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THE HINDU

Building an Atmanirbhar philanthropy ecosystem

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

Mains: General Studies 2

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Why in Focus?

- India's **domestic private philanthropy** has grown rapidly, driven by **family philanthropy**, **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, and **individual donors**.
- Against this shift, the debate around the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA)** focuses on balancing **effective regulation of foreign funding** with the growth of a **self-reliant domestic philanthropy ecosystem**.

Key Highlights:

- Domestic private philanthropy has reached over **₹1.18 lakh crore annually**, more than five times the foreign philanthropic inflows of around **₹22,000 crore**.
- Of roughly **six lakh voluntary organisations** listed on the **NGO Darpan portal**, only about **14,500** have active **FCRA registration**.
 - ◆ **Foreign contributions have themselves doubled over the decade, from about ₹10,000 crore to around ₹22,000 crore.**

- CSR funding** has emerged as an important source of domestic philanthropy, contributing over **₹40,000 crore annually** to development activities.
- The article argues that **foreign funding should be regulated**, but the regulatory system should be **proportionate, predictable, and efficient**, without unnecessarily disrupting genuine organisations.
- India's growing number of **high-net-worth individuals** and increasing participation in **digital payments and financial markets** offer significant potential to expand domestic philanthropy.

NPO DARPAN Portal is a platform, wherein Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs), can **register themselves to obtain a Unique Identity Number**. This number is **mandatory for all NPOs who are seeking grants** from the Ministries/Departments of Government of India, All the States/UT. NGO Darpan is a government portal managed by **NITI Aayog** to **facilitate transparency and partnership** between NGOs and various ministries of the Government of India.

Implications:

- Delays in **FCRA renewals**, long processing times, and cancellation of registrations have affected some organisations working in areas such as **education, health, livelihoods, and rural development**.
- The article highlights the need to distinguish between minor **administrative errors** and



serious violations such as **fraud** while enforcing FCRA rules.

- India's existing **tax incentives for charitable donations** may not be sufficient to encourage greater philanthropic contributions from wealthy individuals.

Way Forward:

- Improve **FCRA administration** through clear deficiency notices, time to correct errors, opportunities for clarification, and an **independent appellate mechanism**.
- Use the **FCRA 2.0 platform** to simplify compliance and introduce more **risk-based supervision**.
- Encourage greater domestic giving by strengthening **tax incentives** and enabling donations of **listed shares** to eligible charitable organisations.
- Use digital platforms and the **Social Stock Exchange** to encourage wider participation by ordinary citizens in philanthropy.

The **Social Stock Exchange (SSE)** is a distinct segment of the existing Stock Exchange designed to help social enterprises **raise funds from the public** using a stock exchange framework.

Mains Question:

India's growing domestic philanthropy can play an important role in financing social development. Discuss the need to balance effective regulation of foreign contributions with the creation of a self-reliant philanthropy ecosystem. (250 Words)

What India's young people are saying about families

Prelims: General Studies Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies 2

Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Why in Focus?

- The **UNFPA Demographic Futures Survey**

(2026) highlights that India's declining fertility rate reflects social progress, while young people continue to aspire to family life but face growing economic, social and environmental barriers.

The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Demographic Futures Survey** is the world's largest survey on young people's aspirations and barriers to marriage and parenthood. It covered 108,000+ young adults across 73 countries to understand the factors shaping fertility choices.

Key Highlights

- The UNFPA Demographic Futures Survey (2026) was **released on World Population Day (July 11)**, covering 108,000+ young adults across 73 countries to examine barriers to marriage and parenthood.
- India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has declined to 2.0, below the replacement level of 2.1**, reflecting progress in girls' education, maternal healthcare, contraception and public health.

Total Fertility Rate (TFR): The average number of children a woman is expected to have during her reproductive years, based on current age-specific fertility rates.

Replacement Level Fertility: The fertility rate at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next, without migration. It is generally 2.1 children per woman.

- Most young Indians still aspire to have families**, with two children remaining the preferred family size.
- Financial insecurity, high housing costs, job instability and concerns about child-rearing** are the primary reasons for delaying marriage and parenthood.
- Persistent gender inequality continues, with women bearing a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work** and having much lower participation in paid employment.
- Climate change, economic uncertainty, conflicts, youth unemployment and mental health concerns** are increasingly influencing reproductive decisions.

