



Press & Public Relations Service



Lok Sabha Secretariat
New Delhi

Press & Public Relations Service

The Press is the main medium of mass communication. Besides its educative role, it helps in strengthening the democratic system. Often, the Press unearths administrative lapses, omissions, commissions and shortcomings; it also gives expression to public grievances and difficulties and reports on how policies and programmes are being implemented. In its relations with Parliament, often material for parliamentary questions, motions and debates emanates from the daily Press, which is an important instrument on which a Member of Parliament relies. The media also keeps the people informed of what is happening in the Chambers of Parliament and about parliamentary events and activities. This two-way flow of information enables the media to maintain an important link between the public and the Parliament.

In this context, it is of paramount importance that the proceedings of Parliament are communicated to the people who are interested in knowing as to what laws are passed, how much money has been sanctioned, which policies and programmes are approved, etc. The media can discharge this function effectively only if it enjoys what is termed as 'Freedom of the Press'. Although Freedom of the Press has not been expressly provided for in the Constitution, it is implicit in the Fundamental Right of the "Freedom of Speech and Expression", guaranteed to the citizens under Article 19(1) of the Constitution. Further, it has been settled by a number of judicial decisions that freedom of speech and expression includes freedom of the Press as well. In this regard, it is also appropriate to mention that the term "freedom of speech and expression" includes the liberty to propagate not only one's views but also the right to print matters which have been borrowed from someone else or are printed under the direction of that person and also include the liberty of publication and circulation.

However, under the Constitution, the freedom of Press is not on a higher plane than the

freedom of an ordinary citizen and is subject to reasonable restrictions being imposed by law in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, public order, decency or morality, etc.

Privileges of the Press

In its relations with Parliament, the Press enjoys some privileges. Indeed, our Constitution confers absolute immunity from proceedings in any court of law on all persons connected with the publication of the proceedings of either House of Parliament, if such a publication is made by or under the authority of the House. The statutory protection given in this regard applies to the publication in newspapers or broadcasts by wireless telegraphy of substantially true reports of any proceedings of either House of Parliament, provided such reports are for the public good and are not actuated by malice. This protection has been given within the overall limitation that Parliament has the power to control and, if necessary, to prohibit the publication of its debates or proceedings and to punish for the violation of its orders.

Generally, there are no restrictions imposed on reporting of the proceedings of the Houses. But, if the proceedings of the Houses or for that matter, of its Committees, are reported *mala fide* or if there is any gross misrepresentation or suppression of the speeches of particular members, it is a breach of privilege and contempt of the House. Similarly, the Press cannot publish the proceedings or evidence given before or any document presented to a Parliamentary Committee before these have been laid on the Table of the House. The Press is not expected to disclose the proceedings or decisions of a secret sitting of the House till the ban or secrecy has been lifted. It has also to ensure that portions of debates expunged from the proceedings of the House by the Presiding Officer are not published. In other words, there can be no freedom of the Press at the cost of the privileges of Parliament.

Press and Public Relations Wing

The Press and Public Relations Wing (PPR) was set up in April 1956 to cater to the needs of the Press and provide all possible facilities to enable them to cover the day-to-day proceedings of Lok Sabha and to establish better liaison with the Media for proper publicity of parliamentary and other activities of Lok Sabha.

The functions of the Press and Public Relations Wing include:

- All work connected with the Press Gallery involving issue of Press Gallery passes for Session periods, admission of Newspapers/ News agencies/Electronic media/Online Media to the Lok Sabha Press Gallery, processing requests for Central Hall and Lobby facilities and grant of Press Gallery passes under the category of “Long & Distinguished Service”.
- Liaison with Government publicity organizations and communication media, Press correspondents, newspapers and other bodies.
- Publicity of Parliament’s activities through Press Releases/communiqués; Photo/TV coverage of various functions organized and held in Parliament House/Parliament House Annexe/Parliament Library Building; setting up of Media Centres during International Parliamentary Conferences, Seminars, Symposia, etc. held in New Delhi.
- Publication of pamphlets, folders, charts, etc. on various parliamentary activities and their distribution to the general public.
- Supply of information and publicity materials relating to the work of Parliament to the general public, institutions, research scholars and others.
- Display of tele-printer news for Members of Parliament in Parliament precincts.
- Maintenance of a Library for the Press.

