

second best city of Maharashtra. However, the budget allocation made for the nagpur railway Station for the year 1991-92 wa not fully utilised. Similarly, the renovation work on the side of the second cotton market also remains to be alone. Further, the budbgetary allocation for the renovation work of Nagpur Railway Station is inadequate and the completion is getting delayed. Do you propose to complete the work this year?

[English]

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: The target for the completion of the renovation is 31.3.1993. I am fully confident that the Railways will rise to the occasion to complete the work in the targeted time.

Late Running of Trains

*189. **DR. SUDHIR RAY:**
SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether important express, mail and superfast trains throughout the country and especially bombay mail on Allahabad-Bombay route usually run late;

(b) whether goods trains are given priority over passenger trains in clearance;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps propoed to be taken to maintain punctuality of trains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWASY (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) No, Sir. However, punctuality of Howrah-Bombay Mail has not been satisfactory.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Instructions already exist to maintain

punctuality by intensive chasing and round the clock moniotoring.

[Translation]

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reply given by the hon. Minister is very unsatisfactory. He has admitted that the punctuality of the Howrah-Bombay Mail is not satisfactory, but it is satisfactory in respect of other trains. The main question was that important mail express and superfast trains are are running late. I would like to say specifically that the people will have to face great difficulties due to late running of trains like Rajdhani Express, AP Express, Jhelum Express, Punjab Mail, Chhatisgarh-Awadh Express, now known as bombay-Bandra - Gorakhpur Express. Sometimes it causes great loss to people and becomes inhumane. Suppose some one has to reach a blace on the death or distress of a near relative or on some urgent work and the trains run late, then it causes a let of proglem. Trains run late by four to eight hours. I would like toknow from the hon. Minister as to how many days during the last six month the Rajdhani Express, the AP Express, the Jhelum Express, the Punjab Mail, the Chhatirgarh Express and te Groakhpur-Awadh-Bandra Express werer late by more than an hour.

Mr. Minister, Sir, I would like to congratulate you for theintroduction of a new express train from Awadh to Bombay called the Awadh-Bandra Express, but people are not adequately benefited by these services due to late running of all these trains including the Awadh Express. If people reach their destination late by so many hours, they suffer a lot. Therefore, I would like to repeat my question as to on how many days these trains were late by more than an hour during last six months ?

[English]

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, punctuality is of great concern to us. Punctrality, safety and security of the passengers should be taken proper care of and we are monitoring

it and once the punctuality was 71 to 72 per cent. Now it has come up to 85 per cent; in some trains even it has gone beyond 91 per cent. However, Sir, we are not satisfied with the punctuality and all those who are concerned with the maintenance of punctuality have been taken, in fact, to task and we are monitoring it. Moreover, Sir, punctuality is lost because certain things which are not within the competence of Railways like normally what is happening even in the long-distance trains where the commuters of some short distance trains get in and start chalking-pulling. Chalking-pulling is one of the major causes in losing punctuality. Apart from that, there are some agitations, band, even certain incidents and accidents. All these factors are taken into cognizance. That is how punctuality is being suffered. But so far as the hon. Members question as to in respect of Rajdhani or A.P. Express or other trains within six months how many times within one hour late the trains have come, that information I do not have Sir. I will furnish it later.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT:

Mr. Speaker Sir, as the hon. Minister said in his reply just now that the trains also get late very often due to accidents. I would like to ask the hon. Minister as to on how many days the trains were late by more than an hour due to accidents during last six months?

MR. SPEAKER: No, the Minister said he did not have the records here. He would give you in writing. If you want to ask anything more, please ask.

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to ask the hon. Minister as to what measures have been taken for ensuring punctuality of trains and what action has been taken against officials who are responsible for the late running of trains.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: About the action you

have already said that you are taking them to task.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, as I have earlier informed the august House, punctuality has to be maintained and it is an obligation on the part of Railways Administration itself and whoever is concerned in operational matters has been alerted, all of them have been, in fact, chased to see that punctuality is properly maintained.

SHRI PETER G. MARBANIANG: Sir, taking the explanatory answer given by the hon. Minister, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to the reply "No, Sir" which is misleading.

Sir, many trains, mail and express, originate from Guwahati Railway Station running to Delhi, running to Bangalore, running to Bombay and running to Calcutta, and all these trains are perpetually late by not less than five hours every day and to give such an answer as "No, Sir" is very misleading and it amounts to a breach of privilege. And to say 'no' is not correct. They are perpetually coming late to Guwahati by six or seven hours. How will the hon. Minister compromise on this?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: I will not compromise so far as punctuality is concerned. In the eastern sector, what the hon. Member is saying is correct. But, I will take care of it.

MAJ. GEN (RETD.) BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has said that the trains are not running late. Taking the reply in its face value, I would like to ask the hon. Minister as to what is the definition for 'punctuality'. If it is late by five minutes or 10 minutes or 15 minutes, is it considered punctual or not? If the superfast trains are late by 15 minutes, 20 minutes or half-an-hour, and there is no unnatural incidents like riots etc., will the hon. Minister promise the House that he will refund the levy?

