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VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

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1. Inside One-Shot Therapy to Lower Bad Cholesterol

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Breakthrough Gene Therapy:** VERVE-102, a novel *in vivo* gene-editing therapy, demonstrated a 62% reduction in low-density lipoprotein (LDL) or "bad" cholesterol following a single intravenous infusion.
- **Targeting the PCSK9 Gene:** The treatment permanently deactivates the PCSK9 gene in liver cells, which naturally breaks down LDL receptors, thereby allowing the liver to absorb significantly more cholesterol from the bloodstream.
- **Sustained Efficacy in Phase 1 Trial:** Results showed an 88% reduction in PCSK9 protein levels, with cholesterol-lowering effects remaining stable for up to 18 months of follow-up observation.
- **Overcoming Compliance Issues:** By providing a "one-and-done" permanent genetic alteration, this approach eliminates the lifelong burden of daily statin pills or repeated antibody injections.

- **Target High-Risk Populations:** The therapy focuses primarily on individuals with familial hypercholesterolemia or high genetic risk for premature cardiovascular disease.
- **Need for Multi-Decadal Trials:** While short-term safety is confirmed, large-scale, long-term clinical trials are required to verify permanent cardiovascular risk reduction and rule out delayed adverse effects.

Essential Definitions

- **Low-Density Lipoprotein (LDL):** Often termed "bad cholesterol," high levels deposit on artery walls as plaque, narrowing blood vessels and triggering heart attacks or strokes.
- **PCSK9 Gene:** A gene encoding a protein that degrades liver LDL receptors; disabling it boosts receptor availability to clear circulating blood cholesterol.
- **In Vivo Gene Editing:** A technology where genetic material (like messenger RNA and guide RNA inside lipid nanoparticles) is directly infused into a patient's body to permanently modify target cellular DNA.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 21 of the Indian Constitution:** Guarantees the Right to Life and Personal Liberty, which the Supreme Court interprets as including access to affordable, advanced healthcare and life-saving medical innovations.
- **Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019:** Governs the ethical standards, approval mechanisms, and safety protocols for conducting human clinical trials of novel therapeutic entities in India.
- **National Guidelines for Gene Therapy Product Development (2019):** Formulated by ICMR and Department of Biotechnology (DBT) to regulate *in vivo* gene-editing technologies, biosafety parameters, and ethical genetic research.

Conclusion VERVE-102 represents a transformative paradigm shift in cardiovascular medicine, moving treatment from lifelong chronic management toward permanent genetic prevention. Ensuring equitable access, lowering treatment costs, and establishing robust regulatory oversight will determine its real-world clinical impact globally.

UPSC Relevance Crucial for **GS Paper-III (Science & Technology)** under *Awareness in the fields of Biotechnology, Gene Editing, and Public Health*, and **GS Paper-II (Governance)** under *Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health*.

2. Behind New Tribunals Bill, Decade-Long Tussle Between Centre, SC

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Legislative Overhaul:** Parliament passed the Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2026, replacing the 2021 Act to reform tribunal administration, structure selection procedures, and address long-standing Supreme Court directions.
- **National Tribunals Commission Established:** The Bill creates an independent National Tribunals Commission to sever administrative and financial reliance on parent ministries, conduct selections, oversee inquiries, and manage a National Tribunals Data Grid.
- **Standardized Tenure Norms:** Resolves decade-long litigation by fixing a 5-year tenure for chairpersons and members, setting the upper age limit at 70 years for chairpersons and 67 years for members, with eligibility for reappointment.
- **Search-cum-Selection Panels:** A judicial member of the Commission heads the selection committee alongside a retired High Court judge, government secretary, technical member, and experts, recommending one candidate per vacancy plus a waitlisted candidate.
- **Mandatory Appointment Timeline:** The Union Government must make appointments within 3 months of receiving recommendations from the selection panel, reducing executive delays.
- **Executive Retention:** While advancing judicial independence, the Centre retains influence by appointing the Commission's leadership in consultation with the CJI, appointing its secretary, and controlling rule-making powers.

