

**ORAL ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS AND  
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS  
THEREON**

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

**RAJYA SABHA  
STARRED QUESTION NO. \*121  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.08.2024**

**FUNCTIONING OF PIB KOLKATA**

\*121. SHRI SAMIK BHATTACHARYA:

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

- (a) the current number of permanent and contractual employees working at Press Information Bureau (PIB), Kolkata;
- (b) the reasons for the delay in the availability of press releases in Bengali at PIB, Kolkata, and the steps being taken to ensure timely dissemination of information in the regional language;
- (c) whether PIB Kolkata is planning to set up a dedicated fact-checking unit to combat the spread of fake news in West Bengal; and
- (d) the initiatives being undertaken by PIB Kolkata to enhance its outreach and engagement with the local media and the public in West Bengal?

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING; AND  
PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS  
(DR. L. MURUGAN)**

- (a) to (d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (d) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. \*121 TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.08.2024 ON FUNCTIONING OF PIB KOLKATA**

(a): The Press Information Bureau (PIB) under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has its headquarter at New Delhi and has 5 zones comprising 19 regional offices in various states. Regional office at Kolkata comes under East Zone and at present has 18 permanent employees and 1 contractual employee.

(b): The Press Releases, which are issued by the PIB, Headquarter, are released in Bengali language by PIB Kolkata after translation of the same. Press Releases in regional language are shared with media and uploaded on the website immediately for timely dissemination.

(c): A Fact Check Unit (FCU) has been set up under Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in November, 2019 to counter fake news relating to the Central Government. After verifying the authenticity of news from authorised sources in Ministries/ Departments, FCU posts correct information on its social media platforms.

(d): The content on developmental and welfare activities of Government, as received from PIB Headquarters, are shared through social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter to enhance PIB's outreach with media and local people. Press Releases, Photos, Graphics, etc. are also regularly shared on social media. Media workshop 'Vartalap' is being organised on regular basis for creating awareness for media about different Government programmes.

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**भारत सरकार**  
**सूचना और प्रसारण मंत्रालय**  
**राज्य सभा**  
**तारांकित प्रश्न संख्या \*121**  
**(दिनांक 02.08.2024 को उत्तर देने के लिए)**

**पीआईबी कोलकाता का कार्यकरण**

**\*121. श्री सामिक भट्टाचार्य:**

**क्या सूचना और प्रसारण मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:**

- (क) पत्र सूचना कार्यालय (पीआईबी), कोलकाता में वर्तमान में स्थायी और संविदा के आधार पर क्रमशः कितने कर्मचारी कार्यरत हैं;
- (ख) पत्र सूचना कार्यालय (पीआईबी), कोलकाता में प्रेस विज्ञप्तियों को बांग्ला भाषा में उपलब्ध कराने में होने वाले विलंब के क्या कारण हैं और क्षेत्रीय भाषा में सूचना का समय पर प्रसार सुनिश्चित करने के लिए क्या कदम उठाए जा रहे हैं;
- (ग) क्या पत्र सूचना कार्यालय (पीआईबी), कोलकाता पश्चिमी बंगाल में फर्जी खबरों के प्रसार से निपटने के लिए एक समर्पित फैक्ट चैकिंग यूनिट स्थापित करने की योजना बना रहा है; और
- (घ) पत्र सूचना कार्यालय (पीआईबी), कोलकाता द्वारा पश्चिमी बंगाल में स्थानीय मीडिया और जनता तक अपनी पहुंच बढ़ाने और उनके साथ संवाद स्थापित करने के लिए क्या पहल की जा रही है?

