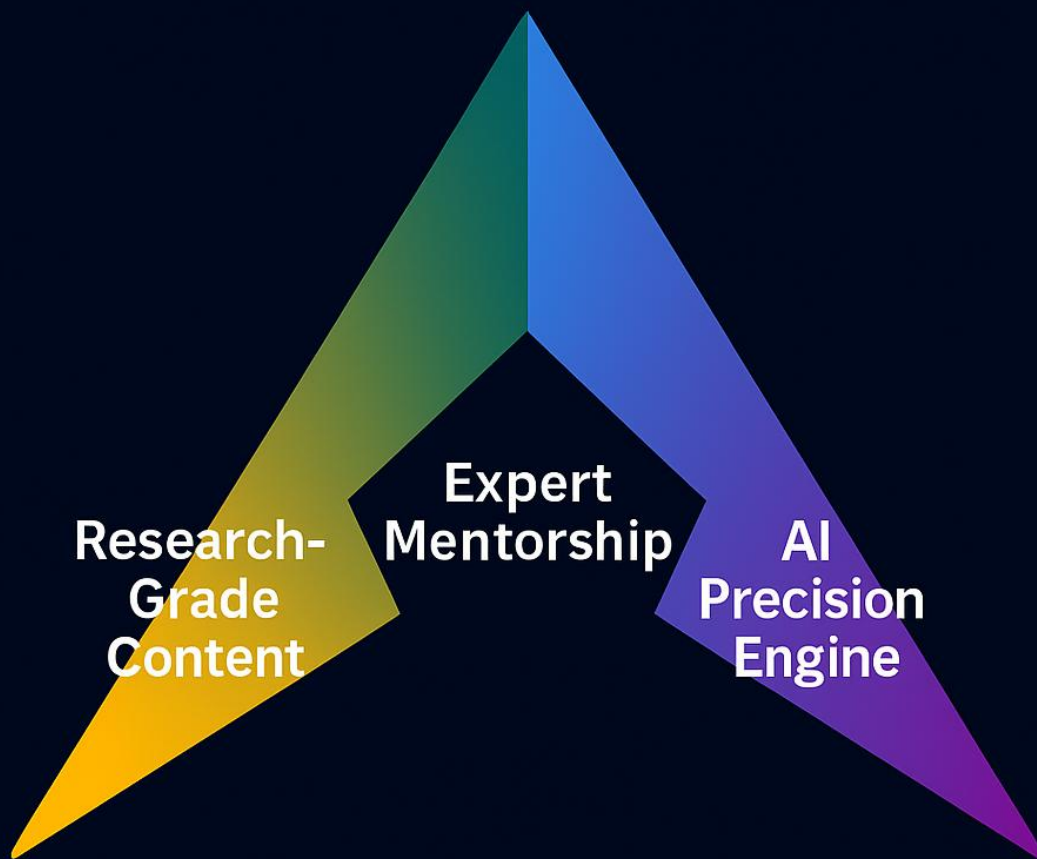


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GS Paper II: International Relations

1. India-Indonesia Strategic Partnership: Deepening Maritime and Indo-Pacific Cooperation

a. Introduction

India and Indonesia are two of the most important maritime powers in the Indo-Pacific, connected by centuries of civilisational exchanges, maritime trade and shared strategic interests. Located at the confluence of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, both countries play a crucial role in safeguarding regional stability, maritime security and global trade routes.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Indonesia resulted in agreements on defence exports, maritime cooperation, critical minerals and the development of Sabang Port, signalling renewed momentum in the India-Indonesia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The visit reinforces India's Act East Policy and its vision of a Free, Open and Inclusive Indo-Pacific (FOIP).



b. Background Context

India and Indonesia elevated their bilateral relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, expanding cooperation beyond traditional trade to encompass:

- Defence.
- Maritime security.
- Connectivity.
- Critical technologies.
- Economic resilience.
- Emerging technologies.

Both countries are founding members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and important stakeholders in the Indo-Pacific. Their shared commitment to international law, freedom of navigation and peaceful dispute resolution provides a strong foundation for long-term strategic cooperation.

Indonesia's strategic geography and regional influence make it one of India's most important partners in Southeast Asia.

c. Why Indonesia Matters for India

Strategic Geography

Indonesia lies close to the Strait of Malacca, one of the world's busiest maritime chokepoints through which a substantial share of global trade and energy supplies passes.

Ensuring stability in this region is vital for India's:

- Maritime security.
- Trade.
- Energy security.
- Supply chain resilience.

ASEAN Leadership

Indonesia is:

- The largest economy in ASEAN.
- The most populous country in Southeast Asia.