Essential Definitions

- **Tribunal:** A quasi-judicial body established by statute to adjudicate specialized disputes, reduce court pendency, and offer technical expertise.
- **National Tribunals Commission (NTC):** An independent statutory umbrella body tasked with supervising appointments, infrastructure, administration, and disciplining across tribunals nationwide.
- **Search-cum-Selection Committee:** A dedicated panel comprising judicial and executive members responsible for evaluating and recommending suitable candidates for judicial and technical vacancies.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Articles 323A and 323B:** Inserted via the 42nd Amendment Act, 1976, empowering Parliament and state legislatures to establish administrative and subject-specific tribunals.
- **Separation of Powers (Article 50):** Mandates state independence of the judiciary from executive control, serving as the constitutional cornerstone for tribunal reforms.

- **L. Chandra Kumar Case (1997):** Held that tribunal decisions remain subject to judicial review under Articles 226/227 by High Courts and established the imperative for an independent supervising agency like the NTC.
- **Madras Bar Association Judgments (2010–2021):** Invalidated short 4-year tenures, minimum age thresholds of 50, and executive-dominated selection panels for undermining judicial independence.

Conclusion The Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2026, marks a pivotal alignment between legislative policy and judicial mandates. By institutionalizing the National Tribunals Commission and standardizing tenures, the framework strengthens functional autonomy while maintaining necessary statutory checks.

UPSC Relevance Crucial for **GS Paper-II (Polity & Governance)** under *Statutory, Regulatory, and Quasi-Judicial Bodies*, *Separation of Powers & Judicial Independence*, and *Structure, Organization, and Functioning of the Executive and Judiciary*.

3. How India's New Nuclear Rules Could Favour Old Nuclear Energy Partner Russia

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Draft Rules Mandate Prior Operation:** The Department of Atomic Energy's draft rules under the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act require foreign nuclear technology to be design-certified and operational in its country of origin or another foreign nation.
- **Competitive Edge for Russia:** While Western competitors like Holtec, Rolls-Royce, and GE-Hitachi remain in design-certification stages, Russia’s Rosatom operates functional Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), such as the Akademik Lomonosov floating plant, giving it a strategic head start.
- **Targeting Localized Energy Needs:** India seeks SMR deployment for captive industrial enterprises, remote locations with weak grid access, and energy-intensive data centres requiring reliable baseload power.
- **Expansion Beyond Kudankulam:** In addition to its flagship VVER-1000 reactors at Kudankulam, Russia is pitching next-generation VVER-1200 high-capacity reactors and land/floating SMR models to India.
- **Cost Competitiveness:** Russian light-water reactors present a lower capital outlay compared to French or American alternatives, closely trailing India’s indigenous Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) at roughly ₹34 crore per MW-electric.
- **Financing and Scale Dynamics:** Serial construction of SMRs and large reactors offers a viable path to reduce high upfront capital investment and long gestation periods in clean power generation.

Essential Definitions

- **Small Modular Reactor (SMR):** Advanced nuclear power reactors with a power capacity up to 300 MW(e) per unit, built in factories and transported to sites to offer flexible, scalable, low-carbon electricity generation.
- **VVER-1200:** A Russian-designed Generation III+ pressurized water reactor with high-capacity output, enhanced safety features, and serial construction suitability.

- **Baseload Capacity:** The minimum amount of electric power required to be supplied constantly to an electrical grid over a 24-hour period.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Atomic Energy Act, 1962:** The primary legal framework governing nuclear energy development, power generation, radioactive waste disposal, and state control over nuclear materials in India.
- **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (CLNDA), 2010:** Outlines strict liability protocols and compensation mechanisms for nuclear accidents, a historically contested area for foreign equipment suppliers.
- **SHANTI Act Norms:** Introduced by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) to streamline technology imports, regulatory compliance, and safety certification for foreign reactor deployments.

Conclusion India’s operational qualification criteria under the SHANTI Act favor proven nuclear vendors like Russia, facilitating rapid SMR deployment to meet rising industrial and clean energy demands while managing capital costs. Balancing regulatory compliance with technological diversity will be critical for India's long-term energy security.

