86 billion. Both countries aim to achieve US$30 billion trade by 2030.
- **Trade Composition:** India exports petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, agrochemicals and engineering goods; imports include crude oil, soybean oil, sugar, iron ore and cotton. Greater diversification can reduce commodity dependence.
- **Investment Partnership:** Indian investments in Brazil exceed US$15 billion, spanning oil and gas, automobiles, IT, pharmaceuticals and aluminium. Brazilian investments in India are estimated at around US$1 billion.



- **Critical Minerals and Energy:** Cooperation covers rare earths, critical minerals, oil and gas, renewable energy and biofuels. Brazil's mineral resources complement India's requirements for electric vehicles, electronics and clean-energy technologies.
- **Trade Agreements and Market Access:** The India–MERCOSUR Preferential Trade Agreement currently covers 450 tariff lines. Its expansion could improve market access, particularly for Indian pharmaceuticals, chemicals and manufactured goods.
- **Strategic and Technological Cooperation:** Both countries collaborate through BRICS, G20, IBSA and the G4 on multilateral reform. Cooperation also extends to defence, space, digital public infrastructure, agriculture and cybersecurity, strengthening South–South cooperation.

2. CEC's Removal and Independence of the Election Commission of India

GS Paper II – Polity and Governance

Why in News?

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) reportedly told the Supreme Court that the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) can be removed only through the procedure applicable to a Supreme Court judge.
- The affidavit defended collective decision-making amid allegations concerning electoral-roll revision and the Commission's internal functioning.

Constitutional and Legal Framework

- **Article 324:** Vests the ECI with superintendence, direction and control of elections to Parliament, State Legislatures, and the offices of President and Vice-President.
- **Article 324(5):** The CEC can be removed only in the same manner and on the same grounds as a Supreme Court judge. Other Election Commissioners can be removed only on the CEC's recommendation.
- **Article 124(4):** Removal of a Supreme Court judge requires proved misbehaviour or incapacity and a parliamentary address supported by a special majority in each House.
- **2023 Act:** The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, regulates appointments, service conditions and tenure. It provides for a Selection Committee comprising the Prime Minister, a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister, and the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

Key Issues

- **Institutional Independence:** Security of tenure protects the CEC from arbitrary executive interference.
- **Collective Decision-Making:** Section 18 of the 2023 Act provides for majority-based decisions when members disagree.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Recorded decisions, procedural fairness and scrutiny strengthen electoral integrity.
- **Constitutional Balance:** Independence must coexist with accountability and judicial review.

Way Forward

- Promote transparent and consultative appointments.
- Strengthen internal procedures and documented decision-making.
- Ensure accountability without compromising constitutional independence.

3. Kudankulam Data Breach: Cybersecurity Beyond Physical Infrastructure

GS Paper III – Science & Technology, Cybersecurity and Internal Security

Why in News?

- A reported data breach involving documents related to the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project, Tamil Nadu, highlighted vulnerabilities in contractors' networks and commercial data centres.

- NPCIL stated that the leaked documents concerned non-nuclear infrastructure; no publicly established evidence indicated compromise of reactor-control or nuclear-safety systems.

Key Dimensions

1. Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure

- Critical infrastructure includes nuclear facilities, power grids, telecommunications, defence and financial systems.
- Modern infrastructure depends on contractors, subcontractors, software vendors and cloud providers, expanding the potential attack surface.

2. Kudankulam Cyber Incident, 2019

- DTrack malware was detected on a computer connected to the plant's internet-facing administrative network.
- NPCIL maintained that the critical internal network remained unaffected.
- Both incidents highlight the importance of securing networks and third-party information beyond the facility's physical perimeter.

3. Major Cybersecurity Vulnerabilities

- **Supply-chain attacks:** Exploitation of weaker security among vendors and subcontractors.
- **Ransomware:** Malicious software used to encrypt data, steal information or threaten disclosure.
- **Information exposure:** Engineering drawings, supplier details and project schedules may facilitate phishing or future attacks.
- **Key distinction:** A data leak does not itself establish that reactor-control systems or nuclear-safety systems were breached.