- Grant of permission for taking film shots of Parliament House/Parliament House Annexe/Parliament Library Building.
- Publishing of Lok Sabha Calendars.

Media Coverage

The Press and Public Relations Wing arranges publicity for parliamentary functions, including call-on meetings with the Speaker, Lok Sabha; Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha; Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha by foreign dignitaries/parliamentary delegations; meetings of foreign delegations with Indian MPs; visits abroad of Indian Parliamentary Delegations, etc. Similarly, the Wing arranges Press coverage of Seminars and Symposia; and Press Conferences of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committees. Besides, the Wing facilitates media coverage of functions like unveiling of Statues/Portraits in Parliament Complex; floral tributes to National Leaders at their portraits installed in the Central Hall; Addresses of dignitaries in the precincts of Parliament House and Release of books by Speaker, Lok Sabha, and other dignitaries and other functions attended by them in Parliament Complex. Special invitation letters/passes are issued to correspondents/photographers to cover the functions. Press Releases and photographs of all the functions/meetings held in Parliament Complex are issued to the Media for wider coverage. The relevant Press clippings of all these functions are maintained for record.

Telecasting/broadcasting of all parliamentary functions held in Parliament House precincts are facilitated through the Lok Sabha Television, Doordarshan and All India Radio. Photo coverage of all functions is made through the Photo Division, Photo Sections of PTI and UNI, official photographers and photographers accredited to the Press Information Bureau. Photographs of all these functions are obtained for publicity, presentation and record.

In the case of International Parliamentary Conferences, Seminars and Symposia held in

New Delhi, all the above mentioned arrangements are made in close cooperation and in consultation with the Branches concerned of the Lok Sabha Secretariat, Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India, Secretariats of International Organisations and the Press Information Bureau.

In addition, the following arrangements are made with regard to International Parliamentary Conferences, Seminars and Symposia:

- A Media Centre is set up at the venue of the Conference/Seminar/Symposium;
- Photo-laminated passes/special passes are issued to accredited correspondents and photographers;
- Curtain Raiser programme of the Speaker, Lok Sabha, on the eve of a function;
- Press Conferences of the Speaker, Lok Sabha on the eve of the Parliamentary Conference/Seminar/Symposium and another at the conclusion of the event;
- Meetings of the Secretary-General, Lok Sabha, with media persons about publicity arrangements;
- Meetings of Secretary-General, Lok Sabha, with Clerks/Secretaries-General of others participating in Parliamentary Conference(s), Seminar(s) and Symposia in New Delhi;
- Collection of all photographs relating to Parliamentary Conferences, Seminars and meetings, etc. and supplying/sending the same to Media/Daily Bulletin Desk;
- Collection of Press clippings pertaining to the Parliamentary Conference, Seminar and Symposium, etc. for various post-Conference uses.

Facilities to Media

PPR Wing provides various facilities to correspondents of the mass media covering Parliament. These include supply of parliamentary papers, daily agenda, Committee

reports, other Papers Laid on the Table of the House, etc. to all accredited correspondents of Parliament who are provided Radio Frequency (RF) tags for a year by the Lok Sabha Secretariat. Photocopying and local fax facilities are extended to them free of cost on request. They can also consult books, periodicals, reports and other literature available in Parliament Library. Facilities available to MPs for viewing recordings of parliamentary proceedings in the Audio-Visual Unit and taking footage of debates, etc. have also been extended to media persons. The facility of simultaneous interpretation of the proceedings of Parliament are available to the correspondents of mass media in the Press Galleries of both the Houses. Canteen facilities are provided in Room Nos. 54 and 73 in Parliament House and Room No. G142 in Parliament Library Building. A separate Work Station for media persons with 10 computers with internet connection, one TV set and a telephone connection has been provided in Parliament Library Building to enable them to file stories on parliamentary proceedings, events and activities.

