

SHRI A.W. RABI BERNARD (Tamil Nadu): Sir, Question Hour has to be suspended ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House is adjourned to meet at 1200 hours.

The House then adjourned at three minutes past eleven of the clock

The House re-assembled at twelve of the clock,

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Report to assess backward areas, regions and States

*421. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission has prepared any report to assess backward areas, backward regions and backward States since independence;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the measures taken by the Government to address the issue of regional inequality;

(d) whether these measures have succeeded in removing regional inequalities;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA): (a) to (f) Addressing regional disparities and promoting balanced growth has always been one of the objectives of development planning. The policy instruments for minimizing inter-State disparities include Plan and Non-Plan transfer of resources from the Centre to the States favouring less developed States. Thus, the formula for distribution of central plan assistance uses criteria such as population and per capita income which favours less developed States. Similarly, the formula used by the 13th Finance Commission for the distribution of Non-Plan Assistance also uses criteria such as population, area and fiscal capacity distance which favours the less developed States. The report of the Inter-Ministry Task Group on Redressing Growing Regional Imbalances in 2005 stressed the need to use the

district as the spatial unit and the involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions, formed the basis of the specific scheme for redressal of inter-district disparities namely, the district component of the Backward Regions Grant Fund. The Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) was launched in 2006-07. BRGF has two components, (i) District Component covering 272 districts, and (ii) the State Component comprised of the Special Plan for Bihar, Special Plan for the KBK districts of Odisha, Special Plan for West Bengal, and the drought mitigation package for Bundelkhand region spread over Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Besides, other area development programmes such as Hill Area Development Programme (HADP), Western Ghats Development Programme (WGDP) and Border Area Development Programme (BADP) etc. also focus on the development of specified areas. Several on-going Centrally Sponsored Schemes and State specific schemes are also expected to redress disparities between areas, regions and States.

The redressal of regional disparities is a continuous process. The interventions in the form of various programmes/schemes made by the Government have led to higher rates of economic growth which have been more broadly shared than ever before across States. In fact, several of the low performing States namely, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand have demonstrated an improvement in their growth rates.

Differential pay packages of Indian and expatriate cabin crew of Air India Express

*422. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of expatriate pilots, with much higher pay packages, who have been engaged by Air India Express, during the years 2009, 2010, and 2011, in spite of the fact that experienced Indian cockpit crew have been applying for such positions at comparatively lower package;

(b) whether there are any procedural constraints like slow management response in reverting back, etc. for this state of affairs; and

(c) whether non-operation from Delhi is also one of the major factors for pilots working with Airlines like Kingfisher Airlines, Spice Jet, etc. not applying for senior cabin crew command level positions?