

**RAJYA SABHA**

*Friday, the 12th May, 1978/the 22nd Vaisakha, 1900 (Saka).*

The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****Publication of India News'**

♦391. SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA:

SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHA-PATRO:

SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA,;

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to resume publication of the Weekly Journal 'India News' by the Indian High Commission in London, which was stopped some time back; and

(b) if so, what will be the estimated annual cost of the publication?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): (a) Yes, Sir. The 'India News' weekly published by the High Commission of India, London, had stopped publication some time ago, but it has now been decided to resume its publication, in June, 1978.

(b) According to preliminary estimates submitted by the High Commission of India, London, the annual cost of reviving the Weekly would come to Rs. 4,75,380.00 approximately.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, is it not a fact that as a result of the inspection which was organised by the Centre, India House stopped the

publication of India News. because it was very expensive, it served no purpose and made no impression whatsoever and that at that time it cost about £20,000 a year? Now, Sir, what is the special reason for reviving this publication when India House is bringing out what are called Indigram, India Bulletin, etc. which give the daily news so on, and when it is known that this publication due to rise in prices in England, is now estimated to cost for distribution and printing alone, according to what information I have gathered. £, 40,000? And if the salaries and other things are added, it is likely to go up to £. 60,000 to £ 70,000. May I know why the Government is permitting incurring of this additional expenditure for a publication which was found to be useless and which is not needed, particularly when such other items of expenditure are being cut by the India House. For instance, take library facilities. Books are not being purchased. Hostel facility—that is also supposed to be stopped. I will cover these in my second supplementary.

Therefore, will the hon. Minister tell us why, in view of the fact that India House spends a lot of money—it is a white elephant as far as expenditure is concerned—suddenly the need has been felt for bringing this out, whether the Ministry has gone into this thing and has discussed the question of stopping of the publication and other details, in order to justify the expenditure of even what he has suggested?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: After the formation of the Janata Government, the question of streamlining foreign publicity was taken up. A committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Chanchal Sarkar was appointed.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Who?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Chanchal Sarkar.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Bhupesh Gupta.

The Committee visited London and some other places. I also inquired into this matter when I happened to be in London. We came to the conclusion that we should have our own publication, our own journal, a good one, not like that which was published earlier. And we have decided to resume the publication of the weekly "India News". The weekly will be published without appointing any new staff. There are people working in the Indian High Commission who have experience of journalism and they will be in charge of editing the paper, and the paper will have a good circulation if it is published in a manner that will be liked by the people. The other point is when we stopped publication of this journal, the High Commissioner was helping many journals published in London by private parties. I would not like to disclose the amount that was given to those journals. But the House should not think that there was no expenditure incurred on our part. We were incurring some expenditure. But during Emergency when some of these papers lost their credibility and they became useless, we decided to stop any assistance to them, and we have now come to the conclusion that we should have our own journal in London.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Normally this is nothing new. This publication was coming even before the Janata Government came into power. The Congress Government had the Congress version. I had seen it. At that time it was all Congress. Now it will be all Janata. That we know. At that time it was Shri Swaran Singh who was the Foreign Minister. For sometime Shri Chagla was there. And then there was some other person. Now it will be Shri Vajpayee and his friends. That we know. At that time we saw Shrimati Indira Gandhi's face. Now we will see Shri Morarji Desai's face. All this will follow. But having regard to all that, having even felt that all that boost should be given in the old days to the Congress Government forgetting

