

(b) whether European Commission has invited public opinion and comments on the proposal;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Darjeeling Tea has got Geographical Indication (GI) registration in some European countries and Tea Board of India has also granted Darjeeling Tea a Certificate of Trade Mark (CTM); and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Tea Board has applied for registration of mark 'Darjeeling' as protected Geographical Indication under the Regulation 510 of 2006 of the European Commission. The Commission after initial examination has published the application in the Journal on 14.10.09. This publication confers the right to file objections to the application within six months from the date of publication.

(d) and (e) Darjeeling Tea has not got any Geographical Indication (GI) in any European Country. However, Tea Board has been successful in registering the Mark 'Darjeeling' as a Trademark or as a certification Mark in various countries.

Foiling US MNCs attempt to patent Ashwagandha

3548. SHRI ANIL H. LAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Ashwagandha known as Indian Ginseng is extensively used in Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani system of medicine since time immemorial;

(b) whether a US multi national company 'Natreon' attempted to register a patent with European Patent Office for Ashwagandha's applications in treatment of induced stress, depression, insomnia, gastric ulcer and convulsions;

(c) whether India's Traditional Knowledge Digital Library foiled the US company's attempt, submitting evidence to European Patent Office showing that Ashwagandha's medicinal properties cited by the US MNC were long known to India; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. M/s Natreon INC, a US Multinational filed a patent application with European Patent Office titled "Method of Treatment or Management of

Stress" on 27-07-2006. The major claim in this application was that Withania somnifera plant extract or Ashwagandha could be used in the treatment of induced stress, depression, insomnia, gastric ulcer and convulsions.

The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research through its TKDL unit submitted evidence to European Patent Office on 06.07.2009. The Examiners at EPO in their examination report issued on 09.11.2009 cited the TKDL reference and concluded that the claims made in the Patent application could not be considered as novel. M/s. Natreon INC has since withdrawn its application.

Review of procedures for Acquisition of land for SEZs

3549. SHRI SHADI LAL BATRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to review the procedures for acquisition of land for setting up of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and other incentives provided to these SEZs;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has decided to defer further actions regarding grant of approval for setting up of SEZs in the country to prevent misuse of land and tax concessions;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) Land is a State subject. Land for SEZs is procured as per the policy and procedures of the respective State Governments. As per the current policy, the Board of Approval does not approve any SEZs, where the State Governments have carried out or propose to carry out compulsory acquisition of land for such SEZs after 5th April, 2007.

(c) No Sir.

(d) and (e) Does not arise.

Package for the leather sector

3550. SHRI B. S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state: