



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

World Press Freedom Day 2026 — India Ranked 157th, RSF Index Released

3 May 2026

POLITY

SOCIAL ISSUES

IR

GS2



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**

bharatnotes.com →

ADVERTISE

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

epicbharat@gmail.com

World Press Freedom Day 2026 — India Ranked 157th, RSF Index Released

3 May 2026 · 4 min read · 4 tags

WHY IN NEWS

May 3 is observed as **World Press Freedom Day** every year — declared by the **United Nations General Assembly** following a recommendation from **UNESCO’s General Conference** in 1993. On this day, **Reporters Without Borders (RSF — Reporters Sans Frontières)** released the **2026 World Press Freedom Index**, ranking India **157th out of 180 countries** — a six-place decline from 151st in 2025. The 2026 conference theme is “**Shaping a Future at Peace**”.

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX 2026 — INDIA

India’s Rank Over Years

YEAR	INDIA’S RANK	TOTAL COUNTRIES
2024	159	180
2025	151	180
2026	157	180

Note: India improved from 159 to 151 between 2024 and 2025, but has now dropped six places to 157 in 2026.

RSF’s Reasons for India’s Low Ranking

- Judicial harassment.** RSF documents cases of journalists arrested, charged, or subjected to prolonged trials using multiple laws simultaneously — UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act), **sedition** (IPC Section 124A — recently under constitutional review), criminal defamation (IPC Sections 499-500), and IT Act provisions.
- Use of national security and sedition laws.** RSF notes that journalists covering sensitive issues — Manipur, Kashmir, Adani-related investigations — have faced FIRs and bail denials under national security provisions.

3. Media ownership concentration. A handful of large industrial conglomerates dominate news media across TV, print, and digital. RSF flags that concentration of media ownership reduces editorial independence.

4. Physical threats. Freelancers, regional reporters, and female journalists face threats and violence — RSF includes physical safety as part of the index methodology.

5. Financial pressure. Advertising dependence on government spending (Centre + States) creates structural incentives for self-censorship.

India vs. Neighbours (WPI 2026)

COUNTRY	RANK 2026
Nepal	95
Bangladesh	149
Sri Lanka	139
Pakistan	153
India	157
China	172
North Korea	179

RSF'S PRESS FREEDOM INDEX — METHODOLOGY

RSF evaluates countries across **five contextual indicators**:

- ① **Political context** — political environment's effect on journalism
- ② **Legal framework** — laws governing press freedom, anti-press laws, access to information
- ③ **Economic context** — media ownership, financial independence, advertising markets
- ④ **Sociocultural context** — social norms affecting coverage (gender, minorities, religion)
- ⑤ **Safety** — physical, digital, and legal threats to journalists

Each country receives a score from 0 (worst) to 100 (best); 2026 global average reflects continued deterioration.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS — PRESS FREEDOM IN INDIA

India's Constitution does not explicitly mention **Freedom of the Press** as a separate right. However:

Article 19(1)(a) – Right to freedom of speech and expression – has been interpreted by the Supreme Court (*Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras, 1950*; *Bennett Coleman & Co. v. Union of India, 1972*) to include the **freedom of the press** as a subset of free speech.

Article 19(2) – Reasonable restrictions on grounds of **sovereignty** and integrity of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, contempt of court, defamation, or incitement to an offence.

Key Supreme Court precedents:

- *Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras (1950)* – Free press essential to political liberty
- *Bennett Coleman & Co. v. Union of India (1972)* – Newsprint controls can violate press freedom
- *Indian Express Newspapers v. Union of India (1985)* – Press freedom includes right to publish, circulate, and have access to information

KEY INSTITUTIONS

BODY	ROLE
RSF (Reporters Sans Frontières)	Paris-based NGO; publishes WPMI annually
Press Council of India	Statutory body under Press Council Act, 1978; adjudicates complaints; can censure but not punish
News Broadcasters Standards Authority (NBSA)	Self-regulatory body for news broadcasters
DAVP	Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity – controls govt ad spend to media

UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS2 — Polity	Article 19(1)(a), freedom of press, reasonable restrictions Article 19(2), Press Council of India
GS2 — Governance	Media regulation, DAVP advertising, media ownership, RTI
GS2 — International Relations	India's global rankings, soft power, democratic credentials
GS4 — Ethics	Media ethics, freedom vs. responsibility, self-censorship

Mains Keywords: World Press Freedom Day, Reporters Without Borders (RSF), World Press Freedom Index, Article 19(1)(a), freedom of press, Press Council of India, media ownership concentration, UAPA and media, criminal defamation IPC 499-500

Prelims Facts Corner

ITEM	FACT
World Press Freedom Day	May 3 (annually since 1993)
Declared by	UNESCO General Conference → UNGA
2026 theme	“Shaping a Future at Peace”
Published by	RSF (Reporters Sans Frontières)
India rank 2026	157 / 180
India rank 2025	151 / 180
Best-ranked country (typically)	Norway (consistently near top)
Press Council of India	Statutory body; Press Council Act, 1978
Article 19(1)(a)	Freedom of speech and expression (includes press freedom)
Article 19(2)	Reasonable restrictions on free speech

← **NEWER ARTICLE**

SIPRI 2026: India Becomes World's 5th Largest Military...

OLDER ARTICLE →

DRDO Conducts Phase-II Trial of LR-AShM — India's Long-Range...

RELATED EDITORIALS

THE HINDU

[Fire and Sound — On Thrissur Pooram and the Cost of Sacrificing Safety at the Altar of Faith](#)

25 Apr

INDIAN EXPRESS

[Burning Rubbish, Leaking Climate — India's Landfill Methane Crisis and the Waste Governance Vacuum](#)

25 Apr

INDIAN EXPRESS

[Decriminalising the State — Jan Vishwas Act 2026 and the Long Road to Trust-Based Governance](#)

25 Apr

INDIAN EXPRESS

[Levelling Up — OGAI and the Challenge of Governing India's Online Gaming Ecosystem](#)

25 Apr

RELATED KEY TERMS

KEY TERM

[42nd Amendment Freeze on Delimitation](#)

The constitutional freeze that locked Lok Sabha seat allocation to the...

KEY TERM

[Act East Policy](#)

India's strategic foreign policy framework prioritising active...

KEY TERM

[Active Case Finding \(TB\)](#)

A proactive public health strategy where health workers systematically...

KEY TERM

[Advance Directive \(Living Will\)](#)

A legal document in which a competent adult specifies their medical...



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujyari →](#)<https://ujyari.com/daily/2026/05/03/world-press-freedom-day-india-rsf-index-2026/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → bharatnotes.com](http://bharatnotes.com)

📌 OPPORTUNITY

Advertise with Ujyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

Ideal for: Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujyari.com · bharatnotes.com