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The Hindu Important News Articles For UPSC CSE

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Page 04: GS II : International Relations / Preliminary Examination

According to recent official data from May 2026, Russia's share in India's total oil imports has increased to 40.5% (by volume), which is the highest in the last two years. This growth is particularly notable because Russia, instead of selling oil to India at discounted prices, is now charging an additional premium (approximately $46 per ton). Along with this, taking advantage of the relaxation in US sanctions, India has also intensified its efforts to diversify its energy sources by importing oil from countries like Venezuela and Iran. This development is highly significant for India's 'Strategic Autonomy' and global energy diplomacy.

Russian share in India's oil imports rises above 40%

Russian dependence

Moscow's share in New Delhi's oil import bill has continued to grow as India's other sources remain constrained

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Russia's share in India's oil imports rose above 40% in May 2026, the highest in nearly two years, according to official government data.

Further, the data shows that Russia charged India a premium for its oil, while other sources such as the U.S. and even the UAE sold India oil at lower-than-average prices.

Russia had been providing India a discount on its oil as recently as February.

Notably, an analysis by *The Hindu* of the data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry shows that India is trying to diversify its sources of oil, including once again importing oil from Iran and Venezuela in April and continuing to do so in May 2026.

The U.S. had, in February, started allowing Venezuela to export oil.

India's total oil imports stood at 21.82 million tonnes in May 2026, the highest since January and about 12% higher than what it imported in April. This was, however, about 2.6% lower than what it imported in May last year.

Despite this, the higher oil prices meant that India's oil import bill still rose significantly in May 2026 – by 23.5% compared to April, and by a sizable 66% over May of last year.

This is because the price of oil that India imported stood at $106 per barrel in May 2026 as compared to $64 a barrel in May 2025, according to data from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

This price effect is visible in India's oil imports from Russia as well. While the value of oil imports from Russia grew 83% in May 2026 over its level in May last year, the actual volume of oil imported from Russia fell by 2% over this period.

That said, the share of Russian oil in India's total oil imports stood at 40.5% in terms of volume and 42.6% in terms of value in May 2026.

A simple calculation based on the volume and value of oil imports from Russia shows that the total price paid by Indian importers stood at $916 per tonne of Russian oil in May 2026, as compared to the average price of $870 per tonne that India paid for all its oil imports. This works out to a premium of about $46 per tonne.

According to Prerna Prabhakar, fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP), the premium charged by Russia is likely a result of the dependence India and China have on it for oil.

Sanctioned sources

The Commerce Ministry data also shows that India has been sourcing some of its oil from countries that were previously restricted from selling their oil.

India imported $605 million worth of oil from Venezuela in April 2026, which rose to $984 million in May. Notably, the data shows that India imported $430.5 million worth of oil from Iran in April 2026, which fell to $277 million in May. However, it was only in late June that the U.S. had given Iran a 60-day waiver to export oil, which it rescinded on Tuesday.

Key Points: Core Analysis from the Examination Perspective

1. India-Russia Energy Relations and the Impact of the 'Premium'

- **Historical Surge in Imports:** In May 2026, nearly 42.6% (by value) of India's total oil imports came from Russia alone. This indicates that despite Western pressure, the trade relations between India and Russia remain strong.
- **Journey from Discount to Premium:** Russia, which was providing cheap oil to India until February 2026, charged a premium of $46 per ton in May. The main reason for this is the growing dependence of India and China on Russian oil, which Russia has leveraged for economic gain.
- **Price vs Volume Effect:** Compared to May 2025, the volume of oil imported from Russia in May 2026 saw a minor decline of 2%, but due to the surge in global oil prices, its import value registered a massive growth of 83%.

2. Widespread Impact on India's Oil Import Bill

- **Massive Increase in Import Bill:** In May 2026, India's oil import bill increased by 23.5% compared to April and by 66% compared to May 2025.
- **Impact of Global Prices:** The price of crude oil for the Indian basket was $64 per barrel in May 2025, which increased to $106 per barrel in May 2026. This price hike has increased pressure on India's Current Account Deficit (CAD) and fiscal balance.

3. Diversification of Energy Sources

- **Procurement of Oil from Sanctioned Countries:** In order to secure its energy security, India has resumed oil imports from countries like Venezuela and Iran.
    - **Venezuela:** Following the relaxation of sanctions by the US, India's imports from Venezuela increased from $605 million in April to $984 million in May 2026.

- **Iran:** India imported oil worth $430.5 million in April and $277 million in May from Iran. However, the decision by the US at the end of June to rescind the 60-day waiver granted to Iran has made future imports from Iran challenging for India.

- **Alternative Cheaper Sources:** Data shows that during this period, the US and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) sold oil to India at below-average prices, which opens up other options for diversification for India.

Administrative and Strategic Implications for UPSC Mains Examination

- **Energy Security vs Economic Cost:** Purchasing oil from Russia at a premium highlights India's compulsion that it cannot abruptly back away from Russian oil due to the technical requirements of its refineries and heavy demand.
- **Geopolitical Balancing:** On one hand, India is buying expensive oil from Russia, while on the other, it is also expanding trade with the US, UAE, and Venezuela. This serves as a precise example of India's multi-aligned foreign policy.
- **Uncertainty of Sanctions:** The sudden cancellation of the sanctions waiver on Iran by the US demonstrates that dependence on countries affected by sanctions can be risky for India in the long term.

Conclusion

It is evident that India cannot compromise its energy security at any cost to sustain its rapid economic growth. The heavy reliance on Russia and the premium being charged by it serve as a cautionary signal for India. In the future, to control the Current Account Deficit and avoid geopolitical risks, India will have to increase supply from lower-cost countries like the US and the Middle East (UAE). Along with this, as a long-term solution, India must accelerate investment towards green energy and domestic oil production to safeguard the Indian economy from the fluctuations of the global market.

UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question:Which of the following is most likely to cause an increase in India's Current Account Deficit?

(a) A rise in global crude oil prices

(b) An increase in foreign investment (FDI)

(c) An increase in exports

(d) An increase in foreign exchange reserves

Ans: a**)**

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: "Energy diplomacy is emerging as the most significant pillar of India's policy of strategic autonomy." Discuss this in the context of recent oil import trends.(**10Marks, 150Words)**

Page 06:GS I & II : Social Issues and Justice / Preliminary Examination

Recently, the 'All India Survey on Higher Education' (AISHE) report for the years 2022-23 and 2023-24 has been released by the Ministry of Education. This report reflects the structural changes that have occurred in the Indian higher education sector over the last decade (2014-15 to 2023-24). The main highlights of this year's report are total enrolment in higher education reaching 4.5 crore, a historic increase in women's participation, and a major leap in the representation of deprived sections (SC, ST, OBC).

Over 42% rise in female enrolment in higher education since 2014: report

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India's higher education sector has recorded significant growth over the past decade, with total student enrolment rising to 4.5 crore in the 2023-24 academic year.

According to the latest reports of the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) for 2022-23 and 2023-24, released by the Education Ministry, this marks a 31.5% rise from 3.42 crore recorded in 2014-15. The multi-year survey data reflect an institutional participation rate of over 90%, drawing metrics from 59,533 higher education institutions across the country to outline major strides in inclusivity, female participation, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) adoption.

Steady progress

Women, STEM learners and marginalised communities drive sustained growth in higher education

	2014-2015	2022-2023	2023-2024	Growth since 2014-15
Total enrolment	3.42 cr.	4.46 cr.	4.50 cr.	↑ 31.5%
Female enrolment	1.57 cr.	2.18 cr.	2.24 cr.	↑ 42.2%
Overall GER	23.7	29.5	30.0	–
Female GER	22.9	30.2	31.2	–
STEM enrolment	91.5 lakh	–	1.02 cr.	↑ 11.4%

The data are self-reported voluntarily by registered institutions via a web-based portal utilising a data capture format. While the Education Ministry executes built-in validations and scrutiny checks, primary data quality remains the responsibility of the respective institutions.

The enrolment of female students in higher educational institutions rose from 1.57 crore in 2014-15 to 2.18 crore in 2022-23 and 2.24 crore in 2023-24, marking a 42.2% increase since 2014-15.

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) stands at 1.08 for 2023-24, remaining consistently above 1.0 for seven consecutive years. This underlines a trend where female participation systematically outpaces male participation.

Also, India's gross enrolment ratio (calculated for the 18-23 age bracket) reached 30 in 2023-24. Notably, the female GER scaled to 31.2, distinctly higher than the national baseline. For the Scheduled Castes, the enrolment jumped 51.4% since 2014-15, reaching 69.72 lakh. The GER for SC students grew from 18.9 to 27.8. For the Scheduled Tribes, enrolment witnessed a 75.7% rise, climbing to 28.83 lakh, with the GER up from 13.5 to 22.8. With regard to the Other Backward Classes, student numbers grew 60.2%, from 1.13 crore to 1.80 crore over 10 years.

Enrolment in STEM fields climbed to 1.02 crore in 2023-24. "Mirroring the overall demographic shift, the female share in STEM programmes climbed steadily to 44%, up from 38.4% a decade ago," the report said.

Key Findings of the Report and Statistical Conclusions

- **Increase in Total Enrolment:** Total enrolment in higher education in the country has increased by 31.5% from 3.42 crore in 2014-15 to 4.5 crore (45 million) in 2023-24.

- **Women Empowerment and Enrolment:** Enrolment of female students has increased by 42.2% from 1.57 crore (2014-15) to reach 2.24 crore (2023-24).

- **Positive Gender Parity Index:** The Gender Parity Index (GPI) of the country has been recorded at 1.08. It has remained above 1.0 for the seventh consecutive year, which means that more women than men are enrolling in higher education.

- **Improvement in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER):** The national GER for the 18-23 age group has increased to 30. In this, the GER of women (31.2) is higher than that of men.
- **Social Inclusivity:**
  - **Scheduled Castes (SC):** An increase of 51.4% in enrolment (69.72 lakh students) and GER increased from 18.9 to 27.8.
  - **Scheduled Tribes (ST):** A massive increase of 75.7% in enrolment (28.83 lakh students) and GER increased from 13.5 to 22.8.
  - **Other Backward Classes (OBC):** Enrolment increased by 60.2% in 10 years, rising from 1.13 crore to 1.80 crore.
- **Progress in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics):** Total enrolment in STEM fields has crossed 1.02 crore. In this, the share of women has increased from 38.4% a decade ago to 44%, which is a major achievement at the global level.
- **Increase in Academic Workforce:** The total number of teachers in the country has reached 17.32 lakh, in which the share of female teachers is 44.9% (7.78 lakh).

Drivers of Growth Behind This Positive Trend

- **Targeted Government Schemes:** 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', free bicycle/scooty schemes of various states, and scholarships available at national and state levels have helped female students reach from school to college.
- **Institutional Expansion:** Over the past decade, there has been a continuous increase in the number of IITs, IIMs, Central Universities, and new degree colleges, making education accessible to remote areas.
- **Impact of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:** Under NEP 2020, 'Multiple Entry-Exit' (Flexible learning) and choices of higher education in regional languages have played a role in reducing the drop-out rate.
- **Socio-Cultural Shift:** There has been a major positive change in the thinking of parents regarding the education and career of daughters in rural and semi-urban societies.

