



World Press Freedom Day 2021

Why in News

The **World Press Freedom Day (WPF)** is an annual celebration of press freedom, observed on **3rd May** every year.

- The main celebration is organized by the [UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#).
- The **theme for WPF 2021** is **"Information as a Public Good"**.

Key Points

- **Background:**
 - The day was proclaimed by the **UN General Assembly** in 1993, following the recommendation of **UNESCO's General Conference** in 1991.
 - The day also **marks the 1991 Windhoek Declaration** (adopted by UNESCO).
 - It aimed towards the 'development of a free, independent and pluralistic press'.
- **Three Key Highlights of WPF 2021:**
 - Steps to ensure the **economic viability of news media**.
 - Mechanisms for ensuring **transparency of Internet companies**.
 - **Enhanced Media and Information Literacy (MIL) capacities** that enable people to recognize and value, as well as defend and demand, journalism as a vital part of information as a public good.
- **World Press Conference 2021:**
 - The 2021 Global Conference was **hosted by UNESCO** and the Government of **Namibia**.
 - It called for **urgent attention to the threat of extinction faced by local news media** around the world, a crisis worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - It **put forward ideas** to tackle the challenges of our online media environment, push for more transparency of internet companies, strengthen safety of journalists, and improve their working conditions.

Freedom of Press in India

- Freedom of press is **not expressly protected by Indian legal system** but it is **impliedly protected under article 19(1) (a) of the constitution**, which states - "All citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression".
- In **1950**, the Supreme Court in **Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras** observed that freedom of the press lay at the foundation of all democratic organisations.
- However, **Freedom of press is also not absolute**. It faces **certain restrictions under Article 19(2)**, which are as follows-
 - Matters related to interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality or in relation

to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.

▪ **Related Rankings/Findings:**

- India has been **ranked 142nd out of 180 nations** in the [World Press Freedom Index, 2021](#), published by Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) or Reporters Without Borders.
- Reports such as '[Freedom in the World 2021](#)' (Freedom House, US)', '[2020 Human Rights Report](#)' (US State Department)', '[Autocratisation Goes Viral](#)' (V-Dem Institute, Sweden)' have all highlighted **intimidation of journalists in India.**

[Source: DTE](#)

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