Press Gallery

The Press Gallery of Lok Sabha has a seating capacity for 123 media persons. Out of these, 57 seats in the first two rows are allotted to specified media Organisations. All matters concerning the Press Gallery of Lok Sabha including accreditation of newspapers, correspondents, increase in the quota of Press Gallery passes, allotment of seats, etc., are dealt with by this Wing. However, all cases relating to the Press Gallery are put up for consideration of the Press Advisory Committee.

Press Advisory Committee

The Speaker, Lok Sabha, appoints a Press Advisory Committee every year from amongst senior representatives of the Press having regular Press Gallery Cards. PPR Wing provides secretarial assistance to the Press Advisory Committee, which generally comprises

25 members, including four office bearers, viz. Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Joint Secretary, who are nominated from amongst the Members by the Speaker. However, the number may vary, subject to the discretion of the Speaker. The Members of the Committee are preferably chosen to represent all parts of the country and should have adequate experience of reporting for various newspapers/news agencies/electronic media on the proceedings of the Parliament of India/State Legislatures or foreign Parliaments.

The Press Advisory Committee performs the following functions:

- To recommend the issuance of permanent passes to representatives of Newspapers/ News Agencies/Media intending to attend and cover the proceedings of the House from the Gallery and/or any other parliamentary event or activity.
- To recommend the issuance of temporary passes to representatives of Newspapers/ News Agencies/Media intending to report the proceedings of the House.
- To examine complaints made against representatives of Newspapers/News Agencies/Media and to recommend to the Speaker, Lok Sabha, appropriate action.
- To recommend to the Speaker, Lok Sabha, the kind of facilities that may be given to them to discharge their duties.
- To do such other things which are related to their functions.

The Committee meets at least once during the period of a Session. One-fourth of the total membership forms the quorum for the meeting. The meetings are generally convened on the directions of the Chairperson/Secretary. The minutes of a meeting are ratified at the next meeting of the Committee. Thereafter, follow-up-action is taken on the recommendations/suggestions of the Committee.

Information Folders

A set of handy Information Folders on various aspects of parliamentary practices and procedures and other activities is brought out in Hindi and English for distribution among Members of Parliament and other dignitaries, Press correspondents and visitors to Parliament, with the objective of wider dissemination of knowledge about the working of parliamentary institutions.

Research Fellowships

Research Fellowships for writing books—three in Hindi and two in English, and Fellowships for writing Monographs—three in Hindi and two in English—every year have been instituted by the Lok Sabha Secretariat with a view to promoting original studies on matters of parliamentary interest. A Fellowship Committee is appointed by the Speaker for this purpose. The Committee is assisted in its work by the PPR Wing.

Photographs of newly-elected Members of Lok Sabha

Photographs for inclusion in the Lok Sabha “Who’s Who” containing biographical sketches of Members are collected by this Wing soon after the constitution of the new House. For this purpose, a temporary studio is set up to take photographs of the newly-elected Members.

Scanning of Tele-printer News

In order to keep Members posted, with the latest developments in the country and abroad, particularly during the Sessions of Parliament, English and Hindi teleprinters, serviced by national news agencies, have been installed in Parliament House/Parliament Library Building. Important news items received on these teleprinters are collected, scanned and brought to the notice of the Speaker and the Secretary-General, Lok Sabha, immediately.

Parliament Calendars

Thematic Calendars on various facets of Indian Parliament and parliamentary functions and

events are brought out every year for distribution among Members of Parliament, dignitaries, Presiding Officers of State Legislatures in India, officers and staff of the Lok Sabha Secretariat, media persons and others.

Photographic Chart of MPs

A photographic chart of Members of Lok Sabha with their names, Division Nos., constituency, and State is prepared for the Table of Speaker, Lok Sabha, in the House and the same is updated regularly with the change in Division Nos. of Members.

Display of Birthday List of MPs

PPR Wing also displays birthday list of Members of Lok Sabha during the Session period on the Notice Board, in the Outer Lobby (Ground Floor) in Parliament House.

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

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**Cover Photo: A view of the Media workstation in
Parliament Library Building*