Challenges Highlighted and Concerns

- **The Paradox in Labor Force Participation:** While women's enrolment in higher education has grown rapidly, according to the country's 'Periodic Labour Force Survey' (PLFS), the Female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is still not in that proportion. The inability to convert education into employment is a serious policy challenge.
- **Over-reliance on Private Sector:** About 71.4% of total colleges in higher education are privately managed (aided and un-aided). This creates the problem of increasing commercialization of education and rising fees for poor students.
- **Regional Imbalance:** More than half (52.9%) of the total enrolment is concentrated in just six states (Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Bihar).

- **Distance from NEP Targets:** The Government of India has set a target of 50% GER by the year 2035 under NEP 2020. Looking at the current rate of 30% and the sluggish annual growth rate (0.5%) in 2023-24, achieving this target seems challenging.
- **Gender Gap Still in Engineering:** While women are ahead in Arts (53.9%) and Education (64.2%), the participation of women in Engineering and Technology is still only 31.1%.

Way Forward

- **Employment-Oriented Policies:** Higher education curricula must be aligned with the demands of the market and industries (Skill-based) so that passing-out female students can get direct employment in corporate or government sectors.
- **Women-Centric Mentorship in STEM:** To increase women's participation in engineering and technical courses, there is a need to start special scholarships, hostel facilities, and 'Women in Tech' mentorship programs.
- **Increase in Public Investment:** Both the Kothari Commission and NEP 2020 have recommended spending 6% of GDP on education. To reduce dependence on private colleges, the government must increase investment in quality government universities.
- **Improvement in Data Quality:** Since AISHE data is self-reported, there should be a system of independent audit or third-party verification to ensure its reliability.

Conclusion

The AISHE 2023-24 report is living proof that India's higher education framework has become more inclusive, democratic, and gender-balanced than ever before. The increasing representation of deprived social groups and women in college campuses strengthens India's dream of converting the 'Demographic Dividend' into 'Human Capital'. However, to transform this academic success into real economic power, the government will now have to focus on quality job creation, skill development, and proper regulation of the private education sector so that no meritorious student is left behind due to financial reasons.

UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Question: According to AISHE 2023-24, which of the following statements is correct?

(a) India's Gender Parity Index (GPI) is 1.08.

(b) The GER for males is higher than that for females.

(c) Women's participation in STEM is more than 50%.
(d) The GER for Scheduled Tribes (ST) is more than 30%.
Ans: b)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

Question: The AISHE 2023-24 report reflects significant progress towards inclusivity and gender equality in the Indian higher education system. Discuss.**(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

Page 09 : GS II & III: International Relations&Indian Economy / Preliminary Examination

Historically, sharp spikes in crude oil prices have been one of the biggest threats to India's macroeconomic stability. The memories of the 1973 oil crisis and the 1991 Balance of Payments (BoP) crisis bear testimony to how global geopolitical tensions can derail the Indian economy. India imports nearly 90% of its crude oil requirements and is heavily dependent on Gulf countries for oil, gas, and fertilizers.

- During the recent West Asia crisis (tensions in the Strait of Hormuz), it was feared that India would once again face a severe energy and economic crisis. However, this time, India successfully navigated this crisis on the strength of its well-thought-out policies, diplomacy, and strategic foresight.

How India withstood the crisis in West Asia

Sachin Kumar Sharma

Director General, RIS, New Delhi. Views expressed are personal

Historically, sharp increases in oil prices have been among the biggest sources of macroeconomic instability for India. It was therefore unsurprising that when tensions in West Asia escalated, many thought that India would once again face an energy and economic crisis, derailing its growth path. It revived memories of the 1973 oil shock and the 1991 balance-of-payments crisis, with concerns over soaring fuel prices, imported inflation, and pressure on the external account. After all, India imports almost 90% of its crude oil and remains heavily dependent on the Gulf for oil, gas and fertilizers.

This time around, however, when the Strait of Hormuz was the epicentre of global anxiety, India proved not only the sceptics at home and abroad wrong, but also seems to have emerged stronger in managing its energy needs. Was this resilience of India a matter of luck, or was it the outcome of deliberate policy choices, institutional learning, and strategic preparation?

Defying the odds

Few major economies were as vulnerable to the disruption in the Strait of Hormuz as India, the world's third-largest oil importer. Heavy dependence on imported crude and LPG, combined with rising freight costs and maritime risks, created conditions for a severe external shock. Within weeks, the Indian crude basket crossed $120 per barrel; the import-linked cost of a domestic LPG cylinder rose above ₹1,600; and war-risk premiums escalated sharply. By conventional measures, India appeared particularly vulnerable. However, the real challenge was not merely managing higher energy costs but preventing a global supply disruption from translating into inflation and shortages at home.

Against all expectations, one of the world's most energy import-dependent economies turned out to be among the most price-resilient; India contained fuel and cooking gas inflation better than many advanced and emerging peers.

The numbers tell an extraordinary story. Petrol prices in India rose by just 7.5% during the crisis, compared with nearly 14% in Germany, 19% in the U.K., 45% in the U.S., over 50% in Pakistan and the Philippines, and almost 90% in Myanmar. The contrast was even starker in diesel prices. While the UAE saw prices surge by about 85%, India limited the increase to just 8%.

One saw a similar story in the kitchen. Even though India imports nearly 60% of its LPG requirements, a domestic cylinder continued to cost ₹942, or ₹642 for Ujjwala beneficiaries, which was cheaper than what it cost in Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, and dramatically lower than in the U.S., Australia and Canada.

However, the cushion came at a cost, as state-run Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) incurred ₹74,781 crore in losses on petrol, diesel, and LPG sales up to June 30 as global crude prices surged during the West Asia crisis. But that cost shows you the big picture. Instead of passing the full shock to consumers, the government and public-sector OMCs absorbed it, protecting household budgets and keeping fuel and cooking gas affordable throughout the crisis.

Weathering the storm

While several factors contributed to India's resilience during the West Asia crisis, four stand out. The first lesson of the crisis is that strategic relationships are themselves a form of energy security. In times of crisis, relationships matter as much as reserves. Decades of engagement with Iran and key Gulf partners ensured that channels of communication remained open even when tensions were at their highest. Iran's decision to facilitate the movement of Indian ships and the willingness of Gulf producers to continue supplying energy underscored a simple reality: foreign policy can be as important to energy security as oil fields.

Second, India had quietly built an insurance policy against geopolitical shocks by diversifying its supplier base. Energy partnerships stretching from Russia and the U.S. to Africa and Latin America gave India the flexibility to withstand disruptions far better than in previous crises. In geopolitics, putting all your energy eggs in one basket is no longer an option.

Third, the crisis vindicated a decade of energy planning. India had quietly built multiple layers of resilience such as higher ethanol blending, a rapidly expanding renewable energy base, larger strategic reserves and stronger refining capacity. These investments did not prevent the crisis, but they made the economy better equipped to absorb it.

Fourth, the crisis reflected the value of a whole-of-government approach, reinforcing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphasis on breaking down ministerial silos and strengthening institutional coordination. The Ministries of External Affairs, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ports, Shipping and Waterways, the Indian Navy, and the National Security Council Secretariat worked in close coordination to monitor risks, manage logistics, and protect energy supplies.

The result was a coordinated national response that turned potential disruption into an exercise in resilience.

The way ahead

The recent crisis shows us that the foundations of resilience are laid in years of preparation, and not in moments of panic. India's response reflected the dividends of strategic foresight, diplomatic outreach and whole-of-government coordination. As global uncertainties deepen, this resilience could become a defining pillar of 'Viksit Bharat'.

India had quietly built an insurance policy against geopolitical shocks by diversifying its supplier base

Key Points: Severity of the Crisis and Global Comparison

Despite rising fuel prices globally, India insulated its domestic market from inflation (price rise), which can be understood from the following statistics:

- **Limited Price Increase:** During the crisis, petrol prices in India increased by only 7.5% and diesel by 8%. In contrast, prices rose rapidly in countries like Germany (14%), the UK (19%), the US (45%), and Pakistan and the Philippines (>50%).
- **LPG Security:** India imports 60% of its LPG requirements, yet domestic cylinder prices were kept under control (₹642 for Ujjwala beneficiaries). This price was significantly lower compared to neighboring countries (Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka) and developed countries (US, Canada).
- **Absorbing the Financial Cost:** Instead of passing the entire burden of the global shock onto consumers, the government and Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) absorbed it themselves. By June 30, OMCs suffered losses (under-recoveries) of ₹74,781 crore on the sale of petrol, diesel, and LPG, but this kept the country's domestic budget secure.

4 Main Pillars of India's Resilience

According to the author, India was able to emerge from this crisis without any major damage because it worked on the following four fronts:

- **Strategic and Diplomatic Relations:** In times of crisis, it is not just strategic oil reserves that come in handy, but bilateral relations are equally important. Due to India's strong diplomatic channels with Iran and other Gulf countries, the movement of Indian vessels remained safe even at the peak of the crisis, and the supply was not disrupted.

- **Supplier Diversification:** India did not limit its energy dependence to just one region (Gulf countries). By expanding energy partnerships with various regions such as Russia, the US, Africa, and Latin America, India diversified its 'Energy Basket', which minimized the impact of the Gulf crisis.

- **Decade of Energy Planning:** Over the past decade, India has built multiple layers of resilience domestically. This includes promoting Ethanol Blending, rapid expansion of Renewable Energy, increasing Strategic Petroleum Reserves, and strengthening domestic refining capacity.

- **'Whole-of-Government' Approach:** During this crisis, various ministries of the government worked with mutual coordination (breaking down silos). The Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Indian Navy, and the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) together monitored risks and managed logistics.

Way Ahead

- **Focus on Long-term Preparedness:** This crisis teaches a lesson that the foundation of resilience is not laid out of panic during a crisis, but through years of continuous preparation and strategic foresight.

- **Energy Self-reliance:** To become self-reliant, India must further accelerate the transition towards renewable energy, green hydrogen, and Electric Vehicles (EVs).

- **Pillar of 'Viksit Bharat':** In this era of global uncertainties, this economic and energy self-reliance of India will become a guiding force and a strong pillar to achieve the goal of 'Viksit Bharat'.

Conclusion

India's firm stance during the West Asia crisis was not a mere coincidence or a stroke of luck, but a result of the country's robust foreign policy, internal strategic planning, and swift administrative coordination. Despite disruptions in the global supply chain, India not only maintained its macroeconomic stability but also proved that despite being a large and import-dependent economy, global shocks can be neutralized with the right policy decisions. India's 'Resilience Model' is an important case study for dealing with future geopolitical uncertainties.

UPSC Prelims Exam Study Questions

Question: The 'Whole-of-Government Approach' implies—

(a) Adoption of a uniform policy by all states.

(b) Addressing a challenge through the coordinated efforts of all ministries and institutions.

(c) Crisis management solely by economic ministries.

(d) Handing over all responsibilities to the private sector.

Ans: b)

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Question: West Asia is a crucial pillar of India's energy security and foreign policy. Examine this statement in the context of the recent crisis in West Asia.**(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

Page 10 : GS II : Indian Polity / Preliminary Examination

This article analyzes a landmark judgment delivered by the Delhi High Court in May 2026 on the 'Right to be Forgotten' (RTF). The bench, led by Chief Justice Manmohan, has formulated a clear framework to balance the right to privacy and Open Justice in the case of 'Laksh Veer Singh Yadav v. Union of India'.