4. India's Institutional and Legal Framework

- **CERT-In:** National cybersecurity incident-response agency; its 2022 directions require reporting specified cyber incidents within six hours of noticing them or being informed of them.
- **NCIIPC:** Established under Section 70A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, to protect critical information infrastructure.
- **Section 70:** Provides for declaring qualifying computer resources as protected systems.
- **DPDP Act, 2023:** Governs digital personal data, but does not comprehensively regulate all sensitive technical information.

5. Way Forward

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- **Supply-chain security:** Mandate cybersecurity standards, contractual liability and periodic vendor audits.
- **Data governance:** Classify sensitive information and enforce least-privilege access.
- **Zero-trust architecture:** Verify every user, device and access request.
- **Cybersecurity-by-design:** Integrate security requirements into public procurement and project planning.
- **Integrated oversight:** Improve coordination among CERT-In, NCIIPC, sectoral regulators and infrastructure operators.
- **Cyber resilience:** Conduct penetration testing, red-team exercises and incident-response drills.

4. Double Fortified Salt: A Scalable Solution to Anaemia

GS Paper II – Health and Government Schemes | GS Paper III – Science and Technology

Why in News?

- Double Fortified Salt (DFS) is being highlighted as a cost-effective intervention to address iron and iodine deficiencies and strengthen India's efforts to combat anaemia.

What is Double Fortified Salt (DFS)?

- DFS is common salt fortified with iron and iodine, targeting two major micronutrient deficiencies.
- It builds on India's Universal Salt Iodisation programme and delivers essential micronutrients through a widely consumed food vehicle.

Public Health Context

- **NFHS-5 (2019–21):** Anaemia affected 57.0% of women aged 15–49 years and 67.1% of children aged 6–59 months.
- Anaemia can result from nutritional deficiencies, infections, blood loss and inherited disorders; hence, iron fortification alone cannot address every case.

Significance

- **Anaemia Reduction:** Can improve iron status and help reduce iron-deficiency anaemia when consumed regularly.
- **Maternal and Child Health:** Better iron nutrition supports maternal health, child development and cognitive outcomes.
- **Economic Benefits:** Improved health and productivity can reduce losses associated with micronutrient deficiencies.

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- **Cost-effectiveness:** The source article estimates an annual cost of ₹14–₹20 per person and a benefit–cost ratio of 4.2:1 for nationwide introduction.

Government Initiatives

- **Anaemia Mukt Bharat (AMB):** Its 7×7×7 strategy covers seven beneficiary groups, seven interventions and seven institutional mechanisms.
- **Key interventions:** Iron–folic acid supplementation, periodic deworming, behaviour-change communication, testing and treatment, and attention to non-nutritional causes.
- **PM POSHAN and ICDS:** Provide platforms for nutrition interventions among schoolchildren and young children.
- **PDS:** Wider distribution of DFS could improve access among vulnerable households.
- **FSSAI:** Establishes food-fortification standards and quality requirements.

Challenges

- Uneven State-level adoption and limited integration into the PDS.
- Need for quality assurance, consumer awareness and adequate financing.
- Fortification cannot replace diagnosis and treatment of other causes of anaemia.

Way Forward

- Expand DFS through appropriate public nutrition programmes with rigorous quality testing and monitoring.
- Integrate fortification with dietary diversification, iron supplementation, screening and treatment.
- Monitor nutritional outcomes and ensure appropriate management of thalassaemia and sickle cell disease.

5. From Climate Targets to Energy Justice: Rethinking Global Climate Governance

GS Paper III – Environment and Climate Change | GS Paper II – International Relations

Why in News?

- The climate policy debate highlights the need to balance global emissions reduction with energy equity, development needs and the historical responsibilities of developed countries.

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Understanding Energy Justice

- Energy justice means ensuring equitable access to affordable, reliable and clean energy while fairly distributing the costs and benefits of the energy transition.
- Climate action must address unequal energy consumption, living standards and development needs alongside global emissions targets.

