

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

RAJYA SABHA
ADMITTED UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1526
(TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.08.2025)

FREEDOM OF PRESS IN INDIA

1526: SHRI MANOJ KUMAR JHA

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

- (a) whether Government has undertaken any review to assess the decline in India's press freedom rankings and the reported rise in intimidation, legal harassment and violence against journalists in recent years;
- (b) whether any steps have been taken to strengthen institutional mechanisms like the Press Council of India to protect press freedom from political interference; and
- (c) the measures being planned to ensure that journalists can work without fear or pressure from government or political actors?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION & BROADCASTING; AND
PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS; {DR. L. MURUGAN}

(a) to (c): India has a vibrant press and media ecosystem, which does not need validation from foreign organizations. India has about 1,54,000 printed publications, more than 900 private satellite TV channels and numerous publishers on digital media including OTT platforms, e-replica of newspapers, digital newspapers, news websites and news channels on social media platforms etc.

India has constitutional guarantees like Article 19 (1)(a), which protects freedom of speech and expression.

Legal framework to protect journalists:

- Freedom of speech and expression is protected under Article 19 of the Constitution.
- Press Council of India (PCI) is a statutory autonomous body set up under the Press Council Act, 1978.
- It is headed by a retired Judge of the Supreme Court and adjudicates on the complaints filed by the members of the press concerning curtailment of press freedom, physical assault/attack on journalists etc.
- Under Regulation 13 of the Press Council (Procedure for Inquiry) Regulations, 1979, the PCI is also mandated to take suo-motu cognizance on the pressing issues concerning freedom of Press and safeguarding of its high standards.
- Freedom of press in electronic & digital media is also ensured through a self-regulatory mechanism under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and IT Rules, 2021. 3 tier-structure is in place for addressing the complaints, with first level at the broadcaster/publisher level followed by the self-regulatory bodies at second level.