**उत्तर**  
**सूचना और प्रसारण एवं संसदीय कार्य राज्य मंत्री**  
**(डॉ. एल. मुरुगन)**

**(क) से (घ): एक विवरण सभा पटल पर रख दिया गया है।**

**पीआईबी कोलकाता का कार्यकरण के संबंध में दिनांक 02.08.2024 के राज्य सभा तारांकित प्रश्न संख्या \*121 के भाग (क) से (घ) के उत्तर में संदर्भित विवरण**

(क): सूचना और प्रसारण मंत्रालय के अंतर्गत पत्र सूचना कार्यालय (पीआईबी) का मुख्यालय नई दिल्ली में है तथा इसके 5 जोन हैं, जिनमें विभिन्न राज्यों में 19 क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय हैं। कोलकाता स्थित क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय पूर्वी जोन के अंतर्गत आता है तथा वर्तमान में इसमें 18 स्थायी कर्मचारी तथा 1 संविदा कर्मचारी कार्यरत हैं।

(ख): पीआईबी मुख्यालय द्वारा जारी प्रेस विज्ञप्तियों को पीआईबी कोलकाता द्वारा बंगाली भाषा में अनुवाद करने के बाद जारी किया जाता है। क्षेत्रीय भाषा में प्रेस विज्ञप्तियां मीडिया के साथ साझा की जाती हैं और समय पर प्रचार-प्रसार के लिए तुरंत वेबसाइट पर अपलोड की जाती हैं।

(ग): केंद्र सरकार से संबंधित फर्जी खबरों से निपटने के लिए सूचना और प्रसारण मंत्रालय के पत्र सूचना कार्यालय के अंतर्गत नवंबर, 2019 में एक फैक्ट चेक यूनिट (एफसीयू) की स्थापना की गई है। मंत्रालयों/विभागों में अधिकृत स्रोतों से समाचारों की प्रामाणिकता की पुष्टि करने के बाद एफसीयू अपने सोशल मीडिया प्लेटफॉर्मों पर सही जानकारी पोस्ट करता है।

(घ): पीआईबी मुख्यालय से प्राप्त सरकार के विकासात्मक और कल्याणकारी कार्यकलापों संबंधी सामग्री को फेसबुक, इंस्टाग्राम, ट्विटर जैसे सोशल मीडिया के माध्यम से साझा किया जाता है ताकि मीडिया और स्थानीय लोगों तक पीआईबी की पहुंच बढ़ाई जा सके। प्रेस विज्ञप्तियाँ, फोटो, ग्राफिक्स आदि भी नियमित रूप से सोशल मीडिया पर साझा किए जाते हैं। विभिन्न सरकारी कार्यक्रमों के बारे में मीडिया में जागरूकता उत्पन्न करने के लिए नियमित आधार पर मीडिया कार्यशाला 'वार्तालाप' का आयोजन किया जा रहा है।

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SHRI SAMIK BHATTACHARYA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, my question is regarding PIB — the Press Information Bureau. The PIB Fact-Checking is doing a great job since 2019. However, fact checking of fake news is only in Hindi and English languages. Given that the fake news against the Central Government is the highest in West Bengal, is the Ministry planning to establish a dedicated fact-checking unit under PIB, Kolkata to specifically address this issue in the State?

DR. L. MURUGAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Member has put a very specific question. Before answering his question, I would like to take two minutes. Sir, you had also expressed concern about menace of fake news. In a function you had said, I quote, “Unregulated information and fake news create a disaster of unimaginable proportions”.

‘Fake news’ is a social menace. We have to control fake news and misleading information. I agree with the hon. Member that fake news and misleading information are the highest in the State of West Bengal. We all know that last week also the Chief Minister of West Bengal, who had come to Delhi to attend a meeting of the Niti Aayog, alleged that during the meeting, her mike was switched off. But, it was found that her statement was misleading. Like that, in West Bengal ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member, you cannot take the name of the hon. Chief Minister. We will delete her name.

DR. L. MURUGAN: Sir, I have not taken her name.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Please go ahead.

DR. L. MURUGAN: So, Sir, I was saying that her statement was misleading. As far as question of establishing a fact-check unit in the State of West Bengal is concerned, as of now, we do not have any plan to establish fact-check units at regional levels. The fact-check unit is in Delhi. We have a very good system here. We established this fact-check unit in 2019. In almost 47,562 cases we took action. Out of that, in 4,800 cases we did fact-checks and 9,922 cases were found to be of fake news. Thus, we are working at all India level.