UPSC Relevance Crucial for **GS Paper-III (Science & Technology / Energy)** under *Indigenization of Technology*, *Nuclear Technology*, *Infrastructure: Energy*, and **GS Paper-II (International Relations)** regarding *Bilateral Relations with Major Powers (India-Russia Energy Partnership)*.

4. India Ratings Lifts India GDP Growth Estimate for FY27 to 6.8%

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Upward Growth Revision:** India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) revised its FY27 GDP growth forecast upward to 6.8% from 6.7%, aligning closely with the Reserve Bank of India’s updated growth projection of 6.7%.
- **Moderation from High Base:** While higher than previous estimates, the projected 6.8% growth marks a deceleration from the National Statistical Office's (NSO) provisional growth estimate of 7.6% for FY26 due to base effects.
- **Geopolitical & Tariff Risks:** Downside risks include ongoing West Asia conflicts, currency depreciation, weak global trade, and potential economic pressures from US tariffs linked to Russian crude oil purchases.

- **Agricultural & Inflationary Pressures:** The anticipated El Niño weather pattern poses risks to agricultural output, driving fuel and food inflation that could offset positive economic momentum.
- **Sensitivity to Oil Prices:** The 6.8% projection assumes Indian crude oil basket prices settling around $85/barrel; lower crude prices reduce the Current Account Deficit (CAD) but inflation risks remain.
- **Public Capex Challenges:** Weaker-than-expected capital expenditure by the central government, aimed at containing fiscal deficits, presents a key constraint to broader economic expansion.

Essential Definitions

- **Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** The total monetary or market value of all finished goods and services produced within a country's borders during a specific time period.
- **Current Account Deficit (CAD):** A measurement of a country's trade where the total value of imported goods, services, and transfers exceeds the value of exports.
- **Base Effect:** The distortion in economic percentage calculations caused by comparing current figures to exceptionally high or low figures from a corresponding previous period.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003:** Sets statutory targets for government fiscal deficit reduction, directly influencing public capex allocations.
- **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 (Flexible Inflation Targeting Framework):** Empowers the RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to maintain price stability around 4% (with a band of +/- 2%) while sustaining growth.
- **Collection of Statistics Act, 2008:** Facilitates official economic data gathering under the NSO for accurate GDP estimation and macroeconomic forecasting.

Conclusion India's upwardly revised GDP growth projection of 6.8% for FY27 reflects resilient macroeconomic fundamentals despite international trade tensions and geopolitical headwinds. Sustaining this trajectory requires prudent fiscal management, effective inflation control, and targeted private investment to offset potential agricultural and external trade shocks.

UPSC Relevance Crucial for **GS Paper-III (Indian Economy)** under *Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment*, *Inflation and Monetary Policy*, and *External Sector & Balance of Payments*.

5. Youth Don't Find Govt Banks 'Cool', Be Part of Their Lives: FM to PSBs

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Youth Engagement Drive:** Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman urged Public Sector Banks (PSBs) to enhance their appeal among tech-savvy youth by launching a month-long "Banking for Youth" campaign.
- **Modernizing Banking Experience:** PSBs were advised to offer simple, intuitive, personalized, and 24/7 digital banking services to keep pace with young consumers accustomed to smartphones.
- **Dedicated Infrastructure:** Recommendations include setting up dedicated "Yuva Kiosks" or deploying "Yuva Banking Mitra" staff at branch offices to assist young customers in navigating their financial journey.
- **Financial Literacy Focus:** The initiative aims to educate youth above 16 years on formal credit ecosystems, credit scores, government schemes, and prudent borrowing practices.
- **Balancing Innovation and Prudence:** The Finance Minister emphasized that modernizing customer appeal must not compromise core banking discipline or financial prudence.
- **Phased Closure of FCNR(B) Swap Facility:** Concurrently, the RBI decided to end its concessional foreign currency non-resident deposit swap window early following strong dollar inflows exceeding targets.

