

2. The 'Right to be Forgotten' on the Internet

Prelims: Governance- Rights Issue

Mains: GS-IV- Ethical concerns in Government and Private Institutions; Laws, Rules, Regulations and Conscience as Sources of Ethical Guidance; Accountability and Ethical Governance; Ethical Issues in Corporate Governance

Context:

- ▶▶ European Union's highest court ruled that an online privacy rule known as the '**right to be forgotten**' under European law would not apply beyond the borders of EU member states.
- ▶▶ The European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled in favour of the search engine giant Google, which was contesting a French regulatory authority's order to have web addresses removed from its global database.

What is the 'Right to be Forgotten' under European law?

- ▶▶ The right to be forgotten empowers individuals to ask organisations to delete their **personal data**.
- ▶▶ It is provided by the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), a law passed by the 28-member bloc in 2018.
- ▶▶ "personal data" means "any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ("data subject")", and "controller" means "the natural or legal person, public authority, agency or any other body which... determines the purposes and means of the processing of personal data".

Significance of the Ruling:

- ▶▶ The ruling comes as an important victory for Google, and lays down that the online privacy law cannot be used to regulate the internet in countries such as India, which are outside the European Union.