



PRESS & PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICE



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The Press/Media is an important 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/Media 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/Media 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/Media 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/Media

In its relations with Parliament, the Press/Media 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

malafide 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/Media 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/Media 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/Media 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/Media 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/Media and Public Relations Wing include:

- All work connected with the Press/Media Gallery involving issue of Press/Media Gallery passes for Session periods, admission of Newspapers/ News agencies/ Electronic media/Online Media to the Lok Sabha Press/Media Gallery, processing requests for Central Hall and Lobby facilities and grant of Press/Media Gallery passes under the category of “Long & Distinguished Service”.
- Liaison with Government publicity organizations and communication media, Press/Media correspondents, newspapers and other bodies.
- Publicity of Parliament’s activities through Press Advisories/Press Releases/communiqués; Photo/TV coverage of various functions organized and held in Parliament House/Parliament House Annexe/Parliament Library Building/Parliament House Annexe Extension Building; setting up of Media Centres during International Parliamentary Conferences, Seminars, Symposia, etc. held in New Delhi. The Press/Media is regularly informed, through expunction Notices, about portions of proceedings of Lok Sabha expunged by the Chair.
- Publication of pamphlets, folders, charts, etc. on various parliamentary activities and their distribution to the general public.
- Preparation and issuance of Sessional Statements of work transacted during Sessions.
- Supply of information and publicity materials relating to the work of Parliament to the general public, institutions, research scholars and others.
- Maintenance of a Library for the Press.
- Grant of permission for taking film shots of Parliament House Complex.
- Publishing of Lok Sabha Calendars. Media Coverage.
- Maintenance of Social Media Platforms of Lok Sabha Secretariat.

The Press/Media 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 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 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/Media Releases and photographs of all the functions/meetings held in Parliament Complex are issued to the Media for wider coverage. The relevant Press/Media 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/Media 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/Media 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/Media 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/Media clippings pertaining to the Parliamentary Conference, Seminar and Symposium, etc. for various post- Conference uses.

Facilities to Media

Parliament's relation with the media is very cordial. The Press & Public Relations Wing maintains a close liaison with the Press and the various Government publicity organizations and communication media for the dissemination of information to the public on the business transacted by the Lok Sabha and also by its Committees.

This Wing provides all facilities to the correspondents of the mass media covering Parliament. These facilities include provision of three Press rooms in Parliament House for media representatives, supply of parliamentary papers, daily agenda, Committee reports, other papers laid on the Table of the House, etc. to all accredited correspondents of Parliament (about 450 in number). Photocopy and fax facilities for functional use are also available to media persons free of cost. The facility regarding simultaneous interpretation of the proceedings of Parliament are also available to the correspondents of mass media, in the Press Galleries of both the Houses of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

A Media Work Station with ten computers, one TV set and a telephone connection has been provided for media persons in the Parliament Library Building to enable them to file their stories on parliamentary proceedings, events and activities.

Two dedicated canteens have been provided exclusively for media persons in Room Nos. 54 and 71 in Parliament House. Besides, two air-conditioned Media Stands, one each opposite Building Gates 1 and 4 of Parliament House, have been set up, with all logistics, to facilitate media persons to take bytes of Ministers and Members of Parliament. *Wi-fi* facility has been made available in all Press Rooms (54, 55, 59, 60 and 61) in Parliament House and Media Work Station in Room No. FB-141 in Parliament Library Building to enable better connectivity to media persons. Accredited correspondents have been given access to resources in Parliament Library for reference purposes.

Press Gallery

The Press/Media 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/Media Gallery of Lok Sabha including accreditation of newspapers/electronic channels/online media/ agencies, correspondents, increase in the quota of Press/Media Gallery passes, allotment of seats, etc., are dealt with by this Wing. However, all cases relating to the Press/Media Gallery are put up for consideration of the Press/Media Advisory Committee.

Social Media Platform

Twitter handle *@LokSabhaSectt* and Facebook account *Lok Sabha Secretariat* have been set up to upload and publicize the latest pictorial and textual publicity material. All important tweets of Hon'ble Speaker are re-tweeted on official social media platforms recently, an account of Lok Sabha Secretariat has been opened in Koo and Parliamentary information, including photos and videos are posted on Koo also.

Interactive Website (pprloksabha.nic.in)

The interactive Website pprloksabha.nic.in maintained by Press & Public Relations Wing, intends to serve the correspondents/media persons of accredited media organizations and other stakeholders in accessing important resources pertaining to Parliament. Besides hosting a large number of textual/graphical and photographic/videos resources (press releases, photographs, videos, etc.) pertaining to different events attended by dignitaries in Delhi and outside, the Website also provides several important links relating to the media management in the Parliament Complex. These links include guidelines for accreditation, accreditation index of correspondents, facilities for the press, expunged/non-recorded portions of the proceedings as ordered by the Chair. Besides an elegant assortment of photographs and press releases, the Website presents multidimensional search strings which provide easy access to the desired material. The link relating to the Press Releases has further been expanded to three diverse links –Speaker Lok Sabha, parliamentary Committees and Parliamentary events. The Website also provides access to Sessional Statement of work transacted during different Sessions of Lok Sabha which include several graphical and tabular resources.

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/Media correspondents and visitors to Parliament, with the objective of wider dissemination of knowledge about the working of parliamentary institutions.

Photographs of newly-elected Members of Lok Sabha

Soon after the constitution of the new Lok Sabha, a temporary studio is set up by PPR to take photographs of the newly elected Members on their arrival to the Parliament House. These photographs are required by Members while filling up several documents in the Lok Sabha Secretariat and also for inclusion in the publication “Who’s Who” which contains profiles of the members of the new Lok Sabha.

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.

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