

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *49
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.02.2024

JUSTICE FOR JOURNALISTS

***49. SHRI BENNY BEHANAN:**

SHRI KUMBAKUDI SUDHAKARAN:

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

- (a) the manner and the steps taken by the Government to ensure speedy justice and compensation to several incarcerated journalists who have been unfairly and illegally arrested under sections of Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA);
- (b) the reasons for India's constant decline and low performance in Global Press Freedom indices and the steps taken thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken to secure the financial independence of news organisations heavily dependent on corporate advertisement revenue or controlled by large conglomerates?

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 LOK SABHA
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JOURNALISTS**

(a): '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.

Central Government attaches highest importance to the safety and security of all citizens of the country including journalists. The existing laws for protection of citizens also cover journalists. There are adequate statutory safeguards in the UAPA, to prevent misuse of the law.

Ministry of Home Affairs has also issued specific advisories to States and UTs on safety of journalists from time to time. Advisory on safety of journalist has been issued on 20th October, 2017 requesting the State Governments to strictly enforce the law to ensure the safety and security of media persons, which is available on the website www.mha.gov.in.

(b): The World Press Freedom Index is brought out by the organization 'Reporters Without Borders' headquartered in Paris, France. The Government does not agree to the conclusions drawn by this organization with regard to India's ranking in the index 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.

(c): 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. The Government, however, does not interfere in the financial and operational matters of the media houses, which function in competitive market driven environment.