Its leadership significantly shapes ASEAN's regional priorities and supports ASEAN centrality in Indo-Pacific affairs.

Indo-Pacific Vision

Both countries support a:

- Free, Open and Inclusive Indo-Pacific (FOIP).
- Rules-based regional order.
- Freedom of navigation.
- Peaceful settlement of disputes.

Critical Minerals Partnership

Indonesia possesses abundant reserves of:

- Nickel.
- Rare earth elements.
- Other strategic minerals.

These resources are indispensable for:

- Electric vehicles.
- Batteries.
- Semiconductors.
- Renewable energy technologies.

Building upon these strategic complementarities, bilateral cooperation has expanded across several important sectors.

d. Key Areas of Cooperation

Defence Cooperation

Proposed export of:

- BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles.
- Astra air-to-air missile systems.

Expanded collaboration in:

- Defence technology.
- Military training.
- Defence industrial cooperation.
- Capacity building.

Maritime Security

Both countries are strengthening cooperation through:

- Development of Sabang Port.
- Maritime domain awareness.
- Naval cooperation.
- Coastal surveillance.
- Protection of Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs).

Critical Minerals

Cooperation has expanded in:

- Nickel.
- Rare earth elements.
- Critical mineral processing.

These partnerships support resilient supply chains for:

- Semiconductors.
- Batteries.
- Clean energy.
- Advanced manufacturing.

Economic Partnership

Growing cooperation includes:

- Trade.
- Investment.
- Industrial collaboration.
- Connectivity.
- Supply chain resilience.

These initiatives complement India's broader Act East Policy.

Together, these areas of cooperation significantly strengthen India's strategic position in the Indo-Pacific.

e. Strategic Significance

Maritime Security

Closer cooperation strengthens India's presence near one of the world's most strategically important maritime corridors.

It enhances:

- Maritime domain awareness.
- Sea lane security.
- Regional stability.

Defence Diplomacy

Growing defence exports support:

- Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- Indigenous defence manufacturing.
- Strategic partnerships.
- Defence industrial cooperation.

Economic Security

Critical mineral cooperation diversifies supply chains for:

- Semiconductors.
- Electric vehicles.
- Renewable energy.
- High-technology industries.

Strengthening ASEAN Engagement

Indonesia serves as India's principal gateway to deeper engagement with:

- ASEAN.
- Southeast Asia.
- Indo-Pacific regional architecture.

Multipolar Indo-Pacific

The partnership contributes to:

- Strategic autonomy.
- Inclusive regional cooperation.
- Rules-based maritime order.
- Regional balance of power.

Despite strong strategic convergence, several implementation challenges remain.

f. Key Challenges

Slow Project Implementation

Projects such as Sabang Port have experienced delays because of:

- Financing constraints.
- Administrative procedures.
- Institutional coordination challenges.

Limited Private Investment

Private-sector participation remains relatively limited in:

- Critical mineral exploration.
- Processing.
- Downstream manufacturing.

Strategic Competition

China's expanding economic and strategic influence across Southeast Asia requires India to maintain sustained engagement and long-term partnerships.

Implementation Capacity

The success of bilateral agreements depends upon:

- Political commitment.
- Timely execution.
- Effective institutional coordination.
- Regular review mechanisms.

Addressing these challenges will require sustained diplomatic engagement and stronger economic cooperation.

g. Way Forward

Accelerate Connectivity Projects

Fast-track implementation of:

- Sabang Port.
- Maritime connectivity initiatives.
- Logistics cooperation.

through stronger institutional coordination.

Deepen Defence Cooperation

Expand:

- Defence manufacturing.
- Joint exercises.
- Naval cooperation.
- Maritime domain awareness.
- Coastal security.

Build Trusted Supply Chains

Enhance collaboration in:

- Critical minerals.
- Clean energy.
- Advanced manufacturing.
- Semiconductors.
- Emerging technologies.

Expand Economic Engagement

Promote:

- Trade.
- Investment.
- Tourism.
- Industrial partnerships.
- Private-sector participation.

Strengthen Regional Cooperation

Continue close coordination through:

- ASEAN.
- Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- Act East Policy.
- Indo-Pacific initiatives.

to promote an inclusive, rules-based and multipolar Indo-Pacific.

Conclusion

India-Indonesia relations have evolved into a comprehensive strategic partnership that integrates maritime security, defence cooperation, critical mineral security, economic resilience and Indo-Pacific governance. As geopolitical competition intensifies in the region, deeper collaboration between these two maritime democracies will strengthen ASEAN centrality, resilient supply chains, secure sea lanes and a rules-based Indo-Pacific, while advancing India's Act East Policy and long-term strategic interests.

