

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3958
ANSWERED ON:18.12.2012
REPORT ON FREEDOM OF PRESS
Ahir Shri Hansraj Gangaram

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

- (a) whether a report on global press freedom compiled by the Reporters Without Borders has stated that India's ranking in the global press freedom index has fallen significantly in the past years;
- (b) if so, whether the Government has made any study of the said report;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (d) the reasons for censorship of freedom of media in the country; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to take concrete steps to restore the freedom of press/media in the country and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MANISH TEWARI)

(a): The Government has come across media reports carrying the results of survey by 'Reporters Without Borders' and World Press Freedom Index 2012 compiled by the body.

(b) & (c): The Government has not made any study of the Report to form an opinion about the ranking of India on global press freedom.

(d) & (e): In pursuance to its policy to uphold the freedom of speech & expression, the Government does not censor or regulate the content in print or electronic media or online content. The Press Council of India, a statutory autonomous body has been set up under the Press Council Act, 1978 with twin objectives of preserving the freedom of press and also to inculcate principles of self-regulation among the press. So far as private satellite TV channels are concerned, the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act does not provide for pre-censorship of the contents aired on these channels. However, all channels have to abide by the Programme and Advertising Code stipulated by the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994 under the Act. Apart from this, the industry has also set up a self-regulatory mechanism for content regulation. As part of their self-regulatory initiative, the industry has set up Broadcasting Content Complaint Council (BCCC) and News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA) to consider the content related complaints of general entertainment channels and news channels, respectively.

Besides, the Information Technology (Intermediaries Guidelines) Rules, 2011 notified under Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 provide for the intermediaries to observe due diligence in discharge of their duties. The Rules are in the nature of self-regulation and are in line with the freedom of speech and expression enshrined in the Constitution of India.

The Government is committed to uphold the freedom of speech and expression and citizen's rights.