

INDIA

India's news cycle was dominated by state elections, bilateral relations, and a contentious constitutional amendment. These developments were accompanied by regional language news and hyperlocal content from diverse media players, including mainstream news organisations and independent journalists. As video-led social media platforms continue to attract both traditional players and new content creators, media like TV now offer multiple avenues for news.

With a majority of respondents saying they find news online and over half of those saying they use social media platforms for news, legacy sources like TV (44%) have retained popularity for news by offering multiple avenues such as traditional subscription models or connected TV, blurring the lines between traditional broadcast and digital content formats.

Video-based social media platforms support diverse actors – news organisations, independent journalists, and news creators – making them a popular source of news. In India, around 58% of respondents rely on YouTube for news.

The Collective Newsroom in India is developing a playbook on how to build partnerships with content creators, including selection and training frameworks. The project will run as a pilot in Hindi and Marathi. Saurabh Dwivedi, former founding editor of The Lallantop, joined The Indian Express Group in January 2026. Dwivedi is expected to drive the group's Hindi digital content and social media reach. Individual news creators continue to garner large audiences in India. Raj Shamani, for example, is a young creator and entrepreneur with close to 17m subscribers on YouTube and his long-form podcast Figuring Out focuses on finance, news, and personal growth. In a move to tap into their popularity and reach, the Indian government announced collaborations with content creators for its broadcast arms – DD News and Akashvani (AIR). It also plans to train 15,000 creators and media professionals on AI through partnerships with Google and YouTube.¹⁴⁴

News channels in regional languages, like Odisha TV and Aaj Tak, have been experimenting with AI anchors and AI clones of popular news anchors. Digital-born news outlet Scroll.in developed a tool that extracts and converts media from a text article into a short video for social channels. *The Hindu*, a legacy print brand, experimented with an AI character during the recent Assembly elections for poll-related video news. AI integration is, however, uneven across newsrooms due to a lack of resources, knowledge, or genuine concerns around the dilution of editorial safeguards and trust in news.

Early this year, the Indian government introduced a slew of amendments to the IT Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code. The amendments look at identifying and labelling synthetically generated information (SGI), and streamlining procedures to take down content by social media platforms when flagged by relevant authorities under the law.¹⁴⁵ Further, the amendments include provisions to oversee content put up by creators, who are not publishers but comment on news and current affairs on social media platforms.¹⁴⁶

However, these amendments have been met with concerns they may dilute procedural safeguards around the removal of content and in the protection of free speech. Some of these include a reduced time limit for platforms to remove content, exercising restraint before publishing content that may violate the law, overlooking benign or creative purposes of AI by way of a broad definition for SGI, and overreach of executive powers to take down content.



Population	1,464m
Internet penetration	70%

Survey sample primarily composed of English speakers

Intermediaries and platforms risk losing their safe-harbour provisions if they fail to comply with the takedown orders.¹⁴⁷

In another worrying instance of attacks on press freedom, the office of one of India's oldest news agencies, United News of India (UNI), was sealed by the local police in Delhi in March, following an order from the Delhi High Court cancelling its land allotment. The move witnessed force to seal the premises on the day the order was passed. Several journalist bodies, including the Press Council of India and the Editors Guild of India, criticised the move as 'high handed' and a display of 'excessive force'.¹⁴⁸

In the latest RSF Press Freedom Index, India ranks 157 out of 180 countries – a drop of six places since last year. While India has ranked lower in RSF's rankings in the past, its current position indicates the legal, political, and economic challenges the press continues to face in one of the most diverse media markets in the world.

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¹⁴⁴ <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/magazines/panache/india-to-train-15000-creators-in-ai-through-govtgoogleyoutube-partnership/articleshow/129758389.cms>

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.dw.com/en/india-tightens-ai-rules-for-social-media-platforms/a-75903631>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/explained-centres-draft-it-rules-how-are-they-going-to-affect-social-media-creators-3950725>

¹⁴⁷ <https://internetfreedom.in/it-intermediary-amendment-rules-2026-contradict-their-purpose/>

¹⁴⁸ https://www.deccanherald.com/india/journalists-bodies-condemn-manhandling-use-of-excessive-force-in-sealing-uni-premises-3939919#google_vignette

WEEKLY REACH OFFLINE AND ONLINE FOR NEWS

TOP BRANDS

% Weekly usage for news

Note: percentages reflect recalled news usage by survey respondents.

