

- (b) the action Government is taking to overcome the situation;
- (c) whether Government has taken any precautionary measures for controlling the situation during the last six months; and
- (d) if so, the effects of the same?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) The wholesale price index for vegetables during the period October, 2010 to October, 2011 has increased from 193.9 to 236.1 which is an increase of 21.76 per cent.

To enhance the production and productivity of horticulture crops including vegetables, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC) has started National Horticulture Mission (NHM) in the country from 2005-06. All the States and Union Territories are covered under the Mission except the eight North Eastern States and the States of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand which are covered under the Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan States (HMNEHS).

A new programme namely, Vegetable Initiative for Urban Cluster (VIUC) was also started during 2011-12, under the aegis of the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY). The Scheme is being implemented in 29 States in one city each having a population of one million or capital city. Initially, this programme will be implemented for a period of one year (2011-12). The Scheme covers all aspects relating to vegetable production, production and supply of planting material to marketing up to the retail level alongwith support for conducting baseline survey, formation of farmers groups, their linkages to aggregators and market, besides training and capacity building of vegetables growers in the identified clusters.

Various efforts such as implementation of NHM and HMNEHS are yielding results and the production of potato has increased from 36.6 million tonnes in 2009-10 to 39.7 million tones in 2010-11. Onion production has also increased from 12.2 million tonnes to 14.8 million tonnes during the same period. Similarly the production of other important vegetables like tomato, brinjal and cauliflower has also increased during the recent period.

National Optical Fibre Network

*357. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry had cleared the proposal for creation of a National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) with an investment of ` 20,000 crore in July this year, whose objective is to provide broadband connectivity to all village panchayats in three years time; and
- (b) if so, the progress made in that direction, so far?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) Government has approved creation

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: