Paradeep project and conserve energy. Any export of iron ore by way of swap will be allowed quality steel in the only after an equivalent quantity of ore has been imported for the plant. The original MoU between POSCO and Government of Orissa was valid for five years.

Decline in tea exports

1095. SHRIMATI T. RATNA BAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether tea exports declined by nearly half in March this year to 11.90 million kg. due to low overseas demand and payment problems from importing countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken to avoid such situation in future with some incentives to tea industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The estimated export of tea from India during March, 2011 has declined. This decline is reportedly due to political disturbances in Afghanistan, Egypt and a few other Middle East countries, payment problems associated with exports to Iran and non-tariff barriers regarding exports to Iraq.

(c) Government of India through Tea Board is taking various steps to boost the export of tea which include conducting promotional campaigns in the foreign markets, Buyer-Seller Meets, Tea Tasting Sessions, Trade Fairs, International Conventions, incentive to exporters, as also lending promotional support to Indian tea exporters in their marketing efforts.

Assent to Andhra Pradesh Special Economic Zone Bill, 2005

1096. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry had taken up the issue of 'obtaining assent of the President of India on the Andhra Pradesh Special Economic Zone Bill, 2005' with the Ministry of Labour and Employment and Ministry of Home Affairs;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof;

(c) the reason for delay in approval of the Bill by above said Ministries; and

(d) by when it is likely to be accorded presidential assent?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Ministry of Home Affairs had sought comments

from Department of Commerce, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Law and Justice and Ministry of Labour and Employment. The views of Department of Commerce were conveyed to Ministry of Home Affairs in December, 2010.

(b) It is learnt from Ministry of Home Affairs that the ministry of Home Affairs has returned the Bill to the State Government on 25.05.2011 alongwith the Hon'ble President's message to carryout amendments in the Bill as suggested by Union Ministry of Labour and Employment and Rural Development.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Does not arise.

Meeting of Commerce Secretaries of India and Pakistan

1097. SHRI PARIMAL NATHWANI:
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Commerce Secretaries of India and Pakistan met recently to discuss bilateral trade issues;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the outcome of these talks;

(c) whether any agreement has reached on 'Most Favoured Nations (MFN)' status that India expects from Pakistan; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Bi-lateral trade and commerce talks were held between Commerce Secretaries of India and Pakistan on 27-28 April, 2011, in Islamabad. The two sides, *inter-alia*, agreed to improve trade infrastructure and expand trade through Attari-Wagha land route, It was agreed to set up a Working Group to address and resolve clearly identified sector-specific barriers to trade. Both sides agreed to undertake new initiatives to enable trade in electricity and Bt. Cotton seeds as also expand trade in petroleum products. It was agreed that cooperation in Information Technology sector would be encouraged through the private sector. Both sides agreed to facilitate grant of Business Visas to encourage expansion of trade. Pakistan recognized that grant of MFN status to India would help in expanding bilateral trade relations. It agreed to replace its present 'Positive List' with 'Negative List', by October, 2011.

Joint Working Groups have been set up for Customs cooperation, trade in electricity and trade in all types of Petroleum Products. A Joint Working Group on 'Economic and Commercial Cooperation and Trade Promotion' to be co-chaired by the Joint Secretaries of the respective