- The 'Right to be Forgotten' (RTF) refers to an individual's right to demand the removal or de-indexing (not showing in search results) of old, irrelevant, or harmful information related to their life from the internet or public digital platforms.

- In the Indian context, the Supreme Court, in the K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017) case, recognized privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21, which includes 'Informational Privacy'. The Delhi High Court's decision in May 2026 is a major step in this direction, offering individuals who have received justice in the digital world a chance to live with dignity.

What is the right to be forgotten?

How does the ruling balance privacy with open justice and free speech? What challenges remain in enforcing the right to be forgotten? What role does the DPDP Act play? Who should decide requests for erasure or de-indexing?

EXPLAINER

G.S. Bajpai

The story so far:
The Delhi High Court, in its recent ruling, has laid down the principles governing the right to be forgotten. The court has evolved a new jurisprudence to protect the privacy of those who continue to be victimised on account of their digital footprints on social media and elsewhere, despite having those matters settled in their favour.

What is the 'right to be forgotten'?
The "right to be forgotten" is the right to have information erased or de-indexed from the public digital environment when its continued accessibility is harmful and serves no public interest.

The concept came to the fore in 2014, when a Spanish citizen, Mario Costeja González, complained to the European Court of Justice that Google continued to display an old newspaper notice about the auction of his repossessed house even though the debt had been settled. The court ruled in his favour, laying the groundwork for the right to erasure, which was later incorporated into Article 17 of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

How has the idea of the right to be forgotten evolved in Indian law?
The Supreme Court's judgment in *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017) held that privacy is a fundamental right under Article 21, including the right to informational privacy. In the years that followed, however, High Courts adopted divergent approaches.

While some permitted anonymisation in limited cases, such as the Delhi High Court ordering the masking of names in certain matrimonial and criminal matters, others rejected similar requests on grounds of open justice.

The real challenge was the lack of a coherent framework to balance these competing interests, which the May 2026 Delhi High Court judgment sought to address.

GETTY IMAGES

What did the Delhi High Court decide?
On May 29, the Delhi High Court ruled in a batch of over 30 consolidated petitions, led by *Laksh Vir Singh Yadav v. Union of India*. The core issue was whether informational privacy could justify the de-indexing or masking of judicial records in a system committed to open justice. The court held that the right to be forgotten flows from Article 21's guarantee of dignity and informational privacy. The structured proportionality test is that retention must have a legitimate purpose, that the harm to privacy must be balanced against the public interest, and that the least intrusive means, typically by masking names instead of deleting the entire judgment, should be preferred. The court also prescribed a two-week deadline for legal databases to comply and explained that only the parties' names should be redacted, not the facts of the case.

How does the right to be forgotten interact with constitutional values?
This is not a stand-alone right. It frequently conflicts with freedom of speech and press under Article 19(1)(a), the principle of open justice, and the public's right to know. A right to privacy must be sacrificed when the public interest is of a high order, particularly in serious cases of crime, but the digital presence should not destroy a person's life long after the trial ends. The judgments are still publicly accessible by case number or a keyword search; only name-based searches are restricted.

What are the practical challenges?
The toughest aspect is enforcement. An acquittal judgment may still appear highly in name-based searches even after a court has ordered the removal of the search results. Search engines are designed so that the original accusation, or the "shadow of crime," is often the first thing the user sees. De-indexing can benefit at the search level, but it won't prevent mirrors, archive copies, or social media sharing. Without effective technical compliance and coordination among platforms, the right may remain largely symbolic.

What is the relationship between the right to be forgotten and DPDP Act?
As of now, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, offers a limited statutory right to erasure in section 12. It is primarily based on consent and does not explicitly address judicial records and public archives, where the right to be forgotten is most needed. The Act is deficient because rules have not been notified and the data protection board has not been completely effective.

Who should decide requests for erasure or de-indexing?
The challenge lies in balancing efficiency with accountability. Requiring every request to be decided by a court would create significant bottlenecks, while leaving such decisions entirely to technology companies raises concerns about due process and transparency. A more sensible approach would be a tiered system, where cases could be heard by platforms, contested ones by the data protection board, and judicial cases by courts.

The Delhi High Court has established an important framework, but until the Supreme Court rules on the matter, establishes a data protection board, and platforms comply with it, this ruling will be mostly declaratory. The conflict over freedom of expression and open justice is a reality. The task ahead is now to establish the institutions that facilitate it.

(G. S. Bajpai is Vice Chancellor at National Law University Delhi. He acknowledges the assistance of Vibhuti Sharma, Academic fellow, NLU Delhi. Views are personal)

THE GIST

The Delhi High Court has recognised the right to be forgotten as part of the fundamental right to privacy under Article 21, laying down a framework that balances informational privacy with open justice and freedom of speech by favouring name-masking over deletion of judgments.

While the ruling provides a legal framework for de-indexing and erasure requests, its effectiveness depends on enforcement by platforms, the operationalisation of the DPDP Act, and the establishment of institutions such as the data protection board.

Core Analysis

A. Recent Decision of the Delhi High Court (May 2026)

- **The Case:** The court delivered this verdict while hearing more than 30 petitions, including 'Laksh Veer Singh Yadav v. Union of India'.
- **Constitutional Basis:** The court clarified that the right to be forgotten is directly linked to Article 21 of the Constitution (Right to Life and Dignity).
- **Proportionality Test:** The court stated that there must be a legitimate objective to retain any information on the internet. If a person has been acquitted, there must be a balance between the damage caused to their privacy and the public interest.
- **Least Intrusive Means:** Instead of removing the entire legal report or judgment, the court ordered only the concealment (Redaction/Masking) of the parties' names. This ensures that the facts of the case and the legal principles remain available for research, but the identity of the person will not be revealed when searched by name.
- **Timeline:** Legal databases and search engines have been given a time period of two weeks to remove the names.

B. Balancing Privacy, Open Court, and Freedom of Expression

- **Article 19(1)(a) vs. Article 21:** This right creates a conflict between the freedom of the press, the public's right to know (Article 19), and an individual's privacy (Article 21).
- **Severity of Crime:** The court accepted that in cases of serious crimes (such as terrorism, heinous crimes), public interest is paramount, and the claim to privacy weakens. However, in matrimonial disputes or minor cases where the individual has been acquitted, they have the right to be free from the "shadow of the past".
- **Protection of Open Justice:** Judgments will not vanish completely. They can still be searched using case numbers or legal keywords; restrictions will only apply to searches conducted by the person's name.

C. Practical Challenges in Enforcement

- **Working of Search Engines:** Search engine algorithms operate in such a way that old news involving 'allegation' or 'arrest' along with a person's name appears first (Shadow of Crime).
- **Technical Limitations:** While a court order can de-index a name from search engines, completely erasing it from social media, archive copies, or other corners of the internet (mirror sites) is extremely difficult.
- **Vague Framework:** Until a robust technical coordination is established between technical platforms and legal portals, this right will remain merely on paper (declaratory).

D. Role of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023

- **Limited Statutory Right:** Section 12 of the DPDP Act provides the right to 'Data Erasure', but it is primarily based on user consent.

- **Shortcomings of the Act:** Currently, this Act does not explicitly apply to judicial records or public archives, where this right is needed the most.
- **Institutional Failure:** Despite the passing of the Act, its rules have not been fully notified, and the 'Data Protection Board' has not yet become fully effective.

E. Who should decide?

The author has suggested a three-tier system for efficiency and accountability:

1. **First Tier (Platform):** General and straightforward cases should be resolved by tech companies/search engines themselves.
2. **Second Tier (Data Protection Board):** If a dispute arises between the platform and the individual, the matter should go to the Data Protection Board.
3. **Third Tier (Court):** The final decision on matters involving court judgments and complex legal interpretations must be taken only by the courts to ensure the process remains transparent.

Conclusion

This May 2026 decision of the Delhi High Court is a progressive step toward maintaining human dignity in the digital era. It reinforces the legal principle that after serving a sentence or being acquitted, no individual should be digitally tortured for their past throughout their life.

However, to make this right fully effective, two things are still urgently needed: first, the formulation of a final and nationwide legal framework by the Supreme Court; and second, making institutions like the 'Data Protection Board' under the DPDP Act active and accountable as soon as possible. Only then can an ideal balance between freedom of expression and informational privacy be established.

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Ques:For what purpose is the 'Principle of Proportionality' primarily used?

(a) For the appointment of judges

(b) To strike a balance between fundamental rights and the legitimate objective of the State

(c) To determine the tenure of Parliament

(d) For the delimitation of constituencies

Ans: b)

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Ques: Striking a balance between the principles of the 'Right to be Forgotten' and 'Open Justice' poses a complex constitutional challenge for the Indian judiciary. Critically analyze.**(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

Page 12 : GS III : Indian Economy / Preliminary Examination

Recently, the International Gas Union (IGU) released the 'World LNG Report'. According to this report, in the year 2025, India increased its regasification (the process of converting liquid LNG back into gas) capacity by a record 52.5 million tonnes per annum (mtpa). With this massive capacity expansion, India has surpassed Spain to become the world's fourth-largest country in terms of regasification capacity. This development reflects India's ambitious goals of a Clean Energy Transition and increasing the share of natural gas in its economy.

India added 52.5 mtpa regasification capacity in 2025: IGU World LNG Report

Santosh V. Perumal
CHENNAI

India added 52.5 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) of regasification capacity across eight terminals, as it surpassed Spain to become the fourth largest market for regasification capacity in 2025, according to the International Gas Union's (IGU) World LNG Report.

Rising demand for fertilizer, city gas and utilities as well as the government's push for enhanced share of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in the energy mix was seen helping the country

Among operational LNG regasification terminals in India, Dahej LNG (17.5 mtpa) stands out as the only ultra-large facility and ranks as the sixth largest globally.

Large-scale category

The remaining seven terminals fall into the large-scale category, each with a regasification capacity of 5 mtpa.

In 2025, India commissioned two LNG regasification projects, including one new onshore terminal, Chhara LNG, with a regasification capacity of 5 mtpa, and one expansion project at the Dabhol LNG terminal through the completion of its breakwater infrastructure.

The project has effectively enhanced the terminal's operational efficiency and has increased its capacity to 5 mtpa from 2.9 mtpa. Previously idle during the monsoon season, the Dabhol LNG terminal now enables uninterrupted, year-round operations after commissioning of the breakwater.

India currently has four LNG projects under construction, including one new terminal and three expansion projects at existing facilities, including the expansion of India's largest terminal, Dahej LNG.

Dahej LNG terminal ranks as the sixth largest globally.

Once commissioned, these projects are expected to add a combined 11.3 mtpa of regasification capacity by 2028.

According to the International Energy Agency, India's natural gas consumption is forecast to increase by nearly 60% by 2030, driven by robust growth in city gas distribution, industrial demand, and power generation.

India's LNG regasification utilisation fell to about 47% in 2025, down from 58% in 2024, reflecting a combination of weaker LNG imports during the summer months and an increase in regasification capacity following recent infrastructure additions.

Asia led the global LNG regasification capacity additions in 2025, with all new capacity coming from China and India, contributing 15.1 mtpa and 7.1 mtpa, representing 24% and 11.3% of global additions, respectively.

Although the Asia Pacific remained the largest LNG-importing region, IGU found imports into Asia fell by 9.2 MT to 108.7 MT, driven mainly by lower intake in China and India.