Essential Definitions

- **Public Sector Banks (PSBs):** Banks in which the majority stake (more than 50%) is held by the Central Government or State Governments, acting as key channels for financial inclusion.
- **Financial Inclusion:** The process of ensuring timely and adequate access to appropriate financial products and services for vulnerable or underserved groups at an affordable cost.
- **FCNR(B) Deposit Scheme:** Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) deposits allowed for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to maintain accounts in foreign currencies, insulated from exchange rate risks.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Banking Regulation Act, 1949:** Provides the regulatory framework for the operation, supervision, and governance of commercial banks by the Reserve Bank of India.
- **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934:** Empowers the central bank to manage currency, regulate foreign exchange facilities, and oversee credit operations across the banking sector.
- **Article 39(b) & (c) of the Constitution:** Directs state policy toward distributing material resources to serve the common good and preventing concentration of wealth, forming the foundation for public sector banking.

Conclusion To remain competitive against private peers and fintech platforms, Public Sector Banks must modernize their digital infrastructure and youth engagement strategies. Fostering early financial literacy and seamless digital access will ensure PSBs remain central to India's expanding formal economy while upholding sound financial principles.

UPSC Relevance Relevant for **GS Paper-III (Indian Economy)** under *Banking System & Financial Inclusion*, *Government Policies & Interventions*, and *Mobilization of Resources*.

6. Maharashtra's Sugarcane Dilemma: Cutters Seek a Way Out as Mills Turn to Machines

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Massive Migrant Workforce:** Nearly 10 lakh migrant sugarcane cutters—half of whom are women—migrate annually from drought-prone districts like Beed to western Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu.
- **Exploitative Contracting & Debt Bonding:** Laborers are bound through contractors (*mukadams*) via strict agreements, facing 16-hour workdays, wage deductions for missing work due to illness, and a complete absence of basic field amenities.
- **Gender Disparity & Harassment:** Couples are hired as single units with payments routed exclusively to male heads. Women laborers face severe financial, health, and social vulnerabilities, alongside a lack of maternity safeguards.
- **Shift Toward Mechanization:** Confronted with acute labor shortages, rising worker rights demands, and judicial interventions, sugar mills are rapidly deploying mechanical harvesters. Out of 3,218 harvesters in India, Maharashtra operates over 68% (2,200 units).
- **Looming Displacement:** Mechanization is expected to fully take over large fields within three years, raising critical economic livelihood concerns for traditional migrant labor families lacking alternative local employment.

Essential Definitions

- **Mukadam System:** An informal labor contracting network where intermediaries advance money to workers, binding them to seasonal, low-wage agrarian labor under exploitative terms.
- **Seasonal Migration:** The temporary movement of rural households to agricultural or industrial belts for employment during non-farming seasons due to local distress or drought.
- **Agricultural Mechanization:** The replacement of manual human labor in farming processes—such as harvesting and transportation—with automated heavy machinery.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 21 & Article 23:** Right to life with dignity and the fundamental constitutional prohibition against forced labor (*begar*) and human trafficking.
- **Article 39(e) & Article 42:** Directive Principles mandating the protection of workers' health and requiring the state to secure just, humane work conditions and maternity relief.

- **Code on Social Security, 2020 & Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008:** Statutory frameworks designed to extend healthcare, disability benefits, and social welfare schemes to seasonal unorganized workers.
- **Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979:** Regulates conditions of service and safety for migrant laborers employed across state borders or through contractors.

Conclusion While technological transition through mechanization offers efficiency gains for India's sugar industry, it risks exacerbating socio-economic distress for vulnerable seasonal laborers. Ensuring comprehensive social security coverage, alternative rural employment generation, and targeted skill development programs is essential to prevent large-scale displacement and protect agrarian livelihoods.

UPSC Relevance Crucial for **GS Paper-II (Governance & Social Justice)** under *Vulnerable Sections of Population*, *Issues Relating to Poverty and Hunger*, and **GS Paper-III (Indian Economy)** under *Agricultural Marketing & Technology*, *Issues related to Direct and Indirect Farm Subsidies*, and *Employment & Seasonal Migration*.

