

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Sports is a State subject and its promotion is the responsibility of the State Governments concerned. However, the Government of India, through its own Schemes and through the Sports Authority of India (SAI), augments the efforts of the State Governments.

At present, SAI is implementing the following Schemes for the promotion and development of sports in the country through its nationwide network of training centres and adoption of institutions:—

- National Sports Talent Contest Scheme (NSTC)
- Army Boys Sports Company Scheme (ABSC)
- Special Area Games (SAG)
- SAI Training Centre (STC)
- Center of Excellence (COX)

Induction of sports talents is done on the basis of selection trials conducted on an all-India basis in which talented children from rural & tribal areas also take part.

(c) The Government of India is aware of the case of four-Year old child, Master Budhia Singh, including concerns over the medical advisability of subjecting small children to such physical strain. However, as sports is a State Subject, it is for the State Government of Orissa to take appropriate action in the matter.

(d) The Government of India, through the Sports Authority of India as mentioned above, facilitates the grooming of budding talent in different age groups, depending on the requirements of individual schemes under the SAI schemes, the minimum age of induction is 8 years.

Security measures in telecom sector

*256. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has rejected the idea of automatic route for 74 per cent Foreign Direct Investment in telecom sector in the larger interest of national security; and

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(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) and (b) The Government has formulated the policy for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in telecom sector and issued the Press Note No. 5 (2005 Series) dated 03.11.2005, according to which automatic route is available for FDI upto 49%. Approval of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board is required for FDI beyond 49% with a ceiling of 74%.

Development of National Highways in Kerala

*257. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would work out and execute a special programme in the context of neglect of Kerala in the NH development for the most backward and underdeveloped NH 49, NH 208, NH 202, NH 213 and NH 222, involving a total length of 650 kms;

(b) if so, whether there is a time bound programme for working out the proper alignment of these NHs and also for developing junctions and to provide hard shoulder on both sides throughout the length; and

(c) if so, the details of the proposals; and by when these proposals could be executed?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) National Highways 202 and 222 are not located in Kerala. Though there is no special programme for the development of the National Highways No. 49, 208, 212, 213 and 220 in Kerala, their development is taken up in a phased manner depending upon the inter se priority of works and overall availability of funds. In the last five years, improvement works amounting to Rs. 146.00 crore have been sanctioned on these National Highways and works amounting to about Rs. 63.00 crore have been identified for further improvement of these National Highways in phased manner including paved shoulders, realignment and development of junctions. However, sanction of works will depend upon overall availability and utilization of funds by the State Government.