

## The Future of Free Speech Index, 2025

### Why in news?

The free speech index was recently released by the Future of Free Speech and India was ranked 24<sup>th</sup> out of the 33 countries.

- **Future of Free Speech Index** - Is a global survey by *The Future of Free Speech*, an independent U.S.-based think tank.
- **Based on 8 questions** - The index is based on answers to 3 general questions and 5 more concrete questions.

#### 3 General Questions

Rejection of censorship of:

- Private speech,
- Media and
- The internet.

#### 5 Concrete Questions

Willingness to allow sensitive types of statements that are critical of:

- The government,
- Offensive to religion,
- Offensive to minority groups,
- Support homosexual relationships and
- Insulting the national flag.

*Free speech is a cornerstone of democracy, a fundamental right that empowers individuals to express their opinions, challenge authority and engage in open debate.*

### Key Findings of the Report

- **Decline in free speech** - The survey, conducted in October 2024, also revealed that “more countries have seen declines rather than improvements in free speech support since 2021.
- **India** - Has ranked India 24<sup>th</sup> out of the 33 countries surveyed on the question of support for free speech.
- India, with a score of 62.6, was placed 24<sup>th</sup>, between South Africa and Lebanon.

**General Trend**

**The Exception**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In many places, there's a clear link, where people strongly support free speech, they tend to have it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India, Hungary and Venezuela are different.</li> <li>• In these countries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A lot of people want and value free speech.</li> <li>- But, the actual level of freedom of expression is relatively limited.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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*Freedom of Expression is protected by **Article 19** of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

- **Democratic nations** - The biggest drops in free speech has occurred in democratic nations like the *United States, Israel and Japan*.
- **Scandinavia** - Dominated the *top rankings*, with Norway ranks highest in support for free speech, followed closely by Denmark and Sweden.
- **Asia** - Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan showed the *biggest improvements*, though they remained at the lower end of the ranking.
- **Authoritarian-leaning nations** — Such as Hungary and Venezuela scored high.

## References

1. [The Hindu | Free Speech Index](#)
2. [The Future of Free Speech Index Report](#)

