EDITORIALS - 29TH OCT 2026

1. Hunker down (GS Paper III Disaster Management)

This editorial '**Hunker down**' was published in **The Hindu** on 29th Oct 2026, highlights how proactive **cyclone management** limited casualties while exposing forecasting, livelihood and infrastructure vulnerabilities.

Forecasting and Disaster Response

- Cyclone Arnab rapidly intensified before its October 28 landfall as a **very severe cyclonic storm**; models underestimated its strength, exposing **forecasting limitations**.
- Faster coastal movement and landfall hours before **IMD** predictions narrowed the **evacuation window** for high-risk settlements during the night.
- Winds of **125–135 kmph** accompanied rainfall exceeding **100 mm** across Anakapalli, Visakhapatnam, Kalingapatnam, Kakinada and Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh.
- **Disaster management** operations reportedly limited casualties in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha; initial no-death reports were qualified by Andhra Pradesh's Chief Minister confirming **five deaths**.
- Transport suspensions, institutional closures and power cuts reduced immediate risks but caused **socioeconomic disruption**, requiring assessment through **post-storm reviews**.

Continuing Flood and Agricultural Risks

- Odisha faced further **extreme rainfall** over incompletely drained land after its fourth-wettest monsoon, increasing **flooding and slope-failure risks**, even with lower subsequent rainfall.
- Farmers in Ganjam and Puri feared **prolonged inundation** destroying paddy; Ganjam had already lost **33% of crops** by October, compounding monsoon-related financial losses.
- Sundargarh farmers expected rainfall to ease **moisture stress** after a dry month, highlighting **uneven agricultural impacts**.
- **IMD alerts** covered Ganjam, Gajapati, Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur and Kalahandi, while the **rain belt** was expected to extend northward.

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Ecosystem-Based Cyclone Risk Reduction

- **Mangrove restoration:** Philippine mangroves avert over $1 billion in annual property damage, demonstrating their value as natural flood barriers.
- **Wetland conservation:** Chennai's Pallikaranai marsh absorbs stormwater and drains approximately 250 sq km, highlighting wetlands' role in flood management.
- **Sand dune protection:** The SHORE project includes dune restoration in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, strengthening natural coastal protection.

- **Risk-sensitive planning:** India's ICZM project supported mapping over 7,800 km of the mainland Coastal Hazard Line to guide coastal planning.
- **Floodplain restoration:** The Netherlands' Room for the River programme relocates dykes, creates side channels and lowers floodplains to improve flood discharge.
- **Community stewardship:** Fishing communities helped expand mangrove cover in Gujarat, Odisha and West Bengal under India's ICZM project.
- **Layered protection:** India's coastal interventions combine mangrove bio-shields with cyclone shelters, integrating ecological protection with disaster infrastructure.

2. India-New Zealand trade ties set to scale new heights (GS Paper II International Relations)

This editorial '**India-New Zealand trade ties set to scale new heights**' was published in **The Hindu** on 29th Oct 2026, highlights the **bilateral FTA's potential** to expand trade, investment and professional mobility through effective implementation.



Trade Potential and Market Access

- The **FTA** builds on diaspora and people-to-people ties, connecting complementary economies and strengthening India's **Indo-Pacific engagement**.
- Bilateral merchandise trade stands at **$1.2 billion**; India supplies just **1.9%** of New Zealand's $47.5 billion merchandise imports, against China's over 22%.

- Australia, the U.S., South Korea and Japan collectively supply **33%** of imports; preferential access enjoyed by most major suppliers except the U.S. disadvantaged India, which now gains **duty-free access** across offered tariff lines.
- New Zealand imported nearly **$1.2 billion** in apparel in 2025, with India supplying around 4%; removing nearly **10% tariffs** expands opportunities, alongside leather, footwear, home textiles and carpets.
- Annual imports of nearly **$7 billion in machinery** and **$5.2 billion in vehicles and automotive components**, against India's shares of around 1% or less, offer substantial manufacturing opportunities.
- Pharmaceuticals already enjoyed zero duty and around **5.5% import share**; using recognised regulators' evaluation and inspection reports can reduce **duplicative compliance** and improve access.

Services, Mobility and Investment

- India supplied less than **3%** of New Zealand's $24.2 billion services imports in 2024; FTA commitments cover **118 services sectors**, including IT, professional services, healthcare, education and finance.
- Skilled-professional pathways provide **5,000 visas** at any given time for stays up to **three years**, while enhanced student mobility and post-study work opportunities strengthen educational and professional links.
- New Zealand will facilitate **$20 billion in FDI** into India over **15 years**, with opportunities in high-value manufacturing, renewable energy, agritech, food processing, digital technologies and infrastructure.

