

(d) whether Government would reconsider to restore Old Pension Scheme for similar cases; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (DR. JITENDRA SINGH): (a) to (e) In accordance with the Scheme for National Pension System (NPS), as notified *vide* Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs)'s Notification No. 5/7/2003-ECB and PR dated 22.12.2003 and section 20 of PFRDA Act, 2013, the System is mandatory for all new recruits to the Central Government service (except Armed Forces) from 01.01.2004.

In a specific case relating to appointments as Sub-Inspector in various Central Para Military Forces after selection in August, 2003 on the basis of CPO Examination, 2002, while appointments in Central Reserve Police Force were made in 2003 itself, offers of appointment in the Border Security Force were issued in January, 2004. On a petition filed by some personnel appointed in the Border Security Force on the basis of that examination, Hon'ble High Court of Delhi directed to cover the petitioners under the Central Civil Service (Pension) Rules, 1972 on the grounds of administrative delay on the part of Border Security Force. The order of Hon'ble High Court of Delhi was implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs/Border Security Force in view of the peculiar circumstances of the case and the administrative delay.

The question whether there is any delay in appointment and whether such delay is on account of administrative reasons or otherwise, can be decided based on the facts of each case. Therefore, no guidelines laying down general criteria for deciding administrative delay in this regard have been issued.

Withdrawal of applications before examination

2522. SHRI K.R. ARJUNAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the UPSC has decided to allow withdrawal of applications before examinations;

(b) if so, the details therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the UPSC is also considering to shift from the pen and paper to online examinations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (DR. JITENDRA SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, the Commission has introduced the facility of withdrawal of applications for those candidates who do not want to appear for the Examination. This scheme has been introduced from the Engineering Services Examination (Preliminary)-2019.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Eradication of poverty

†2523. SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether NITI Aayog is working on any action plan to eradicate poverty from the country and a task force has been constituted by including the representatives of the States concerned with it;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the task force has submitted its suggestions to Aayog and whether required policy measures are being taken, keeping in view the said suggestions; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) to (d) The Governing Council of NITI Aayog at its first meeting held under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister on 8th February, 2015 decided to constitute a Task Force on Elimination of Poverty at the NITI Aayog. The Governing Council also decided to constitute similar task forces in all States and Union Territories (UTs). Subsequently, on 16th March 2015, the NITI Aayog Task Force was constituted under the Chairmanship of Dr. Arvind Panagariya, former Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog. In parallel, States also constituted similar task forces. The report of the Task Force was submitted to Prime Minister's Office on 11th July, 2016. The report includes the recommendations of the Task Force Reports of States and UTs as well as inputs received by the NITI Aayog Task Force during its regional consultations. With respect to strategies to combat poverty, the Task Force has made recommendations on faster poverty reduction through employment intensive sustained rapid growth and effective implementation of anti-poverty programs. The report is under consideration of the Prime Minister's Office.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.