

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3332
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.03.2023**

JOURNALISTS ARRESTED UNDER UAPA

3332. SHRI PRADYUT BORDOLOI:

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

- (a) the details and the number of Journalists arrested under Unlawful Activities Prevention Amendment Act (UAPA), Indian Penal Code and other penal laws during the last five years and the current year;
- (b) the details and the number of Information Technology surveys and raids carried out at News organizations by the Government during the last five years and the current year;
- (c) the details and the number of online news content banned by the Government during the such period;
- (d) whether it is a fact that women journalists in India are targeted by online abuses as well as physical attacks as reported by a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) funded report published by International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ);
- (e) if so, the number of such complaints received and action taken by the Government for the protection of women journalists; and
- (f) the details of steps taken by the Government to improve India's ranking in the World Freedom Index?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING; AND MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR)

(a) to (e) 'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India and State Governments are responsible for prevention, detection and investigation of crimes and for prosecuting the criminals through their law enforcement agencies. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) does not maintain data separately for Journalists/ media personnel.

Central Government attaches highest importance to the safety and security of all residents of the country including journalists. The Ministry of Home Affairs have issued advisories to States and UTs, from time to time, to maintain law and order and ensure that any person who takes law into his/her own hand is punished promptly as per law.

The content of the publishers of news and current affairs on digital media and publishers of online curated content (OTT Platforms) is regulated by Ministry of I&B as per the provisions of part-III of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rule, 2021. Under the provisions of IT Rules, 2021, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has issued directions for blocking from public access of 110 You Tube based news channels and 248 user generated URLs, including webpages, websites,

posts/accounts on social media platforms, podcasts, and apps for carrying content referred to in section 69A of IT Act, 2000 from December, 2021 to till date.

In pursuance of its policy to uphold the freedom of press, the Government does not interfere in the functioning of the press. Press Council of India (PCI), a statutory autonomous body, has been set up under the Press Council Act, 1978 mainly to preserve the freedom of the Press and improve the standards of newspapers and news agencies in the country. PCI considers complaints filed 'by the Press' concerning curtailment of press freedom, physical assault/attack on journalists etc. under Section 13 of the Press Council Act 1978 and processed under the provisions of Press Council (Procedure for Inquiry) Regulations, 1979. PCI is also empowered to take suo-motu cognizance in matters on the pressing issues concerning freedom of Press and safeguarding of its high standards.

(f) The World Press Freedom Index is published by a foreign Non-Government-Organization, "Reporters Without Borders". The Government does not subscribe to its views and country rankings and does not agree to the conclusions drawn by this organization for various reasons including very low sample size, little or no weightage to fundamentals of democracy, adoption of a methodology which is questionable and non-transparent, etc.