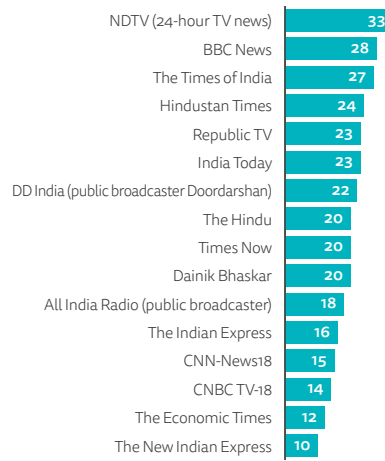
- Weekly use TV, radio & print
- Weekly use online brands

47% (+3)

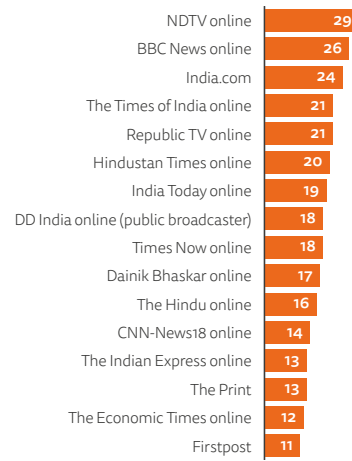
SHARE NEWS

via social, messaging, or email

TV, RADIO, AND PRINT



ONLINE

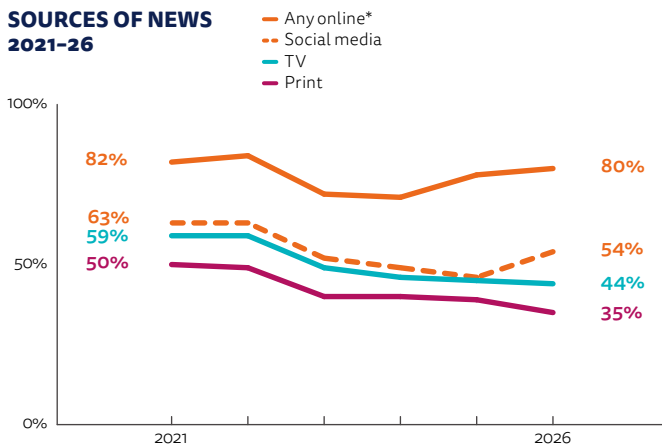


The Wire:	10%
Rediff News:	10%
NewsClick:	10%
The News Minute:	9%
Newslaundry:	9%

METHODOLOGY NOTE

These data are based on a survey of mainly English-speaking, online news users in India – a small subset of a larger, more diverse, media market. Findings in this online poll are not nationally representative and will tend to under-represent the continued importance of traditional media such as TV and print.

SOURCES OF NEWS 2021-26



* Incl. news websites/apps, social/video networks, news podcasts, and AI chatbots

TOP SOCIAL, MESSAGING, AND VIDEO NETWORKS

Rank	Brand	For News		For All
1	YouTube	58%	(+3)	76%
2	WhatsApp	56%	(+10)	78%
3	Instagram	45%	(+8)	63%
4	Facebook	39%	(+3)	57%
5	Telegram	23%	(+1)	39%
6	Facebook Messenger	16%	(+4)	26%



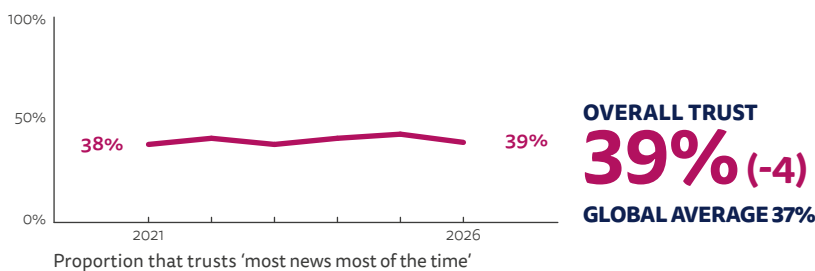
52% (+2)

AVOID THE NEWS sometimes/often

TRUST

India witnessed a 4pp decrease in trust levels. Overall trust in news for India is 39%, placing it eighteenth among 48 markets in the survey. At the brand level, trust in legacy print publishers and public broadcasters remains high.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS 2021-26



PUBLIC OPINION ON BRAND TRUST

Only the brands listed were included in the survey. It should not be treated as a list of the most or least trusted brands, as it is not exhaustive.

Brand	Trust	Neither	Don't Trust
All India Radio	65%	19%	16%
BBC News	64%	19%	17%
CNN-News18	61%	22%	17%
DD India	63%	18%	19%
Economic Times	65%	19%	16%
Hindustan Times	67%	18%	15%
India Today TV	61%	20%	19%
NDTV	62%	18%	20%
Other regional or local newspaper	62%	19%	19%
Republic TV	57%	20%	23%
Scroll.in	48%	28%	25%
The Hindu	63%	18%	19%
The Indian Express	64%	19%	16%
The Times of India	69%	16%	15%
The Wire	51%	26%	23%

Q6_2018_trust. How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Please use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Details: 6-10 coded as 'Trust', 5 coded as 'Neither', 0-4 coded as 'Don't trust'. Those that haven't heard of each brand were excluded. Whether respondents consider a brand trustworthy is their subjective judgement, and the scores are aggregates of public opinion, not an objective assessment of underlying trustworthiness.



WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX SCORE 2026

Score: **31.96**

157 / 180

Measure of press freedom from NGO Reporters Without Borders based on expert assessment. More at rsf.org