even the opposition here^ they thought that it was too much of an expenditure. We, personally myself, and Shri Vajpayee and others also felt the same way. At that time almost Rs. 2 crores used to be spent by the India House. As a result of what we all felt here, an inspection was ordered. Inspectors were sent by the Ministry of External Affairs. They stayed there and inquired into the various heads of expenditure. And this one item was found to be absolutely waste. What guarantee have we that this will not be so? Because, the some staff remain, only musters have changed. The same staff remained. Shri Vajpayee will not be editing the journal. The same staff remained, the same photographers remained. Only the person to be photographed and the details about the photograph will have changed. This is taking place at a time when the India House Library is being starved of funds nowadays. I know about this Library. I had studied there and made use of this Library. I used that Library in my student days. In the name of economy this Library • has been starved of funds. Is the hon'ble Minister aware that this is being done? Does he know where the priorities should go? Is he aware that there is a hostel on Guilford Street where Indian students live? Now there is a proposal to close it, and as a preliminary step they are closing it for the so-called summer months. It is not done that way. Now, according to my information the students have brought a representation to the High Commissioner. The High Commissioner himself went there in November last. He has to look into this matter. This is what we find. I should like to know this thing: Why on the one hand when you bring in the question of economy to house students and others, should you, on the other hand, bring out this luxury publication? May I know whether the hon. Minister is aware that in the case of India House Bulletin, which is coming out nowadays, there are two tenders for printing it from agents of some Delhi busi-

nessman—some agents in London of Delhi businessman for printing the India House Bulletin? If so, who are these persons who have submitted these tenders, what are the antecedents and connections of the Delhi businessman? The hon. Minister should let us know these things. The whole thing seems to be quite fishy.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question pertains to the resumed publication of the Weekly Journal 'India News'. But you are asking something else.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: This is in the context of economy. Myself being a journalist, I know this. If you bring out a journal I do not mind. All I say is, when economy is needed, these journals which cost some money. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: About Rs. 4 lakhs.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA .....are brought out possibly curtailing some necessary expenditure elsewhere. Has the Government gone into this aspect?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Faces have changed undoubtedly. But the policy has also changed. And the changed policy will be reflected in the new journal. I am not aware of any report ...

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: What policy has changed?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I will tell you during the debate.

Sir, I am not aware of any report submitted by the inspectors to the effect that about a crore of rupees were being spent on this. I am not aware of it. But on this journal, as you said, only Rs. 4 lakhs and a few thousands will be spent. Our present High Commissioner has been a journalist as my friend is also an editor—an editor of repute though he has been writing against me—I do not mind that...

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Why he says We are writing against him? You

want publicity. Now I will take special care not to write about you. But I am surprised that Shri Vajpayee does not know this. He must have known this. He was sitting there in the opposition. We had raised questions about the expenditure on India House and American Mission. Mr. Vajpayee, many things you are forgetting. This is the trouble. When you go there you forget things

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mahapatro, you ask your question. Otherwise, he will continue like this.

SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHAPATRO: This particular Weekly Journal which is now sought to be resumed was stopped long back. In the hon. Minister's reply he says that Rs. 4,75,380 will be the annual expenditure, the reason being that the staff already there in the High Commission will be employed in editing it. I have only two questions to ask so that I will be convinced about the utility of this paper which was so long back considered only to be fit to be thrown into the waste-paper basket. Its worth was not more than the cost of the paper used in printing this particular weekly. I want to know whether this will be in addition to the dailies that are being published. There are two Dailies, namely, 'India Gram' and 'India News'. I want to know whether it will be in addition to the India House Bulletins for which already tenders are called and whether the expenditure on these papers has been taken into account and whether it will not mean duplication of work. I would like to know whether the expenditure } that will be made will be worth incurring since such an expenditure is going to be incurred once again. At one time, even the Inspectors said that it was a wasteful expenditure. Has he taken into account the other benefits that the Indian people there, whether they are students or scholars, whether in the India Library or in the Hostel, as Mr. Bhupesh Gupta has pointed out, would derive from

this? Has he taken into account this factor also and has he taken care to see that these will also be attended to and will not be closed and those people who are getting benefits from these things, that is, the Library and the Hostel, will not suffer? Or, will only the activities of the High Commissioner be repeated in the daily and in the weekly? Is it the purpose for which it is published? Then, Sir, my last question is this: Is it correct that last year an RSS man was appointed there?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Sir, I have already stated that no new Editor is going to be appointed. We have decided to appoint one person as the Edition . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Who is that?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: . . . and one other Assistant from the existing staff of the High Commission.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Who is that Editor?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I do not have the name at the moment with me. No new appointments are being made. So, my friend should rest assured that no RSS man will be appointed. If a man has already been appointed in the Indian High Commission, I cannot help it. But there will be no duplication . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You have got the tenders for printing the "India Bulletin".