- India's demographic transition varies widely across States, **from Bihar (TFR 2.7) to Sikkim (TFR 1.0), requiring State-specific policy responses.**

Implications

- Balancing demographic transition while safeguarding reproductive rights and individual choice** remains a key policy challenge.
- Wide demographic variations across States require data-driven and State-specific policy interventions.**
- Rapid urbanisation has increased the cost of housing, healthcare and education,** making family formation more difficult.
- Limited coordination among health, labour, education and social welfare sectors weakens support** for young families.

Way Forward

- Strengthen social protection through affordable childcare, housing support and schemes like **Palna Scheme.**

The **Palna Scheme** is an Indian government initiative under the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) that provides safe, quality day-care and crèche facilities for children aged 6 months to 6 years. Reorganized from the erstwhile National Creche Scheme, it aims to empower working mothers by offering childcare, nutritional support, and health monitoring.

- Promote gender equality by ensuring equal caregiving responsibilities** and improving women's labour force participation.
- Create quality employment through skill development and job creation under Skill India Mission.**
- Ensure family-friendly workplaces by expanding paid parental leave,** flexible work arrangements and workplace childcare facilities.
- Adopt State-specific population policies based on fertility trends** while safeguarding reproductive rights and informed choice.

Mains Question

"India's declining fertility rate reflects changing socio-economic realities rather than declining aspirations for family life." Discuss. Examine the policy measures required to harness India's demographic dividend while ensuring reproductive choice and gender equality. (250 Words)

Is Yashwant Varma still a judge?

Prelims: General Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance.

Mains: General studies 2

Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

Why in Focus?

- Parliament may soon examine the inquiry report under the **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968** related to allegations against former High Court judge **Yashwant Varma.**
- The issue brings focus to the **tension between judicial independence and accountability.**

Key Highlights:

- The issue started in **March 2025** when **partially burnt currency notes** were found at the judge's official residence.
- He **resigned on April 9, 2026**, but confusion continues as some official records still list him as a sitting judge.
- As per the Constitution, **judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts can resign at will** by writing to the President - **no acceptance is required.**
- This principle was confirmed in **Union of India vs Gopal Chandra Misra (1978)**, where the Court held that resignation becomes effective automatically (**ex proprio vigore**).
- In contrast, **MPs and MLAs need acceptance of resignation** under **Article 101(3)(b)** and **Article 190(3)(b).**
- The **Inquiry Committee report remains valid**



even after resignation and must be placed before Parliament.

- However, **removal proceedings cannot continue**, since the person is no longer holding the office of a judge.

Implications:

- The present system creates a clear **accountability gap**, as a judge can resign before impeachment and avoid formal removal, which weakens the spirit of institutional responsibility.
- There is also **administrative inconsistency**, as delays in updating official records create confusion about whether a person is still a judge, raising legal and procedural concerns.
- Even though the inquiry report exists, **Parliament's role becomes limited**, since it cannot proceed with removal or fully debate the issue once resignation takes effect.
- Over time, such unresolved cases can lead to a **decline in public trust**, as allegations remain without a clear and conclusive outcome.

Way Forward:

- There is a need for a **constitutional amendment** to ensure that resignation is not automatically effective when removal proceedings are pending.
- Give the **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** the power to accept or reject such resignations to maintain balance.
- Amend the **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968** to allow **discussion of reports even after resignation**.
- Ensure **quick correction of official records** to avoid confusion.
- Build stronger **judicial accountability systems** (ethics codes, transparent inquiries).

The **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968** regulates the detailed statutory procedure for the removal of **Supreme Court and High Court judges** by Parliament on the constitutional grounds of **proved misbehaviour or incapacity**.

Mains Question:

“Judicial independence is a cornerstone of democracy, but it must be balanced with accountability.” Discuss in the context of resignation and removal of judges in India. (15 mark, 250 words)

KEYWORDS

World Population Day

- World Population Day is **observed annually on 11 July** and was established by the **Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1989**, inspired by the “**Day of Five Billion**” (11 July 1987), when the world's population was estimated to have reached five billion.
- The **theme of World Population Day 2026** is “**Realizing the hopes and aspirations of young people** – today and for the future,” highlighting investment in youth, education, health and reproductive rights.
- The **United Nations General Assembly, through Resolution 45/216 (1990)**, endorsed the annual observance of World Population Day.
- The 2026 theme is based on the UNFPA Demographic Futures Survey, which gathered responses from over 100,000 young adults aged 18–39 across 73 countries on relationships, parenthood and life aspirations.
- **World Population Day focuses on population issues such as family planning, gender equality, maternal health, reproductive rights**, and sustainable development rather than population control alone.

