International Relations · GS - II

Examine the significance of independent media in safeguarding democracy and accountability. Discuss the challenges faced by journalists and media organisations under authoritarian regimes.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 31/10/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Freedom of expression; press freedom; independent journalism; democratic accountability; censorship; state pressure; media pluralism; journalist safety; international human rights

Model Answer

Introduction

Independent media is a vital pillar of democratic governance. It enables citizens to access information, express opinions and scrutinise the exercise of political power.

Significance of Independent Media

1. Government Accountability: Investigative journalism exposes corruption, misuse of authority and administrative failures.

2. Informed Citizenship: Independent reporting promotes public debate and enables citizens to make informed decisions.

3. Protection of Rights: Media can highlight human rights violations and provide visibility to marginalised communities.

Challenges under Authoritarian Regimes

- **Censorship:** Restrictions on reporting limit access to independent information.
- **Institutional Pressure:** Legal action, financial restrictions and administrative interference can weaken media organisations.
- **Journalist Safety:** Threats, intimidation and harassment discourage critical reporting.
- **Media Concentration:** Control over ownership and distribution can reduce pluralism.

The reported closure of Russia's *Novaya Gazeta* illustrates concerns surrounding the ability of independent publications to operate under sustained state pressure.

Way Forward

Countries should strengthen legal safeguards, protect journalists, ensure transparent media ownership and support independent public-interest journalism.

Conclusion

A free and pluralistic media environment is essential for transparency, democratic participation and the protection of fundamental rights.

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