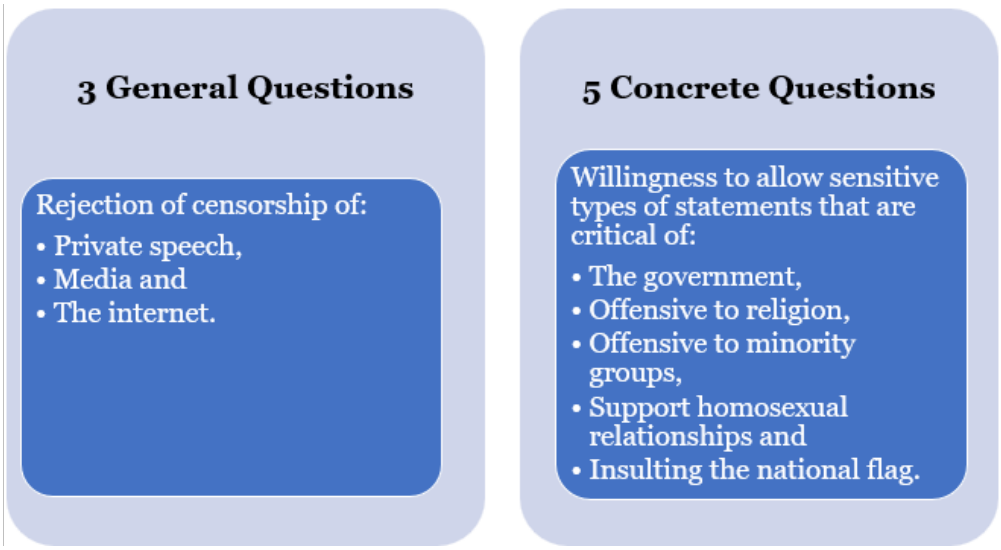
The Future of Free Speech Index, 2025

Why in news?

The free speech index was recently released by the Future of Free Speech and India was ranked 24th 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.



> *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 *24th out of the 33 countries* surveyed on the question of support for free speech.
- India, with a score of 62.6, was placed 24th, between South Africa and Lebanon.

General Trend	The Exception

• In many places, there's a clear link, where people strongly support free speech, they tend to have it.	• India, Hungary and Venezuela are different. • In these countries: - A lot of people want and value free speech. - But, the actual level of freedom of expression is relatively limited.

*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

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