7. PM CARES Fund Sees Drop in Donations, Spending

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Sharp Decline in Inflows:** Total contributions to the PM CARES Fund dropped to ₹479.96 crore in FY 2024-25, comprising ₹479.04 crore in domestic donations and ₹92 lakh in foreign contributions.
- **All-Time High Corpus Balance:** Despite lower annual receipts, the closing balance reached a peak of ₹8,452.06 crore at the end of FY 2024-25, marking a 17.83% increase from ₹7,173.03 crore in FY 2023-24.
- **Record Low Annual Expenditure:** Fund spending plummeted to a five-year low of ₹87.85 lakh in FY 2024-25, compared to ₹15.59 crore in FY 2023-24 and peak spending of ₹3,976.17 crore during the pandemic year 2020-21.

- **Significant Interest Income:** The fund earned ₹475.14 crore purely as interest income during FY 2024-25 (including ₹469.37 crore from fixed deposits and ₹5.76 crore from regular bank accounts).
- **Peak Historical Collections:** Contributions peaked during FY 2020-21 amid the second Covid wave, collecting ₹7,183.77 crore in domestic donations and ₹494.93 crore in foreign donations.
- **Governing Board Composition:** Established as a public charitable trust on March 27, 2020, the Prime Minister serves as the ex-officio chairman, alongside ex-officio trustees including the Union Ministers of Defence, Home Affairs, and Finance.

Essential Definitions

- **PM CARES Fund:** Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund; a dedicated public charitable trust established to deal with public health emergencies or other distress situations.
- **Public Charitable Trust:** A non-governmental legal structure created under trust law for the benefit of the general public or specific sections of society, operating outside government budgetary frameworks.

• Contributions received in the PM CARES Fund and closing balance (amount in Rs Crore)

	Receipts		Opening Balance	Total Receipts	Total Payments	Closing Balance
	Domestic	Foreign				
2019-20	3076.85	0.39	0	3076.62	0.0002	3076.62
2020-21	7183.77	494.93	3076.62	10990	3976.17	7013.99
2021-22	1896.76	40.12	7013.99	9131.94	3716.29	5415.65
2022-23	909.64	2.57	5415.65	6721	437.87	6283.68
2023-24	681.81	1.13	6283.68	7188.63	15.59	7173.03
2024-25	479.04	0.92	7173.03	8452.94	0.87	8452.06

- **Interest Income & TDS Refund:** Revenue earned from principal amounts parked in financial instruments like bank fixed deposits, along with tax refunds deducted at source on such earnings.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Registration Act, 1908:** The legal enactment under which the PM CARES Fund trust deed was officially registered in New Delhi on March 27, 2020.
- **Income Tax Act, 1961 (Section 80G):** Provides 100% tax exemption for voluntary contributions made to notified charitable trusts.
- **Companies Act, 2013 (Section 135):** Recognizes contributions made to the PM CARES Fund as eligible Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure.
- **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010:** Grants special exemption to the PM CARES Fund to receive foreign donations without standard registration hurdles.

- **Exclusion from CAG & RTI Scrutiny:** Because the fund is not financed through the Consolidated Fund of India, the central government maintains it is not a "public authority" under Section 2(h) of the RTI Act, 2005, thereby keeping it outside mandatory CAG audit and parliamentary review.

Conclusion While the PM CARES Fund maintains substantial liquidity with an all-time high balance, declining annual donations and minimal recent expenditure highlight a post-pandemic shift toward corpus accumulation. Rebalancing accumulation with active deployment in public health infrastructure remains key to fulfilling its core humanitarian objectives.

UPSC Relevance Crucial for **GS Paper-II (Polity & Governance)** under *Public Charitable Trusts vs Parliamentary Control*, *Transparency & Accountability (RTI Act, CAG Audit)*, and **GS Paper-III (Economy)** under *Disaster Management Financing* and *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*.