Species In News

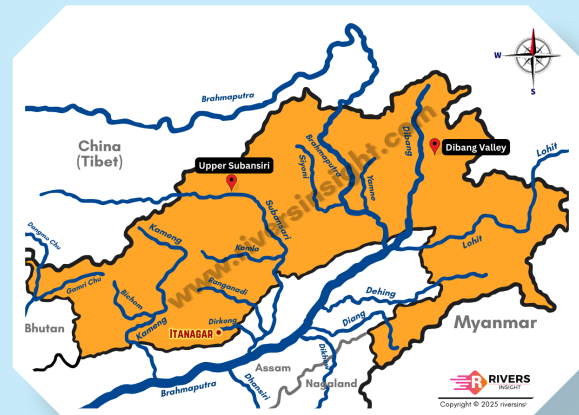
White-Bellied Heron

- The **White-bellied Heron** (*Ardea insignis*) is one of the world's **rarest and most elusive birds**, found along **fast-flowing rivers** surrounded by **mature forests**.
- In India, its population is estimated at only **6–9 individuals**, distributed across the **Noa-Dehing, Lahm, and Lohit rivers**.
- The **Lahm River**, a tributary of the **Lohit River**, and the wider river basin support around **70% of India's White-bellied Heron population**.
- The species inhabits **Himalayan river systems** up to elevations of about **1,500 metres** and prefers areas with **minimal human disturbance**.
- It feeds **only on fish**, hunting mainly in **shallow waters**, and depends on **mature riparian forests and tall trees** for **nesting and roosting**.
- The species was once recorded in parts of **Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar**, but is now restricted to pockets of **Arunachal Pradesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar**.
- It is listed as **Critically Endangered** on the **IUCN Red List** and protected under **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- Major threats include the **1,200-MW Kalai-II Hydroelectric Project** on the **Lohit River**, **habitat loss**, **tourism**, **sand extraction**, and **pollution**.



Places In News

Lohit River



- The **Lohit River** originates in the **Zayal Chu range of eastern Tibet** and flows for about **200 km through Arunachal Pradesh** before reaching **Assam**.
- It enters India through **Anjaw district**, flows through the **Mishmi Hills**, and passes through **Walong, Hawaii, and Tezu** before joining the **Brahmaputra**.
- It is a **fast-flowing river** that descends from the **Tibetan Plateau** through **deep valleys and narrow gorges**.
- The Lohit is known as the **“River of Blood”** because **iron-rich laterite soil** gives its water a **reddish colour**, especially after heavy rainfall.
- The river is associated with **Parashuram Kund**, a sacred site linked to **Parashurama**, an avatar of **Vishnu**.
- According to mythology, **Parashurama** bathed in **Parashuram Kund** to cleanse himself of the sin of killing his mother **Renuka**.

Mount Toubkal

- **Mount Toubkal** is in the news because in July 2026, an eight-year-old girl from Thrissur, Kerala, named **Iya Krish** successfully reached its summit, becoming the **youngest Asian** to accomplish this feat.
- Standing at an elevation of **4,167 meters** (13,671 feet), it is the **highest peak** in



the **Atlas Mountains**, the country of **Morocco**, and the entire **North African region**.

- The mountain is located within the **High Atlas subrange**, which is a **folded mountain system** formed by the **convergent tectonic collision** between the **African continent** and the **Iberian Peninsula**.
- Unlike many surrounding peaks made of sedimentary rock, the **Toubkal massif** is largely composed of **volcanic rocks**, and it acts as a crucial **climatic barrier** separating the moist **Mediterranean coastline** from the arid **Sahara Desert**.
- The broader mountain system surrounding Toubkal is primarily inhabited by indigenous **Berber communities** and holds significant **natural resources**, including **phosphates, iron ore, and lead**.

