

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,

[Shrimati Kishori Sinha]

Sir, Under Rule 377, I would like to raise the following matter. The progress of lakhs of farmers, workers, traders and ordinary citizens of Vaishali, Muzaffarpur and Motihari districts has been blocked due to non-availability of transport facilities. The people of this area have been demanding a railway line for the last 30 years.

In 1912, efforts were made to link Lalganj with Hajipur by a railway line. Foreign traders had also made a demand to the then authorities to provide a railway station at Lalganj. It has been mentioned in the Bihar Gazette also.

Government had conducted a survey for the construction of a new railway line from Hajipur to Sugauli via Vaishali-Lalganj. This railway line will pass through three blocks of Vaishali District, three blocks of Muzaffarpur District and five blocks of Motihari District and it will benefit 1535 villages and 13,44,655 rural population and about 11,000 passengers will travel by rail daily.

With the construction of this railway line, trade links can easily be established with Nepal and other areas.

On 16th August, 1971 a former M.P., the late Nawal Kishor Singh, had also raised this matter in Parliament. On 1st November, 1972 the then Minister of State for Railways along with 18 Members of Parliament had visited Vaishali to make feasibility study.

The proposed railway line has national importance from cultural, economic and other points of view.

While submitting his report to the Asstt. State Transport Commissioner in September, 1969, on Hajipur—Sugauli railway line, the Collector of Muzaffarpur had recommended that this line would pass through Hajipur, Lalganj, Vaishali, Saraiya, Paru, Sahebganj, Kesaria, Govindganj, Paharpur and Sugauli and

would cover an area of 6,23,205 acres and would benefit 1,335 villages and 20,42,655 people.

This railway line will pass through an area which is very fertile and producing about one crore maunds of foodgrains.

This railway line will provide facilities for establishing contacts with big markets etc. and will be of great help to the farmers. It will also facilitate the economic development of the area.

This railway line will be of great importance from every point of view. I, therefore, urge the Railway Minister to order construction of this railway line.

[English]

- (vii) Need to meet the expenditure on shifting the existing railway line from Masulipatnam to Vijayawada

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO (Vijayawada) : Sir, the railway line from Masulipatnam to Vijayawada runs through thickly populated area known as Satyanarayanapuram in the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation limits and there are five level crossings, consequently many traffic jams and accidents occur near these level crossings. So, the Municipal Corporation of Vijayawada has proposed shifting of the line to further east of the city. The railway authorities have already laid one diversion line. All express trains and goods trains are routed on the diversion line while the passenger trains are routed through the existing line. The railway authorities have suggested that the cost of removing the railway track which is about Rs. 3.52 crores should be borne by the Corporation and the Corporation should hand over 10.25 hectares of land to the Railway.

I would like to bring to the kind notice of the Government that the finances of the Municipal Corporation, after meeting the establishment expenditure, are not at all enough even to provide the minimum basic amenities to the citizens. So, it cannot deposit Rs. 3.5 crores for removing the track. I request