

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

**LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3798  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21-12-2021**

**WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX**

**3798. SHRI DIBYENDU ADHIKARI:  
SHRI KUMBAKUDI SUDHAKARAN:  
MS. S. JOTHIMANI:  
SHRI MARGANI BHARAT:  
SHRI KARTI P. CHIDAMBARAM:**

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that India ranked 142 out of 180 countries listed in the World Press Freedom Index compiled by Reporters Without Borders in 2021, dropping two spots from 2020, remains bad, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has ascertained/identified the reasons for the same, if so, the details thereof and the remedial measures taken in this regards;
- (c) whether the Government is aware of the incidents reported in Tripura where police booked 102 people including journalists under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Editors Guild of India (EGI) has objected on such a harsh law for penalizing the journalists for merely reporting on and protesting against communal violences, if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether the Government has taken steps to protect the safety and freedom of journalists, if so, the details thereof?

## **ANSWER**

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

**(a) & (b) 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 organisation 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, lack of clear definition of press freedom 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.**

**The Central Government implements a Journalists Welfare Scheme under which financial assistance is provided to journalists and their families in cases of death, accidents, etc.**

**(c) 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, registration and investigation of crime and for prosecuting the criminals through their law enforcement agencies.**

**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 20<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.mha.gov.in).**

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