

(b) if so, the nature of discussion held during the visit; and

(c) the outcome of the discussion ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Indian Trade Promotion Delegation led by the Minister of State for Commerce held wide ranging discussions covering different aspects of bilateral trade with the Malaysian authorities. These discussions focussed on measures to expand trade in a more balanced manner in order to rectify the imbalance in the trade, hitherto, in favour of Malaysia.

(c) The Malaysians have a better appreciation of our perceptions on bilateral trade and they agreed to take effective steps to rectify the imbalance in trade.

News Item Captioned "Ship Scuttling Frauds on Increase"

3821. SHRI ATISH CHANDRA SINHA : Will the Minister of FINANCE pleased to state :

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Ships scuttling frauds on the increase" appeared in "The Statesman", Calcutta edition of 3 November, 1985;

(b) if so, whether Government have received report (s) from official sources alleging deliberate sinking of ships by the owners to claim compensation from the nationalised insurance companies ;

(c) if so, the details of such reports received during the last three years;

(d) the details of claims received by the nationalised insurance companies during the last three years from owners of drowned vessels and the manner in which such claims were settled by the insurance companies ; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed by the insurance companies to guard against such fraud ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) Yes, Sir,

(b) and (c). No such reports have been received by Government from official sources.

(d) During the last three years, the insurance companies have settled claims in respect of the vessels 'JAL MORARI' and 'MARJAN' belonging to Scindia Steam Navigation Company Limited and Indoceanic Shipping Company for Rs. 2,91,20,692 and Rs. 1,60,00,000 respectively. These ships were lost due to maritime perils only and not due to scuttling.

Recently, two vessels namely m. v. 'Nitya Ram' and m. v. 'Nitya Nanak' belonging to M/s. Maini Shipping Company were reported missing. These claims have not yet been settled and investigations are being made to ascertain the cause of the incident.

(e) The General Insurance Corporation of India has evolved several steps to combat these frauds. These include :—

- (i) Screening of vessels leaving Indian ports with export cargo from India.
- (ii) Guidelines laid down for selection of vessels bringing imports from Far-East.
- (iii) Guidelines laid down for bulk importers like State Trading Corporation of India for selection of vessels.

Adequate provisions also already exist in the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 and the Criminal Procedure Code against such frauds.

[Translation]

Audit of Accounts of Bathnakutti Rural Bank in Gopalganj, Bihar

3822. SHRI KALI PRASAD PANDEY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state;

(a) whether the Union Government have got the accounts of the Bathnakutti Rural Bank in Gopalganj district, Bihar audited on the basis of the complaints