

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

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *272
TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.08.2023**

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

***272. PROF. SOUGATA RAY:**

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that India ranked 161 out of 180 countries as per the report of World Press Freedom Index compiled by Global Media Watchdog Reporters Without Borders and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has ascertained/ identified the reasons for the same, if so, the details thereof along with the remedial measures taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (c) the details of steps taken/being taken by the Government to ensure an atmosphere for free press activities in the country?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (c) OF THE
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(a) to (c) The Government has come across reports carrying the ranking of countries in the World Press Freedom Index, 2023 published by 'Reporters Without Borders'. However, the Government 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.

The Government is committed to ensure the right to freedom of speech and expression enshrined under the Article 19 of the Constitution of India. 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. 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.

Central Government attaches highest importance to the safety and security of every citizen of the country including journalists. An advisory specifically on safety of journalists was issued to States/ UTs on 20th October 2017 requesting them to strictly enforce the law to ensure the safety and security of media persons, which is available on the website www.mha.gov.in.