Implementation Priorities

- Export gains require **market intelligence**, stronger distribution networks, regulatory preparedness and **commercial partnerships**; sustained investor engagement must build commercially viable projects.
- Coordinated **government–industry efforts** could double bilateral trade by **2030**, translating the agreement's opportunities into exports, investment and jobs.

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Domestic Adjustment Risks from Trade Liberalisation

- **Import competition:** India excluded dairy products from India–Australia ECTA tariff concessions, protecting a sensitive domestic sector.
- **Small-enterprise vulnerability:** The WTO's World Trade Report 2016 identifies disproportionate trade barriers facing SMEs, limiting their ability to capture trade gains.
- **Employment displacement:** The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund supports displaced workers through retraining, job-search assistance and business creation.
- **Regional disparities:** World Bank analysis found NAFTA benefited northern and central Mexico more than poorer southern states, reflecting unequal local capabilities.

- **Preference underutilisation:** European Parliament analysis identifies complex origin rules and burdensome certification as obstacles to claiming preferential tariffs.
- **Trade diversion:** Preferential tariffs may favour less efficient partner-country suppliers, reducing economic gains through distorted sourcing decisions, as WTO analysis cautions.
- **Adjustment safeguards:** India–Australia ECTA permits bilateral safeguards, including provisional measures against import surges threatening irreparable domestic-industry damage.

3. India must build a holistic care system (GS Paper I Society)

This editorial '**India must build a holistic care system**' was published in **The Hindu** on 29th Oct 2026, highlights the need to treat care as **economic infrastructure** through coordinated governance, financing and workforce development.

Care, Gender and Economic Participation

- Inadequate care services shift costs to families, especially women, through **unpaid work**, lost earnings and restricted opportunities; affordable services enable **economic participation** as population ageing increases demand.
- **PLFS 2025** found childcare and homemaking kept 44.4% of women outside the labour force; the **Time Use Survey 2024** recorded unpaid caregiving by 41% of women aged 15–59, averaging 140 minutes daily.
- Existing support includes **Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0** for early childhood care and nutrition, **Palna under Mission Shakti** for crèches, alongside Mission Vatsalya, social security and disability and senior-citizen provisions.

Structural Gaps

- **Fragmented governance** across ministries lacks a **common framework**, leaving gaps such as crèche timings incompatible with factory shifts and eldercare needs outside existing schemes.
- **UNDP** estimates 9–10 million women in low-income urban households need childcare; **24% of older persons** face daily-activity limitations, while national service-availability and coverage data remain limited.
- **Care workers**, including Anganwadi workers, home-based caregivers and domestic workers, often receive inadequate or honorary remuneration; standards, certification, decent conditions, social protection and career pathways can establish **skilled, paid work**.
- Care is budgeted as **welfare rather than investment**, while workplace norms assign caregiving to women; EAC-PM recommends **statutory paid paternity leave** in the private sector.

Integrated Governance and Implementation

- International models offer **coordination mechanisms**: Colombia's 2025 policy unites 34 entities; Brazil's 2024 policy and 2025 plan establish inter-ministerial committees; Nepal uses **care mapping** to fund pilots.
- **NITI Aayog** proposes a National Caregiving Council; the Social Justice Ministry's May 2026 workshop discussed a **National Care Economy Mission** with inter-ministerial governance, aligned financing and shared data.
- **State care roadmaps** should map demographic needs and services, identify childcare, eldercare and disability-support gaps, and establish **costed plans** with clear responsibilities.
- **UNDP and UN Women** support service mapping, worker skilling and **women-led childcare enterprises**, drawing on research and TransformCare experience across more than 50 countries.

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A Rights-Based Approach to Care

- **Dignity in care:** The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 establishes a rights-based framework emphasising dignity, respect and equitable care.
- **Personal autonomy:** Article 19 of the UN disability convention recognises recipients' choice of where and with whom they live.
- **Informed consent:** Article 25 of the UN disability convention requires healthcare based on free, informed consent, safeguarding voluntary treatment decisions.
- **Privacy protection:** Article 22 of the UN disability convention protects personal, health and rehabilitation information from unlawful disclosure.
- **Abuse prevention:** Article 16 of the UN disability convention requires safeguards against exploitation, violence and abuse within and outside homes.
- **Equal access:** Article 9 of the UN disability convention requires accessible facilities, services, transport and information, addressing barriers to care.
- **Effective redressal:** Section 28 of the Mental Healthcare Act allows service-deficiency complaints, with escalation to the Review Board and State Authority.