

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1101**

TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 08TH FEBRUARY, 2022/ MAGHA 19, 1943 (SAKA)

PRESS FREEDOM

1101. SHRI MANISH TEWARI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that on 15 January 2022, members of Kashmir Police & CRPF entered the premises of Kashmir Press Club without due warrant or documentation and aided a hostile takeover, if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;

(b) whether the journalists in Kashmir and whole of India are frequently penalized by State agencies under Indian Penal Code, UAPA and other penal laws, if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether due to such abhorrent coercion, India holds a poor 142nd position on the World Press Freedom Index;

(d) if so, the details of number of cases registered, persons arrested, acquitted & convicted under UAPA;

(e) whether it is a fact that there are thousands of persons all over India arrested under UAPA and have not yet been convicted of any charges brought against them, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

(SHRI NITYANAND RAI)

(a): Presently, there is no registered body by the name of 'Kashmir Press Club' or its elected managing body since Kashmir Press Club, as a registered body, has ceased to exist and has failed to register itself under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The Estates Department has taken over the government building on 17.1.2022 in the presence of Executive Magistrate, Srinagar. The government building has deployment of static guard for its protection.

(b) : 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. Such complaints are processed under Section 13 of the Press Council Act, 1978 and provisions of the Press Council (Procedure for Inquiry) Regulations, 1979.

(c) to (e): The World Press Freedom Index is published by a foreign Non-Government-Organisation, "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 National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) compiles the data on crime as reported to it by States and Union Territories and publishes the same in its annual publication 'Crime in India'. As per the latest published report, the number of cases registered is 796, persons arrested is 1321, persons acquitted is 116 and persons convicted is 80 under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) in the country during the year 2020.