

Change profession in passports, addition of children's name in the passports and other endorsements were being done in this office. But now all of a sudden these facilities have been stopped. For all these, people have to go to Cochin Office or have to wait for weeks as the clearance has to come from there.

Practically the Liaison office at Trivandrum is now defunct.

I request the hon. Minister concerned to take immediate steps to resume those facilities which were available in the Liaison Office, Trivandrum.

[*Translation*]

- (iv) Need for Central assistance to the Uttar Pradesh Government for meeting the situation created by unprecedented drought in several districts of the State

SHRI BAL RAM SINGH YADAVA (Mainpuri) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw your attention towards the 17 districts of Uttar Pradesh which are facing acute shortage of drinking water and where a heavy damage has been caused to crops due to failure of rains. These districts are—Mainpuri, Allahabad, Kanpur, Mirzapur, Ghazipur, Etah, Saharanpur, Hamirpur, Mathura, Nainital, Almora, Tehri Garhwal, Pithoragarh, Chamoli, Uttar Kashi, Pauri and Dehradun. There has been an unprecedentedly scanty rainfall in Uttar Pradesh during the winter this year. There is acute shortage of drinking water in the aforesaid nine plain districts of the State, due to which the people are facing great difficulties and in the eight affected districts, more than 50 per cent of the foodgrain crop has been damaged due to drought. No relief measures have been started in these drought-affected districts so far.

This year, the drought has been more severe than that of last year. Last year, Mirzapur, Varanasi, Pauri, Tehri Garhwal, Jaunpur, Allahabad, Bijnor,

Jalaun, Hamirpur, Banda, Mathura, Agra, Jhansi and Ghazipur had faced severe drought. In all, 43,786 villages and 340 crores people were affected by drought in 36 districts. There is need to take measures on a war footing in order deal with the acute drought condition. I would request the Minister concerned to take effective steps to meet the situation and rush the necessary assistance to the State Government.

- (v) Need to raise the height of Railway platforms at stations on Samastipur-Barabanki line and to provide sheds over them

DR. CHANDRA SHEKHAR TRIPATHI (Khalilabad) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Under Rule 377, I would like to draw your attention to a matter of urgent public importance and submit that there are several railway platforms in the country over which no sheds have been provided so far. No doubt, metre gauge line, from Samastipur to Barabanki has been converted into broad gauge line, but platforms of all the stations lying on this route, particularly Maghar, Khalilabad, Munderwa, Chureb, Basti, Walterganj, Tinich, Gaur and Gondajn, are still low which causes a lot of inconvenience to the passengers while alighting from and boarding trains and there is always likelihood of accidents taking place there. Particularly, the children, women and old persons have to face great inconvenience. No sheds have been provided on these platforms for the protection of passengers from sun and rain.

I, therefore, request the Railway Minister to take immediate steps to raise the level of platforms all the stations falling on Samastipur-Barabanki line and also to provide sheds over all of them.

- (vi) Need for constructing a railway line between Hajipur and Sugauli in Bihar

SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA (Vaishali) : Mr. Deputy Speaker,