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Sir, after the publication of "India News" which will resume publication in the next month, there will be no need for the publication of the "India Bulletin".

MR. CHAIRMAN: Economy will be there.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: There will be no duplication.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Tenders you have got.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I am not aware of any tenders having been called.

SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHAPATRO: You have got the "Daily Bulletin", you have got the "India Gram" and you have also got the third paper, the "India Bulletin".

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: They are being cyclostyled. Duplication will be avoided, economy will be effected and no facilities will be curtailed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Indradeep Sinha. Not here. Yes, Mr. Jha.

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : सभापति महोदय मंत्री महोदय ने जवाब दिया है कि अगले महीने से वह इंडिया न्यूज का प्रकाशन शुरू करेंगे, बहुत अच्छी बात है, स्वागत की बात है। लेकिन मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि लंदन में बहुत से हिन्दुस्तानी रहते हैं। इसलिए यह जो न्यूज निकलेगा वह भारतीय भाषाओं में भी, खास कर हिन्दी में भी निकलेगा कि नहीं? यदि नहीं निकलेगा तो क्यों नहीं?

दूसरा सवाल मेरा यह है कि मंत्री महोदय यह न समझें कि भारतीय भाषाओं में सरकार के द्वारा ही साप्ताहिक या कोई पत्रिका निकल सकती है। भारतीय जो विदेशों में, अमरीका और इंग्लैण्ड में हैं वह भारतीय भाषाओं में पत्रिकाएँ निकालते हैं। कैलिफोर्निया में एक पत्रिका पंजाबी में भगवान सिंह निकाला करते थे। इसलिए अंग्रेजी को छोड़ कर भारतीय भाषाओं में कितनी पत्रिकाएँ निकलती हैं?

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : सभापति महोदय, मुझे पता है कि लंदन में बसे हुए भारतीय अपने साधनों से, अपने प्रयत्नों से अनेक पत्र भारतीय भाषाओं में प्रकाशित कर रहे हैं। जहाँ तक सम्भव होता है भारतीय

हाई कमीशन उन्हें प्रोत्साहन देता है। लेकिन जहाँ तक इंडिया न्यूज का सवाल है उसे अभी अंग्रेजी में ही प्रकाशित करने का विचार है।

SHRI SAWAISINGH SISODIA: Sir, at present they are publishing a fortnightly, "Indian and Foreign Review", in English and French which is being circulated throughout the whole world. I would like to know from the honourable Minister whether, keeping the present arrangement in view, he still thinks it desirable, useful and necessary to publish another paper from London.

Secondly, Sir, he has referred to the Chanchal Sarkar Committee. I would like to draw the attention of the honourable Minister to the fact that this Committee has been formed to suggest a new and complete set-up for the Publicity Wing of the External Affairs Ministry and it is not regarding the publication of the various magazines and other things from our Embassies and High Commissions abroad, I would like to know how far the mentioning of this Committee, the Chanchal Sarkar Committee, by the Minister is relevant here. I would like to know from him whether, keeping in view the present arrangement, he still thinks it desirable and necessary to publish another paper from London.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Sir, we think it necessary to publish another paper from London. We have decided to publish it. The Chanchal Sarkar Committee has been entrusted with the task of evaluating foreign publicity.

SHRI SAWAISINGH SISODIA: For suggesting a new set-up for the Publicity Wing of the Ministry.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Not only the set-up in India, but the set-up abroad and to suggest what journals should be continued and

I what improvement is required. They have gone into this question also.

