

reported that it is implementing a Scheme called "SBI ka apna Gaon Scheme" with the objective of total financial inclusion, meeting their credit needs and also to transform the village into a model village by improving the quality of life of the population. A total of 656 villages have been adopted during the three year period from 2007-08 to 2009-10 with a target of one village per region per year. An additional target of around 250 villages has been allotted by SBI for the financial year 2010-11 taking the total number of 4 villages per region per year.

Secret Swiss accounts of Indians

*229. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government admits that it knows of an offer publicly made on behalf of the Government of Germany that without any charge they are willing to share information about the identity of Indians holding secret foreign accounts in Swiss banks covering billions of US dollars;

(b) whether Government had received the names of some of these account holders on or before 18 March, 2009;

(c) whether Government has made it clear that it is interested in investigating these cases of money-laundering; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government till date to retrieve these amounts in the wake of the election promise of Hon'ble Prime Minister to bring back the money within 100 days?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Immediately after becoming aware through media reports published on 27th February, 2008 that German Government was willing to share information available with it in respect of account holders in LGT Bank, Liechtenstein, a letter was addressed by the Central Government seeking such information relating to Indian account holders on 27 February, 2008. The matter was persistently followed time and again with the German Government and finally the information was made available to the Central Government on 18th March, 2009. However the Government is not aware of any such offer publicly made on behalf of the Government of Germany with respect to Swiss banks.

2. The information was provided by the German Government under the Article concerning exchange of information of the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) between India and

Germany read with the Protocol thereto. The disclosure of the same is governed by the secrecy provisions of the said Article of the DTAA, which provides that any information received by a State shall be treated as secret and shall be disclosed only to persons or authorities involved in the assessment or collection of, the enforcement or prosecution in respect of, or the determination of appeals in relation to, the taxes covered by the DTAA. The German authorities, while giving the information, have emphasized that the information is subject to the confidentiality provisions of the DTAA and may be used only for the tax purposes specified therein. Since, the Article concerning Exchange of Information of DTAA does not provide for sharing of information with Directorate of Enforcement, the Indian Competent authority under the DTAA has requested the German Competent authority to allow it to share the information with Indian Directorate of Enforcement. The matter is under consideration of German Competent authority.

3. On the basis of information received from German Government regarding accounts concerning Indian nationals with the LGT Bank of Liechtenstein, assessment proceedings were reopened and cases were centralized in different central charges in Chennai, Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. Assessments have been made against total 18 individual cases involving total assessed income of Rs. 43.83 Crore and total demand of Rs 24.26 Crore. Penalty proceedings for concealment of income have separately been initiated in all these cases.

Lower ATF price for aviation sector

*230. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the aviation sector is receiving aviation fuel at lower prices from oil companies;
- (b) whether it is also a fact that Public Sector Oil Companies have been supplying Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) at 3 per cent lower prices;
- (c) if so, whether the cost of air travel should come down;
- (d) whether the airline companies have refused to match the reduction in ATF prices by lower air tariffs; and
- (e) the steps proposed to be taken to ensure that benefits of lower ATF prices reach the public?