Key Issues

- **North–South Divide:** Developed countries bear greater historical responsibility for emissions, while developing countries need additional energy to address poverty, urbanisation and infrastructure gaps.
- **Consumption Inequality:** Differences in per-capita energy consumption and resource-intensive lifestyles raise concerns about equitable ecological footprints.
- **Climate Finance:** Inadequate and inaccessible finance constrains developing countries' mitigation and adaptation efforts.
- **Technology Transfer:** Affordable clean technologies, energy storage and modern electricity grids are essential for an equitable transition.
- **Energy Transition:** Solar, wind, hydropower and electrification offer opportunities, but intermittency, storage and grid integration remain challenges.

India's Perspective

- **Climate Justice:** India advocates Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) under the UN climate framework.
- **Developmental Priorities:** India must balance energy security, poverty alleviation, industrialisation and emissions reduction.
- **Clean Energy:** Renewable energy expansion, electric mobility and energy efficiency can support sustainable development.

Challenges

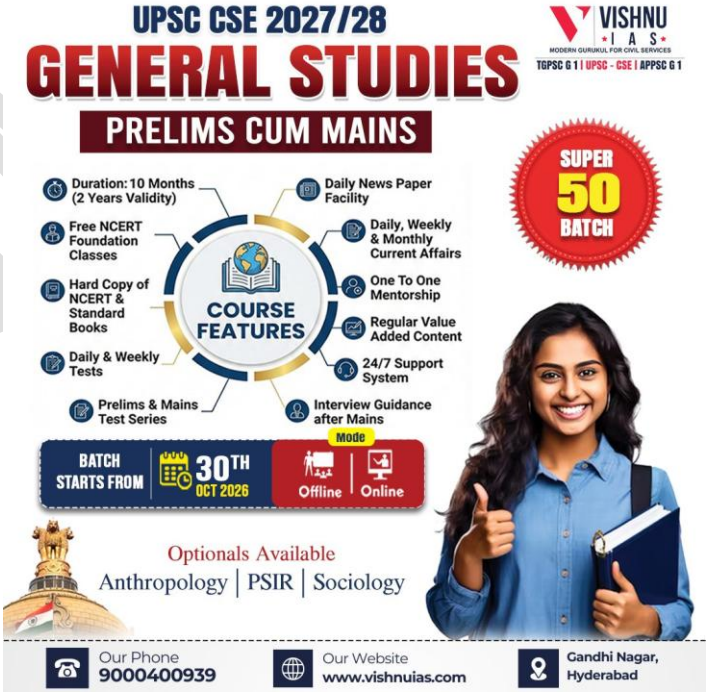
- **Climate Inequity:** Unequal historical emissions and per-capita energy consumption create tensions between developed and developing countries.
- **Climate Finance Gap:** Inadequate, inaccessible and debt-creating finance limits climate action.
- **Technology Divide:** High costs and limited access to clean technologies delay the transition.
- **Development–Environment Trade-off:** Expanding energy access while reducing emissions remains difficult.
- **Renewable Energy Constraints:** Intermittency, storage costs and critical-mineral dependence pose challenges.
- **Weak Adaptation Capacity:** Vulnerable communities face increasing climate risks and inadequate resilience infrastructure.

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Way Forward

- **Operationalise Climate Justice:** Translate CBDR-RC into equitable and measurable commitments.
- **Strengthen Climate Finance:** Mobilise predictable, accessible and concessional finance for mitigation, adaptation and loss-and-damage responses.
- **Enable Technology Transfer:** Promote affordable technologies, international research partnerships and capacity-building.
- **Ensure a Just Energy Transition:** Expand renewables, storage, modern grids and energy efficiency while supporting affected workers and communities.
- **Promote Sustainable Consumption:** Encourage resource efficiency, circular-economy practices and low-carbon lifestyles.
- **Enhance Climate Resilience:** Strengthen early-warning systems, resilient infrastructure and regional disaster-management cooperation.





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