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

2. Right to be Forgotten: Balancing Privacy, Free Speech and Open Justice

a. Introduction

The rapid expansion of the digital ecosystem has fundamentally altered the manner in which personal information is stored, accessed and disseminated. Judicial records, news reports and social media content can remain permanently searchable online, often affecting an individual's reputation long after the underlying event has lost public relevance. This has brought renewed attention to the Right to be Forgotten (RTBF), which seeks to reconcile the constitutional values of privacy, dignity and personal autonomy with freedom of expression, judicial transparency and the principle of open justice.

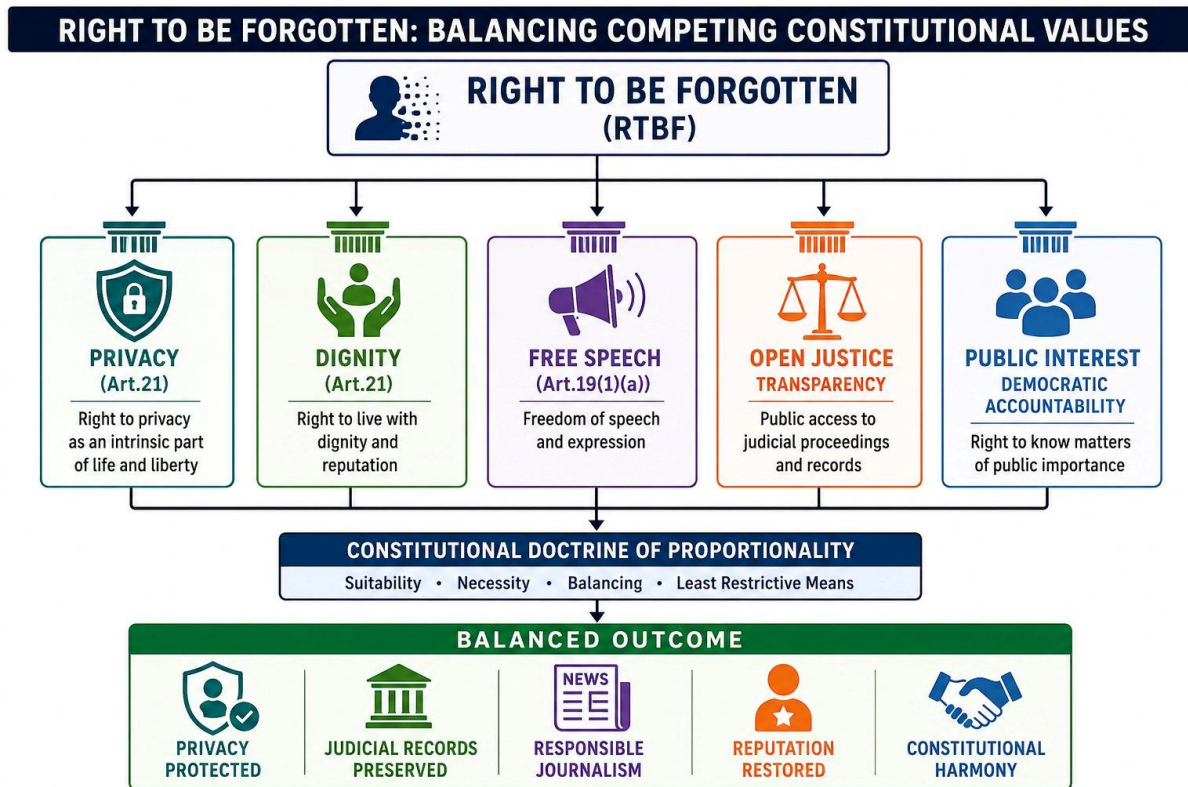
In *Laksh Vir Singh Yadav v. Union of India* (2026), the Delhi High Court recognised the Right to be Forgotten as an aspect of the fundamental right to privacy under Article 21 and laid down guiding principles for balancing these competing constitutional interests.

b. Background Context

The digital age has enabled permanent online accessibility of personal information, making it difficult for individuals to move beyond past legal disputes, acquittals or resolved controversies. While transparency is essential for democratic accountability, unrestricted digital permanence may undermine an individual's dignity, rehabilitation and informational privacy.

Recognising this challenge, courts have increasingly explored mechanisms that protect privacy without eroding the constitutional principles of open justice and freedom of speech.

Against this backdrop, the Right to be Forgotten has emerged as an important component of modern privacy jurisprudence.



c. What is the Right to be Forgotten?

The Right to be Forgotten (RTBF) enables an individual to seek the erasure, anonymisation or de-indexing of personal information from the digital domain where its continued public availability causes disproportionate harm and no longer serves a legitimate public interest.

