Polity & Governance · GS - II

“Freedom of the press is an essential pillar of democracy, but journalists may face challenges while exercising this freedom.” Discuss the constitutional safeguards for press freedom in India and examine the role of the judiciary in protecting journalists.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 16/10/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Article 19(1)(a), Article 19(2), Article 21, Article 32, Freedom of the Press, Fundamental Rights, Judicial Review, Police Accountability, Rule of Law, Due Process, Democratic Accountability, Protection of Journalists, Separation of Powers.

Model Answer

1. Introduction

A free and independent press is essential for democratic accountability, transparency and informed citizenship. In India, press freedom is constitutionally protected under Article 19(1)(a), which guarantees freedom of speech and expression.

2. Main Body

A. Constitutional Safeguards

1. **Article 19(1)(a):** Protects freedom of speech and expression, including freedom of the press.
2. **Article 19(2):** Permits reasonable restrictions on specified grounds, such as public order, defamation and security of the State.
3. **Article 21:** Protects life and personal liberty, which may be relevant where journalists face threats or unlawful violence.
4. **Article 32:** Enables individuals to approach the Supreme Court for enforcement of fundamental rights.

B. Role of the Judiciary

1. **Protection of rights:** Courts can examine allegations of unlawful detention, intimidation and restrictions on reporting.
2. **Police accountability:** Judicial scrutiny can promote lawful policing and due process.
3. **Constitutional balance:** Courts must balance press freedom with legitimate restrictions imposed by law.

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C. Challenges

Threats, physical attacks, arbitrary legal action and digital harassment can discourage independent journalism and weaken public accountability.

3. Conclusion

Protecting journalists requires independent judicial oversight, accountable policing, due process and respect for constitutional freedoms. A free press strengthens democracy while operating within the framework of the Constitution.