

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3333
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.03.2018**

GRANT OF JUDICIAL POWERS TO PCI

3333. SHRI FEROZE VARUN GANDHI

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to grant judicial powers to the Press Council of India (PCI) in light of the growing incidents of attacks on journalists in the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government also proposes to bring forth a Journalist Act, on the pattern of Advocate Act, to bring in a strict code of ethics and protection of journalists;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d): 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 also 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. Therefore, the existing provisions for bringing strict code of ethics amongst journalists are adequate.

However, as regard, incidences of attack on journalists, 'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects under the seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India.

Central Government attaches highest importance to prevention of crime. Representations on providing security received from or on behalf of individuals, including journalists are examined. Based on inputs received regarding threat assessment, required action is taken by the law enforcement agencies. Therefore, the existing laws are adequate for protection of citizens including journalists. Also, the PCI takes appropriate action on receipt of specific complaints from affected journalists. An advisory on safety of journalists has been issued by Ministry of Home Affairs to States/UTs on 20th October 2017, which is available at the Ministry of Home Affairs' website viz., https://mha.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/Advisafety_20-10-2017_24102017.pdf