Core Objective

The right primarily seeks to:

- Protect informational privacy.
- Safeguard personal dignity.
- Prevent perpetual digital stigma.

Scope

The Right to be Forgotten generally does not require deletion of judicial records or historical facts.

Instead, it focuses on limiting the discoverability of personal information, particularly through internet search engines, while preserving authentic legal records.

The Delhi High Court's judgment provides important constitutional guidance on how this balance should be achieved.

d. Delhi High Court Judgment: Key Principles

Recognition under Article 21

The Court recognised the Right to be Forgotten as an aspect of:

- Informational privacy.

- Human dignity.
- Personal autonomy.

protected under Article 21.

Proportionality-Based Approach

The Court emphasised balancing:

- Privacy.
- Freedom of speech and expression (Article 19(1)(a)).
- Open justice.
- Public interest.

through the constitutional doctrine of proportionality.

Preference for Limited Remedies

Instead of deleting judicial decisions, the Court preferred:

- Name masking.
- Anonymisation.
- De-indexing.

wherever appropriate.

Preservation of Judicial Records

Judgments continue to remain accessible through:

- Official court records.
- Case numbers.
- Legal databases.

while restricting searches based solely on an individual's name.

Compliance Framework

The Court also prescribed timelines for compliance by:

- Search engines.
- Legal databases.
- Digital platforms.

These principles strengthen privacy while simultaneously preserving other constitutional values.

e. Constitutional Significance

Strengthening Fundamental Rights

The judgment reinforces:

- Privacy.
- Dignity.
- Informational autonomy.

under Article 21.

It also facilitates:

- Rehabilitation.

- Social reintegration.
- Restoration of reputation.

particularly after acquittal or resolution of legal disputes.

Balancing Constitutional Values

The judgment simultaneously protects:

- Judicial transparency.
- Open justice.
- Freedom of speech.
- Responsible journalism.
- Public's right to know.

where legitimate public interest exists.

Although constitutionally significant, effective implementation of the Right to be Forgotten presents several legal and technological challenges.

f. Key Challenges

Technological Limitations

Information may continue to circulate through:

- Mirror websites.
- Archived webpages.
- Social media platforms.
- Multiple search engines.

even after de-indexing.

Legislative Gaps

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 provides only a limited right to erasure and does not comprehensively regulate:

- Judicial records.
- Public legal information.
- Search engine de-indexing.

Institutional Constraints

The Data Protection Board envisaged under the Act is yet to become fully operational, limiting institutional dispute resolution.

Absence of Uniform Standards

Courts presently evaluate requests on a case-by-case basis, resulting in:

- Legal uncertainty.
- Inconsistent outcomes.
- Limited predictability.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive legal and institutional framework.

g. Way Forward

Operationalise the DPDP Framework

Ensure effective implementation of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 and early operationalisation of the Data Protection Board.

Develop Clear Statutory Guidelines

Frame detailed legal standards governing:

- De-indexing.
- Anonymisation.
- Limited erasure.

while balancing competing constitutional interests.

Create a Tiered Institutional Mechanism

Develop a structured system in which:

- Digital platforms handle routine requests.
- Data Protection Board resolves disputes.
- Constitutional courts adjudicate complex cases involving competing fundamental rights.

Improve Inter-Institutional Coordination

Strengthen cooperation among:

- Search engines.
- Digital platforms.
- Legal databases.
- Judicial institutions.

to ensure timely implementation of lawful directions.

Preserve Constitutional Balance

Every decision should balance:

- Privacy.
- Judicial transparency.
- Freedom of expression.
- Open justice.
- Public interest.

through a proportionality-based approach.

Conclusion

The Delhi High Court's judgment represents a significant milestone in India's evolving privacy jurisprudence by recognising the Right to be Forgotten as an integral component of informational privacy under Article 21. The challenge ahead is to develop a coherent legal framework that protects individual dignity in the digital age while preserving judicial transparency, freedom of expression and the constitutional principle of open justice. A balanced, proportionality-based approach will be essential for harmonising these competing constitutional values in an increasingly digital society.

Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

- factual coverage
- data recall
- Prelims-style MCQs
- objective pattern analysis

This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

2. Content Length

Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density. To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

3. Format Flexibility

The formatting combines:

- paragraphs
- lists
- tables
- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

If you prefer a specific style (lists → paras, paras → tables, etc.), feel free to convert using any free LLM.

4. Monthly Current Affairs Release

The complete Monthly Current Affairs Module will be released soon, optimized to a compact 100–150 pages — comprehensive yet concise, exam-ready, and revision-efficient.

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