

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2967
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.12.2024

SAFEGUARDING FREEDOM OF FREE SPEECH ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

2967. SHRI HARIS BEERAN:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the fact checking initiative by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) violate the freedom of free speech guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has taken any step to safeguard the free speech on social media platform; and
- (d) if so, the details hereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND
PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
(DR. L. MURUGAN)

(a) to (d): A Fact Check Unit (FCU) has been set up under Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in November, 2019 to check fake news related to the Central Government. After verifying the authenticity of news from authorised sources in Ministries/ Departments of Government of India, FCU posts correct information on its social media platforms. The FCU works with the objective of dispelling false and misleading information being circulated regarding the programmes/initiatives of the Government.

So far as the content of publishers of news and current affairs on digital media are concerned the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules, 2021) provides for a Code of Ethics which, inter-alia, requires them to adhere to the Norms of Journalistic Conduct brought out by Press Council of India and Programme Code laid down under the Cable Television Network Regulation Act, 1995 which have specific provisions against publishing of false and misleading news.