Key Points and Major Facts of the News

- **Jump in Global Ranking:** India has now become the world's fourth-largest LNG regasification market.
- **Achievement of Dahej LNG Terminal:** Gujarat's 'Dahej LNG Terminal' (17.5 mtpa) is India's only ultra-large terminal, ranked as the sixth-largest terminal globally. The remaining seven operational terminals fall under the 'large-scale' category (5 mtpa each).
- **New Projects and Expansions (2025):**
  - A new onshore terminal named **Chhara LNG** (5 mtpa) was commissioned in Gujarat.
  - The expansion of the **Dabhol LNG** terminal was completed with the construction of 'breakwater infrastructure' (a wall to block sea waves). This increased its capacity from 2.9 mtpa to 5 mtpa, and it will now be able to operate year-round, even during the monsoon.
- **Future Plans (up to 2028):** Currently, four LNG projects in India (one new terminal and three expansion projects, including the expansion of Dahej) are under construction, which will add an additional 11.3 mtpa capacity by 2028.
- **Fall in Utilization Rate:** Due to rapid growth in infrastructure and weak imports during the summer, India's LNG regasification utilization rate dropped from 58% in 2024 to 47% in 2025.
- **Global Context:** In 2025, Asia dominated the global increase in regasification capacity, with China (24%) and India (11.3%) making the largest contributions. However, due to lower demand in China and India, overall LNG imports in Asia also saw a decline of 9.2 million tonnes.

Drivers of Growth in India's LNG Capacity Expansion

- **Demand from Fertilizer Sector:** Natural gas is used as a major raw material (feedstock) for the production of urea and other fertilizers in India.
- **Expansion of City Gas Distribution (CGD):** Nationwide expansion of the network for CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) for vehicles and PNG (Piped Natural Gas) for household kitchens.
- **Environmental and Policy Incentives:** The Government of India has set a target to increase the share of natural gas in the Primary Energy Mix from the current level of approximately 6% to 15% by the year 2030.
- **Industrial and Utilities Demand:** Promoting the use of gas as a substitute for coal in power generation and heavy industries (such as steel and cement).

Challenges & Critical Analysis (Analytical Importance for UPSC)

- **Gap between Capacity and Actual Utilization (Underutilization):** The report highlights that India's utilization rate has decreased to 47%. This implies that while the infrastructure is ready, we are unable to utilize even half of our capacity due to domestic demand or high import prices. This poses a risk of stranded assets (trapped capital).
- **International Price Volatility:** Global LNG prices remain highly volatile. In the price-sensitive Indian market, when international prices rise, imports decrease, as observed during the summer of 2025.
- **Infrastructure Bottlenecks:** Although regasification terminals are being constructed rapidly, the development of the 'National Gas Grid' (pipeline network) to transport gas to the interiors of the country is still not fully proportional.
- **Domestic vs. Imported Gas:** India imports nearly 50% of its gas requirements. Over-reliance on imports poses a challenge to India's energy security and Current Account Deficit (CAD).

Way Forward

- **Accelerated Development of the Gas Grid:** The success of regasification terminals will depend on how quickly this gas is transported via the pipeline network to demanding states and industries.
- **Bringing Gas under the Ambit of GST:** Bringing natural gas under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime will eliminate the cascading effect of taxes, making it more affordable and competitive for industries.
- **Long-term Contracts:** To hedge against international market volatility, Indian companies should enter into long-term LNG import agreements with global suppliers to ensure price stability.
- **Policy Stability for a Gas-based Economy:** Clear and transparent gas allocation policies should be formulated for the power and industrial sectors.

Conclusion

This report by the IGU marks a significant milestone in India's energy journey. Becoming the world's fourth-largest market in terms of infrastructure reflects India's foresight toward its future energy needs. However, merely building capacity is not enough; to become a true 'gas-based economy', India must establish a strong balance between affordable consumption, infrastructure (pipeline) connectivity, and protection against global price shocks. This step will not only strengthen India's energy security but will also be instrumental in achieving its carbon emission reduction targets under the Paris Agreement.

UPSC Mains Exam Study Questions

Ques: India's goal of becoming a gas-based economy is a significant step towards energy security and the clean energy transition. Discuss. **(10 Marks, 150 Words)**

Page : 08 : Editorial Analysis

The Indian diaspora as Australia's identity, its future

The Indian diaspora is now officially Australia's largest overseas-born community, overtaking the England-born population for the first time. This is not a small demographic footnote. Australia's population has, for two centuries, been anchored by a British-derived majority. An Indian-origin community now outnumbering it marks a genuine inflection point in how the country understands itself. It is against this backdrop that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Australia – his third visit Down Under – will be a trip in which the diaspora is expected to command the spotlight.

The Australia-India relationship has come a long way, from being defined by the simplistic 'three Cs' – Cricket, Curry and Commonwealth – to a more meaningful 'four Ds': Democracy, Defence, Diaspora and *Dosti*. This shift reflects a decade of institution-building, including India's participation alongside Australia, the United States and Japan in the Quad, the informal security grouping that has become the backbone of the Indo-Pacific strategy of India and Australia. Mr. Modi's visit will touch on all four pillars, but it is the diaspora event – a large public gathering billed as 'Melbourne Meets Modi' – that is drawing the most attention, precisely because of what this community has come to represent for both nations.

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Research Fellow at the Australia India Institute, University of Melbourne

A new migration era

The settlement trajectory of the Australian-Indian community is very different from its counterparts in the U.S. or the United Kingdom. The first significant wave of Indian professional migration to Australia dates only to the 1960s and 1970s, climbing after the dismantling of the White Australia Policy – an explicitly racist immigration regime that excluded all but European migrants.

