

(c) A number of measures as listed below have recently been taken to cut down delays in the settlement of accident claims, which include, inter alia.

(1) delegation of more powers to the General Managers;

(2) removal of ban on the appointment of retired judicial officer as ad hoc Claims Commissioner;

(3) removal of ban on creation and sanction of posts for the office of *ad hoc* Claims Commissioner and the Railways' own accident compensation cells on a justified scale by the General Managers themselves. It has also been decided to constitute One Man Standing Tribunals to deal with all accident claims. Follow up action has also been initiated in consultation with the Ministry of Law.

Indo-Bangladesh pact in respect of Inland Water Transport

*68. SHRIMATI SUDHA VIJAY JOSHI: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of the pact entered into by India recently with Bangladesh with regard to inland water transport;

(b) what benefits are accruing to India from the above pact; and

(c) for how long will this pact continue and what amount of money would India pay to Bangladesh as per the terms of the pact?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI):

(a) The Protocol on Inland Water Transit & Trade between Bangladesh and India provides for utilisation of the waterways of the two countries

for inter-country trade and for passage of goods between two points in one country through the territory of the other. Under this protocol certain routes have been defined for use of operators of the two countries. It also lays down the procedure for undertaking conservancy and pilotage of Protocol routes, levying of port dues, provision of handling facilities, bunkering and repair of vessels, purchase of stores and provisions, assistance to vessels in distress, sharing of inter-country trade, and opening of branch offices and appointment of agents in each others' country.

(b) The Protocol promotes mutual goodwill and understanding between two neighbouring countries of India and Bangladesh. It enables the Indian operators to operate inland water transport services for inter-country trade as also for transport of essential commodities like foodgrains, cement, steel, bitumen, sugar, fertilizer, edible oil and packed lubricant oil etc. from Calcutta to destinations in North-Eastern States and for shipment of the produce of that area like Jute, Tea, Timber, Bamboo to consumer and industrial centres in West Bengal and Calcutta Port for export, for which the rail and road capacity is already saturated. Since the inter-country trade is likely to expand between these two countries the Protocol will be of benefit to both.

(c) The existing Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade was signed on 17-9-84 and will remain in force upto 3-10-1986. This is likely to be extended further from time to time. Under the existing Protocol, the Government of India have agreed to pay to the Government of Bangladesh an amount of 65 lakh Bangladeshi Take for the period from 4-10-84 to 3-10-85 and 75 lakh Bangladeshi Take for the period from 4-10-85 to 3-10-86. The quantum of payment to be made thereafter will be decided by negotiations at the time of further extension of the Protocol in due course.