SHRI MANUBHAI MOTILAL PATEL: Sir, those Indians who have settled abroad are not satisfied with this weekly or these weekly bulletins. They are more or less like the Government Gazettes and they do not give full information regarding our country and the Indian newspapers which go to these countries go only once in a week in the diplomatic bags and they are also not available to everybody. In view of this, may I know from the honourable Minister whether the Government has any proposal to change the quality of the bulletins into which good and sufficient material would be fed in order to give sufficient news to the people who reside there?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Sir, the proposed "India News" will not be a news bulletin and it will not be a Government Gazette. Our efforts will be to make it interesting as well as readable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Yadav. Be brief.

श्री रामानन्द यादव : मैं अपने विदेश मंत्री जी से पब्लिकेशन के सम्बन्ध में दो बातों की जानकारी हासिल करना चाहता हूँ। पहली बात यह है कि क्या हमारे विदेश मंत्री यह विश्वास करते हैं कि जिन पुराने कर्मचारियों के कारण, उनकी निष्क्रियता, उनकी जर्नलिज्म की अज्ञानता के कारण पब्लिकेशन को बन्द कर देना पड़ा, मुनः इसको पढ़ने लायक, समझने लायक, यजफुल बना सकते हैं ? दूसरी बात मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि चंचल सरकार की कमेटी जो बनी थी इसकी विशेषता क्या थी और किन वजह से विदेश मंत्रालय के सम्बन्ध में एक वरिष्ठ कमेटी का निर्माण हुआ और उनके काम का जो दायरा था, जो यह पब्लिकेशन बाहर के मूल्कों में होता था, एम्बेसीज के माध्यम से तो उसमें यह आता है या नहीं ?

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** सभापति जी, जिस प्रकाशन को बन्द किया गया वह 1974 में बन्द किया गया था।

SHRI RAMANAND YADAV: Don't brush aside the question. Don't leave aside thi; question by blaming the past Government. It is a bad precedent.

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** 1974 से ले कर अब तक बहुत सा पानी नदियों में बह चुका है, बहुत से कर्मचारी बदल चुके हैं। हाई कमिश्नर भी बदल गया है और विदेश मंत्री भी बदल गया है। अब जो पब्लिकेशन निकलेगा वह भी बदला हुआ निकलेगा और आशा है आपको भी पसंद आएगा। यहाँ तक चंचल सरकार समिति का सम्बन्ध है...

**श्री रामानन्द यादव :** आप जो पब्लिकेशन निकाल रहे हैं उतने उन्हीं कर्मचारियों को रखा है या नहीं? यह क्लीयर कर दीजिए।

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** जो पहला पब्लिकेशन था वह 1974 में बन्द कर दिया गया था। जो नया पब्लिकेशन निकाला जा रहा है वह 1978 में निकल रहा है।

(Interruptions)

**श्री रामानन्द यादव :** उन कर्मचारियों को छांटा गया है या नहीं?

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** सभापति जी, विदेशों में कोई कर्मचारी तीन वर्ष से अधिक नहीं रहता है। उसे बदल दिया जाता है। (Interruptions)

वे नहीं जानते हैं, इसलिए मैं बता रहा हूँ। श्री चंचल सरकार की तारीफ मैं इस सदन में खड़े हो कर करूँ कि वे एक अच्छे पत्रकार हैं, यह मैं नहीं चाहता। लेकिन जिस मामले पर विचार करने के लिए हमने समिति गठित की है उस मामले के सम्बन्ध में

वे विशेषज्ञ हैं, यह कहना कोई अतिशयोक्ति नहीं होगी।

SHRI NARASINGHA PRASAD NANDA: Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that the publication of this newspaper was stopped in the year 1974. I would like to know what was the circulation of this paper when it was stopped and what expenditure was incurred on the publication of this paper then.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This supplementary will not arise out of this.

SHRI NARASINGHA PRASAD NANDA: Sir, they are going to resume it and you will kindly see that the hon. Minister has stated that now the circulation will increase. He also said that the get-up of the paper will improve in order to make it attractive. Therefore, the question arises out of this. What was the circulation, what was the cost when it was stopped and what will be the circulation now when they are going to incur an expenditure of Rs. 4.75 lakhs when there are more pressing things and need for expenditure on Indian citizens residing in London?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: The old journal had a wide distribution and copies could also be sold or subscribed to as India News was registered with the General Post Office. I do not have the exact figures of circulation, nor do I have the figures of cost incurred. If the hon. Member puts a separate question. I will be glad to give him the information.

