

**MOST IMMEDIATE /
PARLIAMENT MATTER**

No. H-11011/08/2023-Parl.
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Parliament Section)

New Delhi, 30th November, 2023

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Guidelines on handling of Parliament Questions/ Parliament matters.

Instructions have been issued, from time to time, regarding the procedure for handling of Parliament Questions/ Parliament matters in the Ministry. However, it has been observed that some Divisions are not following the instructions, leading to delay in submission of Answers to Lok Sabha/ Rajya Sabha Secretariats and delay in uploading of replies on Lok Sabha/ Rajya Sabha portals. Further, the Parliament Questions are being returned to the Parliament Section on the ground that the complete Question or part of the Question does not pertain to the Division. This results in loss of precious time and avoidable delay in preparation of Answers to the Parliament Questions.

2. It has also been observed that the replies, from almost all the Divisions, are being submitted late and timelines are not being followed strictly. The late submission of the replies lead to delay in sending the files to the Hon'ble MEF&CC/ MoS EF&CC for approval. In this regard, Lok Sabha Secretariat had pointed out about delay in submission of the replies to the questions pertaining to this Ministry.

3. As per the instructions received from the Lok Sabha Secretariat, the Ministries/ Departments are required to furnish the requisite number of copies of Answers to the Lok Sabha Secretariat, latest by 1500 hours positively on the working day preceding the date on which the Questions are due for Answer. Rajya Sabha Secretariat stipulates that all the Answers should be received in the Rajya Sabha Secretariat by 1700 hrs on the previous working day of the day of Answer.

4. In order to facilitate the smooth and timely processing of the Parliament Questions, the following procedure/ instructions are reiterated:

i. Marking of Parliament Questions at Notice Stage:

The marking of Parliament Questions is done on the basis of the subject matter indicated in part (a) of the Question in accordance to the procedure of handling Parliament Questions laid down by the Lok Sabha/ Rajya Sabha Secretariat. In case part (a) of the Question is of general nature & does not pertain to any particular Wing/ Division then the Wing/ Division dealing with other parts shall reply to the Question.

The Divisions are requested to take necessary action as indicated below:-

- a. Immediately upon receipt of the Notices of Starred/ Unstarred Questions, the Divisions should start preparation of reply of the Question, without waiting for final admission of the Question.
- b. In case, inputs are required from other offices/ organisation to prepare the Answer, the same may be sought immediately.

ii. **Factual information:**

Response to the Notices of Starred/Unstarred Questions for seeking factual information, should be furnished positively by the concerned Division **within two days** of receipt of such Notices with particular reference to points like - whether the Question relates to Ministry, it seeks secret information etc.

iii. **Admissibility of a Parliament Question:**

In case a Division is of the view that a Question is not admissible due to any of the reasons, as laid down in Clauses 47 and 48 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha (**Annexure-I**) and Clauses 41 and 42 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (**Annexure-II**), then the concerned Division shall:

- a. Contest the admissibility of the Question **promptly**, indicating cogent reasons, with the Rajya Sabha/ Lok Sabha Question Branch.
- b. In case of sub-judice matter, major details of case such as case number, listing date, name of Court where such case is listed may be provided.
- c. If acceptance is not received from the concerned Question Branch, the Division to whom the Question has been marked initially, shall take necessary appropriate action for preparing the reply to the Question.

iv. **Admission of Question without Notice:**

Sometimes Parliament Questions get admitted in final list of Questions, without prior Notice. In that case the Question is marked to the concerned Division on the basis of the work allocation within the Ministry.

v. **Transfer of Questions within the Ministry:**

Advance Notice/ Admitted Version of the Parliament Questions are marked by the Parliament Section as per the work allocation to the concerned Wing/ Divisional Head for preparation of reply. In case any Division to whom a Question has been marked feels that the first part i.e. part (a) of the Question substantially pertains to other Division, the Divisional Head concerned, to whom the Question has been marked initially, may transfer the Question in writing to the concerned Divisional head, only after personally confirming the willingness of that Divisional head. The Parliament Section of this Ministry may be informed accordingly. The Advance Notice/ Admitted Version may not be sent to Parliament Division for marking to some other Division as it may lead to delay in timely submission of Answer to the Hon'ble Minister/ Minister of State.

vi. **Inter-Ministerial transfer of Questions:**

In case any Division to whom a Question has been marked observes that the Question does not pertain to this Ministry, on the basis of the Allocation of Business Rules, the Question may be transferred to the concerned Ministry.

