

-From Public R/

New Delhi

Publication:	The Indian Express
Place:	

No:	14
	9/6

DoT may reorg national optical fibre network project

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 8

THE Department of Telecom is looking at various models to expedite the roll-out of National Optical Fibre Network that aims to link all panchayats with broadband connectivity.

The options being looked at include restructuring the special purpose vehicle for the project, BBNL or handing over the entire task to state-owned telecom firm BSNL and fixing greater accountability on officers involved in NOFN's execution.

"There has been too much delay in NOFN. About 3-4 models are being worked out which will be presented before the minister (Ravi Shankar Prasad) who will take the final call on it," a government official told PTI.

"The DoT is assessing if there is a need to continue with existing model of doing it through BBNL or give the entire task to BSNL," he said.

The UPA government had approved Rs 20,000 crore for starting the NOFN project in 2011. At the conception stage, the UPA government had set a deadline of 2012 for completing the project. The deadline was then extended to December, 2013 and later to September, 2015.

The BJP in its manifesto also promised to focus on increasing the penetration and usage of broadband across the country at every village level.

Under the present arrangement, a special purpose vehicle Bharat Broadband Network Ltd (BBNL) is working on the project in which BSNL, PowerGrid and RailTel jointly hold 60 per cent stake and 40 per cent is owned by the government.