

of National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) on 25.10.2011 for providing broadband connectivity to all Panchayats. The plan is to extend the existing optical fibre network initially upto Panchayats by utilizing the Universal Services Obligation Fund (USOF) and creating an institutional mechanism for management and operation of the NOFN for ensuring non discriminatory access to all service providers. The network proposed, under the scheme, is to be completed in 2 years' time. The cost of initial phase of the NOFN Scheme is likely to be in the region of Rs. 20,000 crores.

As per the approval of the Cabinet, the action for establishing and operationalising Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) has been initiated for management and operation of the NOFN and ensuring non-discriminatory access to all service providers.

Setting up of Innovation Universities

*358. SHRI DILIPBHAI PANDYA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether, a legislative proposal for setting up Universities for innovation aiming at world class standards in academics and research has been finalised;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether there is any specific proposal for establishment of the said proposed university in the district of Patan in Gujarat; and
- (d) if so, by when the proposal is likely to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) A legislative proposal aiming at the establishment and incorporation of Universities for Innovation to promote synergies between teaching and research and to create institutions universally recognised for quality in teaching, learning and research has been mooted. The Universities for Innovation are expected to be an instrument for making India a global knowledge hub and set benchmarks for excellence for other institutions of higher learning. Each University for Innovation may, in recognition of the fact that knowledge created is not pure discipline based or propositional but also emerges in response to problems of society, focus on an area or areas with problems of significance. It is expected to build an ecosystem of research and teaching around different related disciplines and fields of study which are relevant thereto, searching for solutions that are globally valid, and in the process, develop education at undergraduate and higher levels.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. There is no proposal to set up one such university in the district of Patan, Gujarat.

Availability of wagons

*359. SHRI BALWINDER SINGH BHUNDER: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state: