

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Demand for early construction of the Kovvuru-Bhadrachalam broad gauge railway line in Andhra Pradesh

SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I would like to mention that Khammam and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh are inhabited by a large number of tribals, backward classes, poor and working classes. Way back in 1969, a new Broad Gauge railway line of 149 kilometres from Kovvuru to Bhadrachalam road station was proposed. Since then this line was surveyed several times and the report was submitted to the Ministry. But due to lack of will and interest on the part of Railway Board, unfortunately, this is still a pending case.

By completion of this 149 km Broad Gauge line, several coal mines, dolomite mines, sponge iron and paper mills, heavy water plants, thermal power stations and many mineral mines situated in this region will be connected and the distance from Hyderabad to Vizag would be reduced by nearly 125 kilometres. Also, 200 villages of the remote tribal belt will be benefited. Singareni Coal Mine authorities, Visakha Steel Plant, have come forward to share the cost of the proposed line.

I would further request to consider introducing a passenger train between Madhira and Jaggaiahpetta towns, which are 30 kilometres apart. This line has been already completed and electrified, but only goods trains are being run. This passenger train would benefit nearly one lakh people of Khammam and Krishna districts.

I strongly urge upon the Government to consider the above just demands and start the new Broad Gauge line at the earliest.

Demand to withhold the proposal of merger of Associate Banks with the State Bank of India

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN (West Bengal): I would like to raise the issue of merger of associate banks with the SBI. There is a move to merge seven associate banks with the SBI. The merger of two associate banks — the State Bank of Sourashtra and the State Bank of Indore — has already taken place. The employees have protested strongly and there have been strikes in last September and December and now again the employees have gone on strike on 6th July 2009. The SBT is an associate bank which is also going to be merged with the SBI. If the merger happens, this will be going to adversely affect the economy of Kerala. Further, various national and international studies have proved that merger of banks will not increase the competitiveness and efficiency of banks as claimed by the Government. The argument that the merger and consolidation will reduce the risk of the financial stability is also not true. The mergers have always been accompanied by the closure of rural branches, retrenchment of employees and outsourcing of banking jobs. Hence, it is found that the mergers are not isolated moves but part of the policies of globalisation. In fact, we don't need the merger but the expansion of banking services in our country.

Hence, I urge upon the Government not to proceed with the merger of banks.