SHRI SAMIK BHATTACHARYA: Sir, district journalists are underpaid. They also lack proper training. In West Bengal, no *Vartalaap* programme has taken place. Will PIB, Kolkata, organize to extend the *Vartalaap* Scheme for district journalists to improve

communication between the Government and the regional media in West Bengal as well as in other States?

DR. L. MURUGAN: Sir, the question is very particular. 'VARTALAP' is a workshop or conference held for the journalists and media people. This year itself, 72 'VARTALAPs' have been conducted and 27 Press Tours have been conducted by the PIB for their journalists. In West Bengal itself, last year, on 25.8.23, Durgapur conducted one 'VARTALAP'. On 18.7.23, Midnapur conducted one VARTALAP. On 16.12.23, in Balakot, three VARTALAPs were conducted and before 2022, four VARTALAPs were conducted. It is a continuous process. Every year, in every State, the VARTALAP programme is held for the training and welfare of the journalists and also for the advancement of their knowledge.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Third supplementary, Ms. Dola Sen.

MS. DOLA SEN: Sir, though we know that Treasury Benches have an agenda of political revenge, still, we are bound to obey the Supreme Court verdict. I would like to know from the Minister, through you, Sir, : Is it true that the Supreme Court of India has ordered a stay on the creation of a Fact-Check unit in West Bengal by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) this year in March, 2024? If yes, please state the reasons behind it. Why was the creation of a Fact-Check Unit stayed by the hon. Supreme Court and Bombay High Court too? And, then even after the stay, what we are discussing here?

DR. L. MURUGAN: Sir, this matter is *sub judice*. The case is pending with...  
...(Interruptions)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't rise. The hon. Minister is on his legs.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW): Hon. Chairman, Sir, the point is, as regards the fact-check related to the Government of India, all the Ministries, all the Departments of the Government of India are the right authority to say whether a data or an information related to a particular Ministry or a particular Department should not be given by anybody other than the Ministry or Department. That is the fundamental point which is under contention. The amendment in the IT, Intermediary Rules, which has been stayed by the hon. Supreme Court, is still under contest, but the fundamental principle is, our

point is; anything related to the Government of India, only the Government of India can say whether it is a correct fact or a wrong fact. That is our stand.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Supplementary No. 4, Shri Saket Gokhale. Ask pointedly.

SHRI SAKET GOKHALE: Sir, I have a very specific question. The hon. Minister in his response to the first supplementary said that the problem of fake news is most rampant in the State of West Bengal. I would like to ask if the hon. Minister can authenticate this with data. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other supplementary?

SHRI SAKET GOKHALE: Sir, my supplementary is: Can you authenticate this with concrete data and lay it on the Table of the House?

DR. L. MURUGAN: Sir, I am ready to lay it on the Table of the House. The Member himself tweeted a misleading information. The hon. Member himself tweeted: "The RTI reveals that Modi's visit to Morbi for a few hours cost Rs.30 crores." We checked that. That message was verified.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

DR. L. MURUGAN: I will submit this. ...*(Interruptions)*..

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister has agreed to authenticate. ...*(Interruptions)*..

**श्री मनोज कुमार झा:** शुक्रिया, सभापति महोदय। मेरा माननीय मंत्री जी से एक सवाल है। जब राजनीति विभाजित होती है, तो पत्रकारों का काम बड़ा मुश्किल हो जाता है। Is the Government planning to bring in any kind of legislative initiative with regard to protection of journalists as well as their social security mechanism?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member, does it relate to the question?

SHRI MANOJ KUMAR JHA: Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. I hope it doesn't.



DR. L. MURUGAN: Sir, you have rightly mentioned that this is related to the question. We are concerned about the journalists' welfare. The Journalists' welfare schemes are there. If any journalist meets with an accident, our PIB supports them with the medical aid. If the journalist, unfortunately, loses his or her life, some assistance is also given. During pandemic time also, we supported more than hundred journalists.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you are right because Media is fourth pillar of democracy. And, by media, I mean a Media that is well-informed, believes on sanctified platforms, and it is a necessary asset of democracy.

Question Number 122, Shri Manas Ranjan Mangaraj.

*\* Q. No. 122. [The questioner was absent.]*