8. Why New Rules in Maharashtra Give CM Veto Power Over Any Minister

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Overriding Authority to Chief Minister:** The Maharashtra government notified the *Maharashtra Government Rules of Business, 2026*, replacing the 1975 regulations, explicitly empowering the Chief Minister to override or review any minister's decision in public interest.
- **Judicial Precedent Alignment:** The rule amendment follows a March 2023 Bombay High Court (Nagpur Bench) ruling which held that under the legacy 1975 rules, the CM lacked statutory supervisory authority to alter or stay decisions taken by a department's minister-in-charge.
- **Rule 13(5) Inclusions & Exceptions:** The newly inserted Rule 13(5) allows the CM to override departmental decisions provided reasons are recorded in writing and the action serves the public interest, though this power excludes quasi-judicial matters.
- **Enhanced Role of Chief Secretary:** The administrative workflow requires cabinet-bound proposals and inter-departmental matters to be routed through the Chief Secretary, standardizing inter-ministerial clearances prior to order issuance.
- **Gubernatorial Submission Mandatory:** The rules specify 22 distinct categories of administrative matters—including law and order, Centre-State relations, ordinances, and welfare of SCs, STs, OBCs, and minorities—that must be submitted to the Governor before issuing final orders.
- **Impact on Coalition Dynamics:** By formalizing the CM's executive veto, the framework curtails cabinet ministers' unilateral domain autonomy, streamlining governance while altering political power balances within coalition governments.

Essential Definitions

- **Rules of Business:** Statutory procedural regulations framed by a state government to allocate administrative portfolios and define decision-making workflows among executive bodies.
- **Chief Minister as Primus Inter Pares:** The constitutional principle positioning the CM as "first among equals" in the Council of Ministers, driving collective responsibility and administrative cohesion.
- **Quasi-Judicial Orders:** Administrative rulings involving rights determination by executive authorities, which are insulated from political or supervisory override.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 166(2) and 166(3):** Authorizes the Governor to make rules for the more convenient transaction of government business and allocation of work among ministers.
- **Article 163 and Article 164:** Mandates a Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister to aid and advise the Governor, maintaining collective responsibility to the Legislative Assembly.
- **Judicial Review:** High Courts retain authority under Article 226 to scrutinize whether executive action complies with statutory Rules of Business and Constitutional mandates.

Conclusion The framing of the *Maharashtra Government Rules of Business, 2026* bridges a critical administrative gap highlighted by judicial decisions. By codifying the Chief Minister's supervisory override while safeguarding quasi-judicial decisions, the framework balances cabinet solidarity, executive accountability, and legal transparency in state administration.

UPSC Relevance Crucial for **GS Paper-II (Polity & Governance)** under *Structure, Organization, and Functioning of the Executive*, *Executive Rules of Business (Article 166)*, *Collective Responsibility vs Individual Ministerial Discretion*, and *Role of Chief Minister and Governor*.

9. BRICS Environment Ministers Oppose EU's Carbon Border Tax

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Joint Opposition to CBAM:** Environment and climate ministers from the 9-member BRICS bloc collectively opposed the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), characterizing it as a unilateral, punitive, and discriminatory trade barrier that violates international law.
- **Full CBAM Enforcement in 2026:** Following its initial reporting-only phase launched on October 1, 2023, CBAM became fully operational on January 1, 2026, requiring EU importers to purchase certificates corresponding to embedded carbon emissions in imported goods like steel, iron, cement, fertilizers, and aluminum.
- **Call for Climate Finance Mobilization:** Member nations urged developed countries to scale up financial aid for climate adaptation and fulfill commitments under the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) established at COP30 in Belém, Brazil, aiming to triple adaptation finance for developing nations by 2035.
- **Affirmation of CBDR-RC Principle:** The joint declaration reiterated the fundamental UN principle of "Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities" (CBDR-RC), stressing that global climate actions must be voluntary and tailored to national circumstances.

- **Impact on Developing Economies:** BRICS nations expressed deep concern that unilateral trade levies like CBAM undermine developing countries' domestic capacity to build climate resilience, divert resources away from climate adaptation, and distort multilateral trade mechanisms.
- **Leadership Handover:** The 12th BRICS Environment Ministers' meeting in New Delhi concluded a year of technical deliberations under India's chairmanship, officially handing over hosting duties for the 13th edition to China for 2027.

