

Title: Need to introduce Dhaka-Agartala bus service.

SHRI KHAGEN DAS (TRIPURA WEST): Sir, proper connectivity of Tripura to rest of the country is of paramount importance for its economic growth. Prior to independence, convenient rail, road and water links of Tripura with rest of the country were through Bangladesh. Subsequent to partition, Calcutta (now Kolkata) which was only 350 kilometres away from Agartala through Bangladesh became 1,800 kilometres away. Besides this, road, rail and air connectivity of Tripura with the rest of the country continues to be extremely poor. Every year, for several months, the national highway and rail link to Tripura gets disconnected due to landslides. Besides improving this, it is important for Tripura to have rail/road connectivity through Bangladesh. A protocol was signed on 10th July, 2001 between India and Bangladesh to start a bus service between Dhaka and Agartala. Tripura Road Transport Corporation (TRTC) and Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) signed an agreement on 1st March, 2002 to run the bus service. A trial run of TRTC and BRTC buses was done on 12th July, 2002. However, since then, there has been no progress. As the matter is of great importance for economic prosperity of Tripura, it is strongly urged upon the Government to take all possible steps to start the Dhaka-Agartala bus service as soon as possible.