

(c) whether incumbents like Bharti, Essar, BPL, Idea, Reliance, Tata did not have any experience in telecom when they first entered the sector; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) The Empowered Sub-Committee of the Committee on Infrastructure in Planning Commission in its meeting held on 11th January, 2008 and 2nd April, 2008 approved inclusion of Telecommunications as an Infrastructure Sector.

(b) Telecom sector is capital intensive sector. The break even period of a company may vary depending upon a number of factors like operating environment, structure of the industry, technology adopted and associated risk, potential for growth, state of the available infrastructure, investment by licensee, service area, brand image and services proposed to be provided by the licensee.

(c) and (d) The selection/eligibility criteria for award of Basic, Cellular and Unified Access Service (UAS) licenses prior to UAS License guidelines of year 2005 had one of the criteria as experience of the bidder company in the telecom sector. All the incumbents named had first entered the sector prior to 2005.

Separate compartments for students and elderly persons

*136. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering a demand for two separate compartments for students and elderly persons in suburban trains in metros across the country;

(b) if so, by when it will be started; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) to (c) Accommodation is being earmarked in suburban trains for senior citizens on Central & Western Railways during specified non-peak hours. Accommodation is also earmarked in suburban trains for ladies, vendors and physically handicapped. Suburban trains are already running with dense crush load during peak rush hours. Earmarking of accommodation in these trains exclusively for other categories of

passengers will curtail the availability of accommodation for general public. However, earmarking of accommodation for different categories of passengers in suburban trains is a continuous process subject to increased availability of Suburban coaches/infrastructure.

Protection to coconut growers

*137. SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the background of new challenges posed by ASEAN treaty with massive duty-free import of palm oil, Government would consider to announce a special package with adequate funds allocated with plans to diversify the products, value addition, better farming with introduction of new technology and machines for making coconut farming competitive;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and other alternative steps proposed to be taken to protect the coconut cultivation and growers?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) There has been no reduction in duty applicable to Crude Palm Oil (CPO) and Refined Palm Oil (RPO) after entering into Agreement on Trade with the ASEAN which came into force on 1st January, 2010. As such, there has been no impact of the aforesaid agreement on imports of edible oil on account of India being deficient in edible oil domestically.

Government of India is implementing various schemes/programmes for coconut development in the country through Coconut Development Board (CDB), Kochi, such as (a) Integrated Development of Coconut; (b) Technology Mission on Coconut; (c) Pilot Project for Replanting and Rejuvenation of Coconut Gardens in three districts of Kerala and Andaman & Nicobar Islands; (d) Coconut Palm Insurance Scheme (CPIS).

Apart from the above schemes, to protect the interest of coconut growers, Minimum Support Price (MSP) of de-husked coconut and Copra is announced by the Government every year. In addition to the MSP, procurement of Copra is also taken up through NAFED in major coconut growing States.