

## Religious laws



### Internet Freedom

India was designated as 'partly free' by Freedom House's 'Freedom of the Net 2024' report. The country has been the global leader in the number of internet shutdowns over the previous 5 years. Although recently the number has been decreasing, the frequency, geographical distribution, and duration of these outages remains on the rise. The Telecommunications Act, passed in December 2023 gives the government broad powers to restrict and intercept communications. The ruling BJP uses legislation to force private internet providers to shut down the internet, and to censor discussion of political issues, criticism of the government, and independent reporting. Journalists, activists, and minorities (especially the muslim population) are often the target of hate speech, harassment and persecution. Mis- and disinformation are frequently shared online and political parties (particularly the BJP) are participating, seeking to influence public perception, especially in regions near the border with Pakistan. The use of VPN-s remains legal, however since 2022 VPN providers must store users' names, addresses, contact numbers, period of subscription, email and IP addresses, and the purpose of using their services, which has made many of them cease their operations in India.

*Read more:*

[India: Freedom on the Net 2024 Country Report](#)

[Govt releases draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules. no penal clause | India News - Business Standard](#)

[Indian tech hub state pushes jail terms for 'fake news': sparks worries | Reuters](#)