

considered in the near future.

SHRIMATI USHA THAKKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, regarding 31 Down and 32 Up Express train, I would like to ask the hon. Minister.....

MR. SPEAKER: No, no, you can only ask supplementary connected with this question only.

SHRI ANOOPCHAND SHAH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Railway Minister stated the concept of Rajdhani Express just now. However, according to my knowledge, when the same question was raised recently in the Divisional Railway Consultative Committee meeting, the Divisional Railway Manager, Bombay Division, stated that the proposal to provide a stoppage of Rajdhani Express at Surat was under consideration. Borivali station is considered to be the entrance of Bombay and after departing from Baroda Jn., Rajdhani Express stops direct at Bombay Central. My submission is that the passengers living in the suburban areas of Bombay should also be provided facilities to make use of this train. So a stoppage of this train should be provided there as well. A discussion on this matter has already taken place in D.R.U.C. meeting. Will the hon. Minister kindly reconsider these proposals after obtaining the required information from the Divisional Railway Manager and the Divisional Railway Headquarters?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: I have no information regarding the discussion that took place in the Divisional Railway Users' Committee meeting. If at all the Divisional Manager, Railways gave an assurance in this regard, he had no right to do so because this is our policy that its stoppage will be provided only for operational requirements.

MR. SPEAKER: If you want to ask any question regarding Rajdhani Express, you may do so

SHRI U.H. PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, according to my information, the Railways had taken a decision to provide stoppage for

2 minutes each of 13 trains at the stations located in the vicinity of Delhi. The distance between Baroda and Bombay is very long. The hon. Minister should provide a stoppage of this train at any one of the suitable stations between Baroda and Bombay. There are no two opinions that Surat is a very big and beautiful city. If you do not want to provide a stoppage of Rajdhani Express there, you should arrange to provide a stoppage at least at Balasore.

MR. SPEAKER: No, no. Shri Brajamo-han Mohanty.....

[English]

South Eastern Railway Hotel

*272. **SHRI BRAJA MOHAN MOHANTY:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for transfer of South-Eastern Railway hotel at Puri and if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether there is any proposal for improving the management of this hotel and if so, the details of the plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. There is a proposal to renovate the hotel and to upgrade the level of management.

SHRI BRAJAMOHAN MOHANTY: The South-Eastern Railway Hotel is one of the most lovely and romantic hotels. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what is the detailed picture of the official renovation and upgradation of the management and I would like to know whether there is any extensive programme for the hotel.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: I agree with the hon. Member that this is one of the most beautiful hotels. But as far as the romantic part of it is concerned, I accept his

word from his experience. At present, we have drawn up a renovation plan for about 33 lakhs of rupees, out of which we would like to take up 25 lakhs of rupees rightaway and another 6 to 7 lakhs of rupees later. We also want to improve the management, the efficiency of the hotel and services of the hotel and therefore a decision has been taken to upgrade the post of the Manager of the hotel to J.A. Grade.

SHRI BRAJAMOHAN MOHANTY. May I know whether the hon. Minister has figures about the percentage of the occupancy of the hotel and figures about the loss or profit. May I also know whether the hotel is earning profits regularly?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA Sir, I am happy to inform the hon. Member that the hotel has been making profits. I have the figures from 1982 to 1987. The profit ranges, in each year, from a low of about one lakh fifty thousands to a high of about five lakhs ninety three thousands. This is the range. Unfortunately, the occupancy has dropped considerably from 49% to about 26% and as the hon. Member well knows, this is because of the mushroom growth of new hotels, the problems of sewage discharge into the beach, which we are trying to take up with the local authorities, the heavy establishment costs and what we thought was some sort of lack of professional management because primarily we are trained to run the railways, not to run the hotels and inadequate investment for renovation. That is why we have taken up this investment plan because we want to restore it to its earlier glory and also—improve the management by upgrading the manager so that there is a more professional and senior level of management.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA: May I know whether it is a fact that the foreign tourists are not coming to that hotel because it has not been upgraded as a 5-star hotel and, therefore, the occupancy got reduced last year? Has the Government any plans to make it a 5-star hotel so that the occupancy may increase?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: There is no need to make it a 5-star hotel as the requirements of 5-star hotel are not really necessary.

Gold Smuggling

*273. **SHRI PRAKASH CHANDRA:** Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of gold smuggled into the country during the last 3 years, year-wise and State-wise;

(b) whether there has been spurt in gold smuggling in past few months; if so, the causes thereof, and

(c) the steps taken recently to contain this evil?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI A. K. PANJA) (a) to (c). A statement is given below.

STATEMENT

(a) and (b). Smuggling being a clandestine activity, it is not possible to estimate the quantity of gold that has been smuggled into the country as a whole or the quantity that has been smuggled into each State. However, the quantum and value of gold seized by the Customs authorities during the last 3 years are given in the table below.—

Year	Quantity of gold seized (in Kgs)	Value of gold seized (Rs in crores)
1987	2255	65.78
1988	6094	200.53
*1989 (upto 24.7.89)	5569	176.38

*Figures are provisional.

The increase in the value of the seizures