By diaspora standards, this makes the Australian-Indian community still young. A large share of recent arrivals left India during the 'New India' years since 2014, a period of rapid outward migration driven by a mix of economic ambition and, for some, disillusionment with the state of democratic institutions at home. Whatever the reasons for leaving, this cohort tends to be more recently and more tightly bound to India – through family, business, remittances and a resurgent nationalist identity. That is what makes Australia's Indian community distinct beyond just numbers.

> The diaspora must be valued not merely as a symbol of partnership, but as a community whose voices matter

The rise of political backlash

As the anti-immigration wave rises across the globe, in Australia this wave has found a specific target in the Indian community. Nationalist street rallies under banners such as 'March for Australia' have gathered pace over the past year, and the right-wing populist One Nation party is emerging as the main opponent to the left-of-centre Labor party currently in power. Mr. Modi's high-visibility diaspora event lands squarely within this tense landscape. By showcasing the scale, accomplishments and mobilisation of the Indian community, it will reiterate the statement – increasingly co-opted by conservative movements – that this community has grown too large, too fast, and too visible.

For Australia, the Indian diaspora is an economic asset and a force multiplier for the country's multicultural fabric. But a fracturing domestic political landscape means that this asset can just as easily be recast as a liability in public discourse. Mr. Modi's visit should be a reminder to policymakers that failing to invest in better understanding this growing and dynamic community carries real stakes for the future of this strategic partnership.

Beyond numbers and narratives

For India, the diaspora has long been framed as a source of pride and a connecting tissue of cultural links to Australia as a strategic partner. But pride and sentiment are not the same as understanding. What is missing – on both sides of the relationship – is a serious, evidence-based picture of how this diaspora actually lives, trusts and participates in Australian civic life, beyond the headline statistics on income, education and trade that has long been the mainstay of government discourse. If both countries are serious about treating the diaspora as a genuine pillar of their partnership rather than a talking point, that requires concerted efforts to capture their experiences of settlement which are far from monolithic.

Australia's demographic transformation is not a passing trend. It will permanently reshape its national identity from an antipodean one to one that is far more entangled with India and the wider Indo-Pacific. That means sustained research, stronger engagement with civil society, and policies that build social cohesion rather than taking it for granted. If democracy, defence, diaspora and *dosti* are to remain the four pillars of the partnership, then the diaspora must be treated not merely as a symbol of the relationship, but as a constituency whose experiences and trust deserve to be understood.

GS Paper II: International Relations

UPSC Mains Exam Practice Questions: What challenges does the rising anti-immigration politics in Australia pose for the Indian community? Analyze.(**10Marks, 150 Words)**

Context : According to recent demographic data, the Indian diaspora has now officially overtaken Britain (England) to become the largest foreign-born community in Australia. For Australia, which has had a British-origin majority for the past two centuries, this is a major demographic and cultural shift. Amidst this historic turning point, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Australia and large diaspora events like 'Melbourne Meets Modi' are giving a new direction to the strategic and social future of both countries.

Key Points Analysis

A. Changing Nature of Bilateral Relations: From 3C to 4D

- **Old Approach (3Cs):** Traditionally, India-Australia relations were limited only to Cricket, Curry, and Commonwealth.
- **Modern Pillars (4Ds):** Due to strong institutional engagement over the last decade, this relationship now rests on four new pillars—Democracy, Defence, Diaspora, and Dosti (Friendship).
- **Strategic Engagement:** The participation of both in the Quad group (India, Australia, USA, Japan) is strengthening the Indo-Pacific strategy.

B. A New Migration Era of the Diaspora

- **Historical Background:** Compared to the US or UK, Indian migration to Australia is relatively new. It began in the 1960s and 1970s after the end of the 'White Australia Policy'.
- **Impact of 'New India':** A large part of the current diaspora population arrived in Australia after the year 2014. This young demographic is strongly linked with economic ambitions and a deep nationalist identity towards their homeland.

C. Domestic Political Opposition and Social Challenges (Political Backlash)

- **Anti-Immigration Wave:** Due to the ongoing global right-wing wave, resentment against immigrants has increased in Australia as well. Rallies like 'March for Australia' and right-wing parties like 'One Nation' are turning the growing number of immigrants into an issue.
- **Economic vs. Social Tension:** While the Australian government considers immigrants an economic asset and a 'model minority', at the local level, they are being blamed for rising housing prices, pressure on infrastructure, and the cost of living.
- **Political Risk:** Prime Minister Modi's large and highly visible diaspora programs may give this right-wing politics an opportunity to argue that the Indian community has grown too fast and too big.

D. Beyond Mere Statistics: Lack of Real Understanding

- **Over-reliance on Data:** The governments of both countries view the diaspora through the narrow lens of high income, education, and business metrics.
- **Lack of Monolithic Understanding:** The Indian diaspora community is diverse (based on class, language, religion, and visa status). The experiences of a temporary visa holder student and a permanent citizen are different, which policymakers often ignore.

Way Forward

- **Need for Meaningful Research:** Instead of making the diaspora merely an economic tool or a medium for geopolitical messaging, there should be solid evidence-based research to understand their real civic and social experiences.
- **Investment in Social Cohesion:** Australia will have to work together with civil society to counter the growing racial and anti-immigration rhetoric.
- **Recognition as a Stakeholder:** Rather than considering the Indian diaspora as just a 'token', they should be given importance as a crucial 'cultural and civic constituency' between the two nations.

Conclusion

The rise of the Indian diaspora in Australia is not a temporary demographic shift; rather, it is permanently reshaping Australia's national identity. If India and Australia want to make their strategic partnership long-term and secure, they must avoid the mere economic and political utilization (instrumentalization) of the diaspora. Both countries must invest in the social welfare, trust, and internal diversities of this vibrant community so that this '4-D' framework does not remain just a paper slogan but develops on a strong ground reality.