Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the significance of an independent press in a democratic system. Discuss how restrictions on media freedom can affect transparency, accountability and citizens' rights.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 30/10/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Freedom of expression; independent journalism; democratic accountability; media censorship; right to information; constitutional safeguards

Model Answer

Introduction

An independent press is a vital institution of democracy. It enables citizens to access information, express opinions and scrutinise the functioning of public authorities. Reports about restrictions on Russia's *Novaya Gazeta* highlight concerns regarding media freedom.

Significance of Press Freedom

- **Accountability:** Investigative journalism exposes corruption, misuse of power and administrative failures.
- **Informed citizenship:** Independent reporting supports public debate and informed democratic participation.
- **Protection of rights:** Media provides a platform for marginalised voices and human rights concerns.
- **Transparency:** It strengthens public scrutiny of government policies and decisions.

Challenges and Safeguards

Censorship, intimidation, arbitrary restrictions and concentration of media ownership can weaken press independence. In India, Article 19(1)(a) protects freedom of speech and expression, including press freedom, subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2).

Institutional independence, transparent regulation, journalist safety and access to public information are essential safeguards.

Conclusion

A free and responsible press strengthens democratic institutions. Protecting media independence while ensuring accountability for genuine legal violations is essential for an informed society.

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