

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 989  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.12.2017**

**GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS OF PCI**

**989. SHRIMATI KOTHAPALLI GEETHA:  
SHRI J.C. DIVAKAR REDDY:**

**Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING**

**be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government organized golden jubilee celebrations of the Press Council of India (PCI) and celebrated National Press Day recently;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the issues discussed and outcome thereof;
- (d) whether the Government proposes for a single watchdog body for both print and television media as PCI is only for print media and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) whether the Government has taken steps for upholding freedom of press in all forms and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING [COL RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (Retd.)]**

(a) to (c) The Press Council of India (PCI), a Statutory Autonomous Body celebrated its valedictory of Golden Jubilee Year on November 16, 2017. The details of the event is annexed as Annexure.

(d) In pursuance of its policy to uphold the freedom of the press, the Government does not interfere in functioning of the press. However, Press Council of India (PCI), a statutory autonomous body has been set up under the Press Council Act, 1978 to maintain and improve the standards of newspapers and news agencies in the country and also to inculcate the principles of self-regulation among the press. In furtherance of its objectives, PCI have formed Norms of Journalistic Conduct under section 13(2)(b) of the Press Council Act, 1978 which cover the principles and ethics regarding journalism. The Council monitors and takes cognizance, *suo motu* or on complaints, of contents in print media which *prima facie*, are violative of Norms of Journalistic Conduct. The council may warn, admonish or censure the newspaper, the news agency, the editor or the journalist or disapprove the conduct of the editor or the journalist.

Besides, the content broadcast on TV channels is regulated in accordance with the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the Cable television Network Rules, 1994 framed thereunder. All programmes/advertisements telecast on TV channels have to comply with the Programme and Advertising Codes prescribed under Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the Cable television Network Rules, 1994 framed thereunder. In addition, the self-regulation regime has also been established both for news and non-news channels in the form of News Broadcasting Standards Authority (**NBSA**) of News Broadcasters Association (**NBA**) and Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (**BCCC**) of Indian Broadcasting Foundation (**IBF**) respectively and advertisement by Advertising Standards Council of India (**ASCI**) which has been acknowledged by Supreme Court of India in W.P. (C) No. 387/2000 filed by Common Cause Vs UoI & Ors.

(e) PCI is mandated to promote and protect the freedom of the press within ethical jurisdiction and declaratory observations. In discharge thereof, it adjudicates on specific cases and in a wider perspective, prepares white papers/reports on matter impinging such freedom.

‘Police’ and ‘Public Order’ are State subjects under the seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. The existing laws are adequate for protection of citizens including journalists. Also the Press Council of India takes appropriate action on receipt of specific complaints from affected journalists. Representations on providing security are received from or on behalf of individuals, including journalists. All such representations are examined and based on inputs received regarding threat assessment, required action is taken by the relevant authorities. Central Government attaches highest importance to prevention of crime. An advisory on safety of journalists has been issued to States/UTs on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017, which is available at the Ministry of Home Affairs’ website viz., [www.mha.nic.in](http://www.mha.nic.in).

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**Annexure referred to in the reply to Part (a) to (c) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.989 for answer on 21.12.2017.**

**NATIONAL PRESS DAY 2017**

The National Press Day celebration are held every year by the Council and this year being the valedictory of the Golden Jubilee year of the Press Council of India (PCI) the subject for discussion, countrywide, on the National Press Day was “Challenges Before The Media”. The National Press Day’s main event was inaugurated by Hon’ble Vice President of India Mr. M. Venkaiah Naidu. Hon’ble Minister of Information & Broadcasting Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani graced the occasion as Guest of Honour. The National Awards for Excellence in Journalism were also conferred on the Day in various segments out of the entries received from all over the country. The representatives of World Association of Press Councils (WAPC) who were in Delhi during the period for participating in the WAPC Executive Committee Meeting, also participated in the deliberations organised by PCI.

Hon’ble Vice President expressed concern over some of the dangerous trends that had crept into the newsrooms of both print and electronic media. They needed to be curbed in order to ensure that the pristine role played by the press earlier stood restored.

Earlier speaking at the function, Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting and Textiles, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani said that voices of media shouldn’t be suppressed and constitutionally it was our responsibility to ensure that media had the freedom to speak. She further added that today we have citizens who are becoming journalists through the social media network and they are playing an important role to remind the media of their responsibility as the fourth pillar of democracy.

The Hon’ble Chairman speaking on the occasion highlighted that the challenges faced by the media are its credibility, the surge of paid news and advertorials, and interference of Business Houses in newsroom. He stated that all these challenges have to be met by none other than the community of Journalists themselves as the challenges and threats are more from within than from the outside and it is duty of all who value the freedom of the press to make efforts to overcome the challenges.

The outcomes post deliberations held are as follows:

1. Augmenting Country wide debates and deliberations on “Challenges before the Media” and Generating Proposals for meeting the Challenges at National/International level.
2. Encouraging higher Journalistic practises by awarding those excelling in Journalistic writings covering diverse categories.