Essential Definitions

- **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM):** A carbon tariff levied by the European Union on carbon-intensive goods imported into the EU, designed to equalize the price of carbon between domestic production and imports to prevent "carbon leakage."
- **Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR-RC):** A guiding principle within the UNFCCC recognizing that while all nations share responsibility for addressing climate change, developed countries bear a higher historical responsibility and capacity to act.
- **New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG):** A financial target under the Paris Agreement framework establishing scalable climate finance allocations from developed to developing nations post-2025.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):** Article 3.5 explicitly states that climate measures should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade.
- **World Trade Organization (WTO) Principles:** CBAM faces scrutiny under Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) treatment (Article I) and National Treatment (Article III) under GATT 1994, which prohibit discriminatory tariffs on like products.
- **Article 51(c) of the Indian Constitution:** Directs the State to foster respect for international law and treaty obligations, providing a constitutional anchor for India's multilateral climate negotiations.

Conclusion The collective stance of the BRICS bloc highlights growing global south resistance against unilateral climate-trade policies like the EU's CBAM. Achieving meaningful global decarbonization requires cooperative climate finance frameworks and technology transfer rather than coercive trade levies that penalize developing economies.

UPSC Relevance Crucial for **GS Paper-II (International Relations)** under *Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings involving India (BRICS)*, *Effect of Policies of Developed Countries on India's Interests*, and **GS Paper-III (Environment & Economy)** under *Environmental Pollution and Degradation*, *Climate Change Negotiations (COP30/UNFCCC)*, and *International Trade & Tariffs (WTO)*.

10. Private Funding Fueling India's Olympic Dreams

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Funding Shortage in National Federations:** Except for cricket, most Indian national sports federations operate on tight budgets, leaving major Olympic disciplines like weightlifting, archery, and boxing severely underfunded.
- **Rise of Private Non-Profit Initiatives:** Private philanthropic entities like Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ)—founded by legends Geet Sethi and Prakash Padukone—raised ₹92.1 crore in donations in 2024-25, exceeding the combined income of six major national sports federations.
- **Outpacing Central Government Schemes:** OGQ's direct spending on elite athletes reached ₹77 crore in 2024-25, surpassing the government-run Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) allocation of ₹34.8 crore.
- **Targeted Support vs. Broad Outreach:** While TOPS supports a broader pool of athletes (over 300-400 per cycle), OGQ focuses intensively on high-potential Olympic and Paralympic disciplines, funding travel, professional coaching, medical care, and equipment.
- **Corporate CSR and Philanthropy:** Corporate support for Olympic prospects has expanded significantly, driven by major corporate groups and foundations using Section 8 non-profit frameworks.
- **Proven Impact on Medal Tally:** Private-backed interventions have delivered tangible results, supporting 13 of India's 21 medalists over the last four Olympic Games and 33 of 48 Paralympic medalists across the last two cycles.

Essential Definitions

- **Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ):** Registered as the Foundation for Promotion of Sports and Games, a Section 8 non-profit organization dedicated to bridging gaps in training, equipment, and sports science for prospective Olympic and Paralympic medalists.

- **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS):** A flagship program initiated by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to identify and provide financial and technical assistance to top Indian athletes.
- **Section 8 Company:** A company incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013, established for promoting charity, sports, education, or social welfare, where profits are strictly reinvested into its core objectives rather than paid out as dividends.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Seventh Schedule (State List, Entry 33):** Grants state legislatures primary jurisdiction over sports, entertainment, and amusements, though national federations receive central oversight and funding.
- **National Sports Development Code of India, 2011:** Regulates governance, financial transparency, tenure limits, and election procedures for recognized National Sports Federations (NSFs).
- **Companies Act, 2013 (Section 135):** Mandates Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) spending, explicitly recognizing the training to promote rural, nationally recognized, Paralympic, and Olympic sports as eligible CSR activities.

Conclusion Private sports philanthropy and targeted corporate funding are essential complements to public programs like TOPS. As India bids to host international events like the 2036 Olympics, fostering public-private partnerships will prove critical for scaling up sports science, infrastructure, and elite athlete development across non-cricket disciplines.

UPSC Relevance Relevant for **GS Paper-II (Governance & Social Justice)** under *Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services*, *Role of NGOs, Philanthropies, and Private Stakeholders*, and **GS Paper-III (Indian Economy)** under *Mobilization of Resources* and *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*.