

[**Shri Balkrishna Bhatnagar**]

agencies are the fundamental base for journalism.

The Madhya Pradesh Government and the Haryana Government have made capital investment in one of these two news agencies i.e. 'Samachar Bharati' Hindustan Samachar is a cooperative undertaking; in fact both these news agencies should be merged into one integrated news agency. It is a just demand that the employees of both these news agencies should be absorbed in the integrated news agency and Government should give assistance to this integrated news agency.

It is a matter of surprise and concern that no initiative has been taken by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting in this regard so far. It is not proper to leave such news agencies on the mercy of newspapers. Why will the owners of newspapers invest in such news agencies? The Central Government should immediately come forward to build an infrastructure for Hindi news agencies in the manner they do in other fields. The matter must have been brought by now to the attention of the Hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Union Information Minister. Closure of these two news agencies will directly hit Hindi journalism. It is the obligation of Government to keep these withering news agencies alive and healthy. Otherwise Hindi journalism will be relegated merely to a position of translation service.

I urge Government to intervene and take immediate action in the matter.

[*English*]

(vii) **Need to set up a Separate Central department for Spiritual Affairs**

SHRI KAMAL NATH (Chhindwara): I rise to mention a matter that involves preservation of India's most important heritage which, we all would agree, is the spiritual heritage. The sadhus and spiritualists today may appear to be just saffron-clad mendicants

but we should not forget that it is their ancestors who formulated the Indian philosophical system, who gave to the world not only the Vedas and the Upanishads, but also the first lessons in algebra and the first concept of Zero.

Today, there are thousands who visit India in search of the spiritual secrets of life, or to learn Yoga and the Indian system of meditation. The foreign exchange earning under this head should be nothing less than Rs. 20 crore annually.

The policy of our government is secular but religion and spiritualism are two different things. It is the task of the society in general, and the government in particular, to safeguard India's spiritual heritage. Genuine spiritual institutions and the individuals practising in this sphere should be encouraged and this calls for the formulation of an authentic government policy towards spiritualists. Therefore, there should be a separate department for spiritual affairs in the Union Ministry of Education or Culture. We should not feel hesitant to do that because India is better known abroad for its spiritualism than its material success. It is only through a consistent Government policy enforced through a separate Government Department that the legacy of India's ancient culture can be preserved.

(viii) **Need to increase the railway facilities in the coastal area of Andhra-Pradesh**

SHRI S.M. BHATTAM (Visakhapatnam): It is rather surprising that the bi-weekly through carriage to Waltair (via) the coastal towns by Grand Trunk Express has been withdrawn. The Waltair compartment (half three-tier sleeper and the other half first class) which was being attached to Daskhin and Link Express was also withdrawn.

To meet some of the demands for railway accommodation of the people belonging to the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, the following measures

are urgently required to be taken up :

(a) At present Andhra Pradesh Express runs four days a week from New Delhi to Secunderabad. Twice a week, half of the train may run upto Visakhapatnam via Vijayawada.

(b) Earlier a three tier through coach facility to Waltair via Vijayawada by Grand Trunk Express/Godavari Express was available. This had been since discontinued. The facility may please be restored and further improved by introducing two through carriages daily to Waltair via Vijayawada - one II class three-tier and the other I-Class by Grand Trunk/Godavari Expresses.

(c) At present Dakshin Express is running with 16 compartments. Of them 10 go to Hyderabad and the rest to Madras. If 22 compartments are introduced and the additional 6 coaches (four second class and two first class) are run upto Waltair via Vijayawada, railway accomodation facility to Waltair can be improved substantially without introducing an additional train.

(d) Tirumala - Tirupati Express which starts from Vijayawada is now being extended upto Kakinada at a distance of about 70 miles from Waltair. It is necessary that Tirumala Express is extended not merely upto Kakinada but upto Waltair which is an important city in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

I urge that immediate suitable steps in this regard should be taken in the interest of the travelling public in the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh.

(ix) Need to link Etah in U.P. with Delhi, Calcutta. by direct rail services

SHRI MOHD. MAHFOOJ ALI KHAN (Etah) : At present there is no direct rail service either from Delhi to Etah or between Etah-Allahabad-Lucknow-Calcutta. Etah is being catered by a local train which starts from Tundla Junction and goes to Etah via Barhan.

Etah is a District Headquarter and has good trade and business potential. With a view, therefore, to bringing it in the mainstream of country's progress, it is necessary to link it with proper rail service.

According to the reply given to the U.S.Q. No. 4924, on 25.8.55 the branch line from Barhan to Etah is running at a loss and during 1983-84, the line suffered a loss of Rs. 60.58 lakhs. The main reason for the line running at a loss is that neither there is a direct link between Delhi and Etah nor there is any extension of the services.

Therefore, I take this opportunity to request the Minister of Railways that—

- (i) a direct train service may be introduced from Delhi to Etah and vice-versa.
- (ii) AGM service which is running from Aligarh to Delhi may be extended and instead should start from Etah and terminate at Etah on return from Delhi.
- (iii) At least two bogies may be attached with the AGM extended service upto Tundla for passengers wishing to travel from Etah to Allahabad or Lucknow.

There is also no direct rail link between Etah and Farrukhabad which is connected by road. On this route there are big towns like Dhumri, Jaithra, Aliganj, Nawabganj, etc. which are big Mandis.

It is requested that a survey may be conducted to examine the feasibility of linking Etah with Farrukhabad by rail.

Sir, the suggestions if implemented would be economically viable and would substantially increase the railway revenues.

Through you Sir, and this august House, I would request the Minister of Railways to consider these suggestions in the larger interest of the development and economic growth of the area.