The Division shall take the following steps:-

- a. The request for transferring the Question should be directly sent to the concerned Ministry/ Department immediately by the Division to whom the Question has been marked initially.
- b. The intimation of transfer of the Question may also be sent to the Rajya Sabha / Lok Sabha Question Branch and the Parliament Division of this Ministry.
- c. If acceptance from the concerned Ministry/ Department is not received within the stipulated time period, i.e. before admittance of the Question by the concerned Ministry/ Department and the Question is admitted in the name of this Ministry, the Division to whom it has been marked initially, shall take necessary appropriate action for preparing the reply of the Question.

vii. **Additional information to be annexed with draft Answer:**

The following information (from 2014 till date) needs to be annexed along with the draft reply of each Parliament Question (Starred/ Unstarred) for approval:

- a. RTI reply given earlier, if any, on the Question raised under consideration;
- b. Replies (both Starred/ Unstarred Questions) given earlier on the lines of the Question raised;
- c. Paper/Magazines clipping on the issue in this regard, if any.

viii. **Important points to be kept in mind while preparing Answers of the Parliament Questions:**

- a. Text of Question should be copied from the Rajya Sabha/ Lok Sabha portal.
- b. Underlining should be strictly avoided and italics or bold fonts may be used instead of underlining, if necessary.
- c. For English version of the Answer, Times New Roman font of size 12 may be used.
- d. In the case of the Hindi version of the Answer, Unicode Font (Hindi version) is to be used.
- e. In the English version of the Answer, the portfolio or the name of the Minister should not be shown in Hindi.
- f. When the Answer contains tables, grid lines may be shown to clearly identify the rows and columns.

- g. Tables should be prepared separately in Hindi and English. The practice of producing the English as well as Hindi text on the same table by multiple photocopying has often been seen to produce faint and even unreadable copies. Therefore, it should be avoided.
- h. The words – ‘RAJYA SABHA/ LOK SABHA’ ‘STARRED/ UNSTARRED QUESTION’ ‘ANSWER’, ‘STATEMENT’ and the HEADING should be in capitals and bold. Name(s) of the Questioners and name and designation of the Minister, etc. may be in capital, but not in bold.
- i. The end of the Answer/Statement should be clearly indicated by a line of stars, i.e. ‘*****’.
- j. Each part of the Question shall be Answered separately and clearly.

ix. **Providing inputs/ acceptance of Parliament Question received from other Ministry/ Department:**

A large number of Parliament Questions from the other Ministries/ Departments are received for providing inputs on the Parliament Question. Similarly, some Questions are also received for acceptance of the Parliament Questions. The Parliament Question related to supplying inputs or acceptance of the Question are marked to the concerned Division.

In case the requisite inputs for the Question relate to more than one Division, then the Question is marked to the Nodal Division of that Ministry/ Department in accordance to the GC Section’s O.M no. 23011/3/2015-GC dated 16th August, 2023 (**Annexure-III**) for providing inputs to the concerned Ministry/ Department directly under intimation to the Parliament Division of this Ministry.

x. **Time lines for handling the Parliament Question:**

All the Wing/ Divisional Heads are requested to ensure that the Lok Sabha/ Rajya Sabha Starred/ Unstarred Questions reach the Hon’ble MEFCC as per the following schedule:

Sl. No.	Name of the House	Question Day	Schedule for Replies
1.	Lok Sabha	Monday	Preceding Thursday by 17:00 Hrs
2.	Rajya Sabha	Thursday	Preceding Monday by 17:00 Hrs

xi. **Presence of Officers during Session:**

It has often been observed that the concerned officers from most of the Divisions are not available in the office when correction is requested to be carried out in the Answer of a Parliament Question, from the Office of HMEF&CC/ HMoS EF&CC after the office hours and on Saturdays/ Sundays/ Holidays. All Wing/ Divisional Heads are therefore, requested to ensure that the officials, who are well versed with the Answer of the Parliament Question, are

available in the office, till soft copy of the final reply of the Parliament Question is received by the Parliament Section.

5. **In case of any dispute regarding the reply to a Question/ matter and its handling, AS (Parl.) shall be the final Authority to decide.**

6. All Wing/ Division Heads may, therefore, follow the above-mentioned procedure for handling of the Parliament Questions so that the Answers are prepared and dispatched within the stipulated timelines.

7. This has the approval of Secretary, EF&CC.

Encl: As stated.

Rakesh Sharma
30/11/2023
(Rakesh Sharma)
Deputy Secretary (Parl.)
2215

To: All the Wing/ Divisional Heads in the MoEFCC

Copy to: Addl. PS to MEF&CC/ Addl. PS to MOS, EF&CC/ PSO to Secy., EF&CC/ PPS to DGF & SS