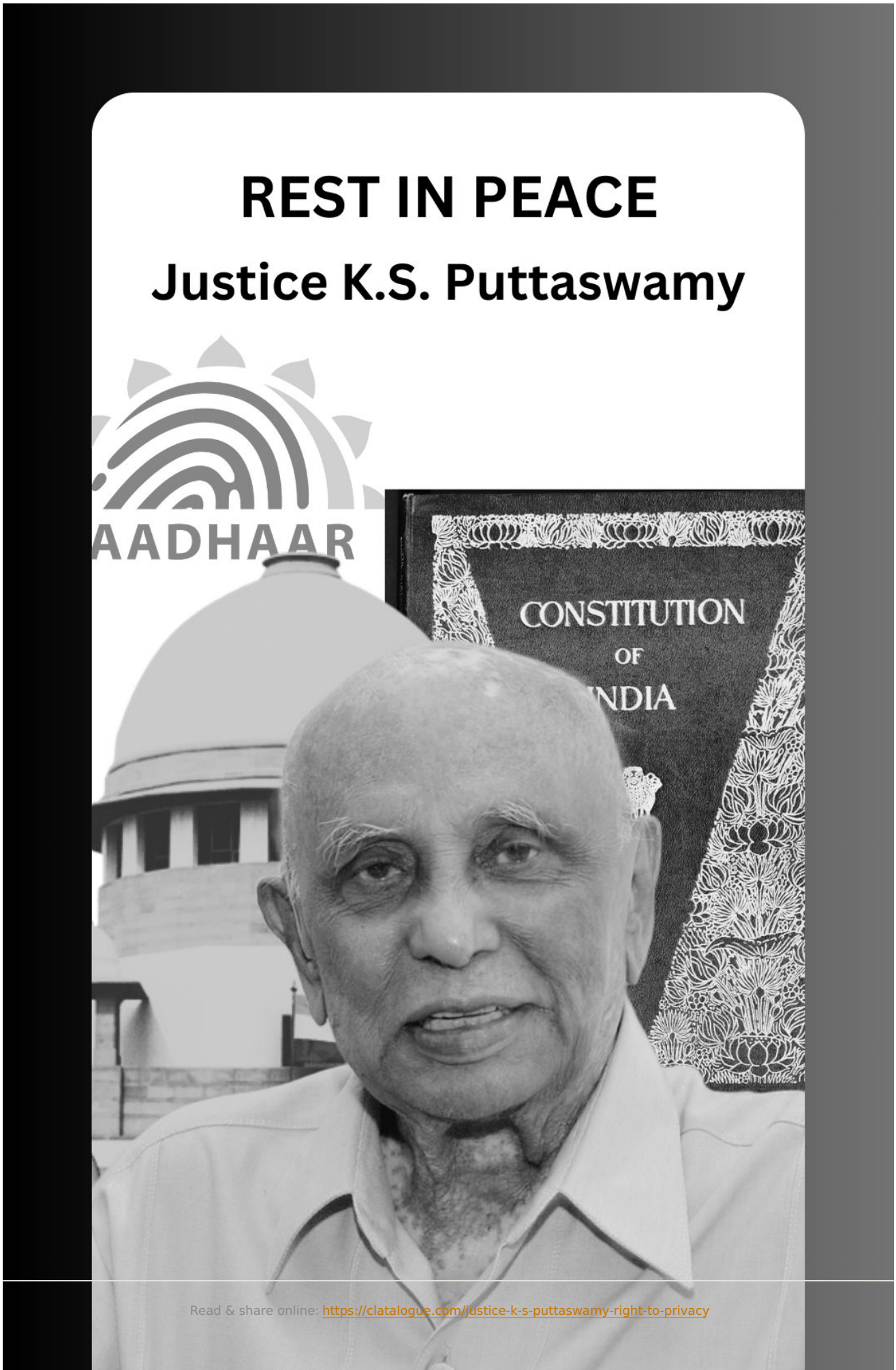
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Justice K.S. Puttaswamy, Architect of India's Privacy Rights, Passes Away

Ruchika Mohapatra · 28 Oct 2024

Justice KS Puttaswamy, who famously led the landmark privacy rights case against Aadhaar, has passed away.

Justice K.S. Puttaswamy, former judge of the Karnataka High Court and a trailblazer for privacy rights in India, passed away in Bengaluru. He gained nationwide recognition for his historic legal challenge against the Aadhaar scheme in 2012, questioning the constitutionality of mandatory biometric data collection. His petition culminated in a Supreme Court ruling affirming the right to privacy as a fundamental right, reshaping data protection and individual liberties in India.


REST IN PEACE
Justice K.S. Puttaswamy
AADHAAR
CONSTITUTION
OF
NDIA

Born and raised in Karnataka, Justice Puttaswamy served as a judge on the Karnataka High Court, known for his dedication to upholding civil liberties. After retiring from active service, he continued to take a deep interest in citizens' rights, remaining vocal about issues of governmental overreach and the protection of individual freedoms.

Justice K.S. Puttaswamy served in several key roles during his career. In 1986, he became the first Vice-Chairman of the Bangalore Bench of the Central Administrative Tribunal. Later, in 1989, he was appointed the inaugural Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Administrative Tribunal under the new Uniform Administrative Tribunals Act. Then, on January 26, 1994, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Kotla Vijayabhaskara Reddy, appointed him as the head of the newly formed Backward Classes Commission, marking another significant chapter in his public service.

In 2012, he initiated a petition against the Union Government's Aadhaar program, arguing that the mandatory collection of biometric data encroached on personal freedoms without adequate safeguards in place.

The 2017 Supreme Court ruling in favor of Justice Puttaswamy's arguments became a watershed moment in Indian constitutional law, enshrining privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21. The judgment set new standards for the government's handling of personal data, with direct implications for technology laws, data protection legislation, and surveillance practices across India.

His legacy stands as a reminder of the power of judicial advocacy and the importance of safeguarding personal freedoms against unchecked state power. As India continues to adapt to digital transformations, Justice KS Puttaswamy's contributions will remain a cornerstone in the defense of individual privacy and liberty.

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