

vessels upto 2 lakhs tonnes. As a result of the above steps the quantum of iron ore exports during 1984-85 and the first seven months of 1985-86 has increased over the corresponding period of the prior years.

(b) The quantum of iron ore exported from Paradeep Port during the last three years was as under:—

Year	Qty. (in L. kb tonnes)
1982-83	9.84
1983-84	9.27
1984-85	16.07
1984-85 (April-Oct., 84)	9.40
1985-86 (April-Oct., 85)	11.30 (Prov.)

Opening of branches of Nationalised Banks in the backward areas of Andhra Pradesh

346. SHRI ADINARAYAN REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of branches of nationalised banks proposed to be opened in the backward areas of Andhra Pradesh during the year 1986; and

(b) what was the target for the year 1985 and how many branches of nationalised banks were opened in backward areas of Andhra Pradesh upto 31st October, (1985)?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) and (b) The Branch licensing Policy for 1985—90 finalised recently by the Reserve Bank of India in consultation with the Government aims at achieving a coverage of 17,000 population per bank office in rural and semi-urban areas of each development

block as also eliminating large spatial gaps in the availability of banking facilities. As the process of identification of centres under the new Branch Expansion Policy has not yet commenced, no targets have been so far fixed in regard to the number of branches of banks to be opened in the backward districts of Andhra Pradesh during the years 1985 and 1986. According to the latest information available, as on 30-6-1985; there were 1685 branches of commercial banks located in the districts of Vizianagram, Visakhapatnam, Prakasam, Karimnagar, Khammam, Mahabubnagar, Medak, Nizamabad, Anantpur, Cuddapah and Karnool in Andhra Pradesh which are considered to be backward.

Raising of interest rate on deposits by banks

347. SHRI ADINARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to raise the rate of interest at present paid by the banks on deposits; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposals and by when a decision is likely to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) and (b) Interest rates payable by banks on deposits are kept under continual review and changes are made as and when necessary. The prevailing structure of deposit rate is considered to be adequate at present.

UA Trade cooperation with India

348. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the US Government have decided to increase the trade and technical cooperation with India;

(b) whether any agreement in this regard has been signed between the two countries; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c) The recent steps taken to increase trade and technical cooperation between India and U.S.A are given briefly below:—

With the objective of promoting trade and collaboration in advanced technology between the two countries, India and U.S.A, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Technology Transfer in November, 1984. The Implementation Procedures document of the MOU was signed on May 17, 1985 during the visit of US Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Malcolm Baldrige. Under the MOU, the US Government has issued 66 licences or "export" of high technology system to India in the last two months.

The India-US Programme for the Advancement of Commercial Technology (PACT) was signed on August 30, 1985. The Programme promises to provide important link between Indian and American firms in scientific and technical for specific work on product and process research and development. US AID will provide 12 million over a period of 5 years for specific work on product and process, development involving engineering and experimental design studies, manufacture of prototypes, laboratory and market testing and pilot scale trials. PACT will be administered by the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI) and will be organised under two national advisory councils,

**Powerloom licences for unemployed
retrenched textile workers**

349. SHRI K. VASUDEVA PANICKER: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to reserve powerloom licences for those persons who have been rendered unemployed due to the closure of textile mills or retrenched following modernisation of the mills; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the decision taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) It is not considered necessary to make any reservation for such persons. There are no specific restrictions regarding eligibility of persons for setting up powerlooms under the new Textile Policy. The requirements of compulsory registration and locational guidelines will however, apply to sick, powerlooms.

(b) Does not arise.

**Issue of licences for export of shells found in
Andaman Islands**

350. SHRI D. HEERACHAND: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to issue licences for the export of special type of shells and living snails shells found in and around Andaman Islands to Japan and China; if so, what are the details of the proposal and the amount of foreign exchange likely to be earned thereby;

(b) whether Government have received any representation in this regard, if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government have taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c) Export of Sea Shells is allowed "On Merits" in terms of existing export licensing policy. There is no separate policy for export of shells found in Andaman Islands. The amount of foreign exchange earned through export of Sea Shells from the Indian Coast and Andaman Islands was Rs. 10.67 lakhs during 1984-85 .

Government have not received any representation in regard to the matter of issuing licences.