MR. SPEAKER: Can you refund the levy?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: It is not possible.

SHRI CHIRANJI LAL SHARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in reply to a question, the hon. Minister was pleased to state that punctuality has to be maintained and that he has taken to task those officials who have been guilty of it. May I ask the hon. Minister to let the House know as to how many officers or officials had been punished or taken to task? If so, what punishment has been given? Have they been suspended? Has any explanation been sought from them or has any penalty been imposed?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, the staff who are responsible to monitor the proper running of the train have been alerted. Taking them to task does not mean that we have imposed some penalty and so on and so forth. However, I do not have the information as to how many members of the staff, who are involved, have been taken to task.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM NIHOR RAI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Shramjivi Express running between Patna and New Delhi is always late by three to four hours. If its departure timing is changed and it is allowed to leave Patna at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, it will reach Varanasi at 6 o'clock in the evening. It would prove very convenient for people because there will a difference of only 1 or 2 hours between the arrival time of this train at Varanasi and the departure time of the Kashi Vishwanath Express which starts from Varanasi. Will the Government consider it keeping in view people's convenience?

[*English*]

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, the time-table is prepared keeping in view the various trains running on that particular route. So, it is not possible.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: It has become

a practice with the trains to run late by one to two hours. Will the hon. Minister please say whether the late running of trains is attributed to a number of thefts taking place in the reserved, AC sleeper and AC first class coaches. Due to these thefts also sometimes the trains are held up at the station for registering complaints. The thieves take advantage of such delays and flee with stolen goods. Who should be held responsible for this? Is this also one of the reasons for the late running of trains?

[*English*]

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sometimes, the trains are delayed for certain reasons like some amenities are not available within the coaches. Then, the passengers themselves pull the Chain and detain the train till the defect is rectified.

So far as thefts are concerned, some cases have come to our knowledge. We have taken the necessary precautions so that such things do not occur.

[*Translation*]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to point out to the hon. Railway Minister that despite writings on Railway Platforms-Punctuality Safety and security is our motto, in practice quite the opposite is happening. I come from Ajmer to Delhi. As soon as the Mail train reaches Delhi Cantt, it is held up there for more than half an hour. It is said that no preference is given to trains of Western Railway. Trains of Northern Railway are given clearance first. As a result thereof the trains run late by more than an hour and I become late to reach the Parliament. I would like to know from the Government as to why the fast running trains are held up when they reach other zones. Will the Government issue necessary directions to Railways officials in this regard?

[*English*]

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: It is purely an

operational matter for what reason, a particular train is late.

Extension of Railway line upto Agartala

*190. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:
SHRIMATI BIBHU KUMARI
DEVI:

Will the MINISTER OF RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to extend railway line upto Agartala in Tripura;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the estimated cost of the project; and

(c) the time by which the work is expected to start on this project alongwith the time schedule drawn for its completion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) to (c). The survey for extension of the Railway line from Kumarghat to Agartala has been taken up. Further action would depend on the results of the survey and availability of resources in the coming years.

SHRIMATI BIBHU KUMARI DEVI: Sir, this answer is most unsatisfactory for very obvious reasons. We have requested very humbly for the railway lines right from 1967 and it took about 22 years to link Dharmnagar with Kumarghat. People were buying land just to make money for speculation purposes. You know, Tripura being a border State, we have got a very big problem, influx of refugees. When land is bought up like this for speculation purpose, the other developmental work of the State gets delayed.

I expected the hon. Member would let me know what is the total length of alignment to be covered. There are hills running east to west, not north to south. What is the expected land to be acquired falling under autonomous district council, tribal land, land which are under forest, plantation of rubber,

coffee and pine apple. What is the extent of acquisition of land from the State Government in general and the other general public?

In this connection, I would like the hon. Minister to let me know whether linkage from Kumarghat to Agartala will be linking Akhara which is in Bangladesh because that will open up another flood gate for Bangladeshis. Has the Government considered the implications of this linkage?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, when the hon. Member from that region was here, no doubt, he made an attempt. That is how, the railways line from Dharmnagar to Kumarghat, 33 kms., has been completed.

Now because of the persistent demand for extension up to Agartala, the line between Kumarghat and Agartala has to be laid. In the last financial year, we have resumed its final location survey. It is a hilly terrain and it will take some time to complete the final location survey. The length is about 131 kms. from Kumarghat to Agartala.

SHRIMATI BIBHU KUMARI DEVI: Will the hon. Minister consider adoption of new technology, Japanese technology for laying the line for Agartala. 131 kms. line is not a long length. By following the present technology, it will take a longer time and more people will be displaced. You will have to acquire thousand acres of land. With the new technology, Japanese technology, laying of railway line over bridges, minimum land areas are involved. Will he consider the new technology for linking Agartala to Kumarghat?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, adoption of a new technology is a secondary phenomenon. Now, the primary one is: let the final location survey be completed. Once it is completed, once we know what is the return, then it will be sent to the Planning Commission for its clearance. So far as acquisition of the land is concerned, I would like to say that so long as we do not complete the final location survey, the question of acquisition of