SHRI NARASINGHA PRASAD NANDA: What will be the circulation now?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is regarding resumption.

SHRI NARASINGHA PRASAD NANDA: He must tell us what will be the estimated circulation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He will find out and let you know.

**श्री सीताराम केसरी :** सभापति जी, आपके माध्यम से मैं परराष्ट्र मंत्री जी से यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि उन्होंने अपने उत्तर में यह कहा है कि लन्दन में कुछ स्थानीय अखबारों की विश्वसनीयता की वजह से ...

SHRI K. K. MADHAVAN: Sir, may I know whether it is a supplementary question or a speech?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let me see whether it will be a speech or a supplementary. Wait for a minute, Mr. Madhavan.

**श्री सीताराम केसरी :** मैं कोई भी प्रश्न मूल प्रश्न से अलग हो कर नहीं पूछ रहा हूँ। चूंकि परराष्ट्र मंत्री महोदय ने अपने उत्तर में यह कहा है कि लन्दन की स्थानीय साप्ताहिक पत्रिका ने, जो वहाँ पर चल रही थी, अपनी विश्वसनीयता खो दी थी, इसलिए वहाँ के उच्चायुक्त ने उसको अनुदान देना बन्द कर दिया था। मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि विश्वसनीयता खोने का क्या अर्थ है? क्या इसका स्पष्ट अर्थ यह होता है कि जिस प्रकार से वर्तमान सरकार ने राष्ट्र के अन्दर अपनी विश्वसनीयता खो दी है उसी प्रकार से उसने अपनी विश्वसनीयता विदेशों में भी खो दी है और उसी का प्रभाव विदेशों पर भी पड़ रहा है? इसलिए मैं स्पष्ट रूप से जानना चाहता हूँ कि जिस आधार पर परराष्ट्र मंत्री ने स्थानीय अखबार द्वारा विश्वसनीयता खोने पर उसको अनुदान देना बन्द कर दिया, क्या इसी मापदण्ड को परराष्ट्र के अन्दर भी लागू करेंगे क्योंकि

आजमगढ़ में जिस प्रकार से आपने विश्वसनीयता खोई है उसकी पृष्ठभूमि को देखते हुए क्या आप विश्वसनीयता की बात को सदन में स्पष्ट करेंगे? इस दृष्टि से मैं यह स्पष्ट जानना चाहता हूँ कि किस तरह की विश्वसनीयता उस अखबार ने खोई है जिसकी वजह से आपने उसको अनुदान देना बन्द कर दिया?

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** सभापति महोदय, बात तो लन्दन की ही रही है और हवाला आजमगढ़ का दिया जा रहा है ...

(Interruptions)

**श्री सीताराम केसरी :** आपने विश्वसनीयता की बात कही है ...

(Interruptions)

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** श्रीमान, मैं यह निवेदन कर रहा था कि कुछ पत्रों को हुकूमत की ओर से मदद दी जाती थी लेकिन इमरजन्सी के दौरान क्योंकि उन्हें सरकार से मदद मिलती थी ...

(Interruptions)

**श्री सीताराम केसरी :** यहाँ मैं चाहता था कि आप ऐसा कहिये ...

(Interruptions)

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** सभापति महोदय, जिन्हें मदद दी जाती थी वे सरकारी पक्ष को पेश करने के लिए मजबूर थे। इसलिए उनके पाठकों की संख्या गिरी। हम चाहते हैं कि वहाँ जो पत्र निकलते हैं, वे स्वतन्त्र निकलें, सरकार पर निर्भर न रहें। सरकार अपने अलग पत्र निकाले और जिसको पढ़ना हो वह पढ़े। यह नीति स्पष्ट है।

\*392. The questionnair Shri Ibrahim Kalaniya)was absent. For answer, vide col. cc.cd infra.]