

(c) and (d) The mandatory period of 45 days in which the RuPay Card was to be swiped to avail of the accident insurance benefit has been increased to 90 days in favour of the account-holders.

Waiver on educational loans

†*171. SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government provides education loans to students for obtaining higher education;

(b) if so, whether interest on that loan becomes effective from the very date on which it is disbursed;

(c) whether charging interest like this will not put heavy burden on the students;

(d) whether Government will make such provisions in the terms and conditions of education loan that interest on loan may be recovered from the students after completion of education and getting employment; and

(e) whether Government proposes to waive off loan of students in the eventuality of meeting with an accident, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) Education loans to students are provided by Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs). The Indian Banks' Association (IBA) has formulated a Model Educational Loan Scheme in this regard.

(b) to (d) As per the IBA scheme:

- Simple interest is charged on the loan during the study period up to commencement of repayment.
- Servicing of interest during moratorium period which includes period of study is optional for students.
- Repayment usually commences after one year of the course period.
- Banks may also provide additional moratorium upto 6 months at a time taking into account spells of under-employment/unemployment during the tenure of the loan.

The IBA scheme provides broad guidelines to the banks to operationalise the educational loan scheme and the implementing banks may vary their products as may be required.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(e) There is no provision in the IBA Scheme for waiving off loan of students in the eventuality of meeting with an accident.

Sharing of information on black money by Swiss Government

*172. SHRI A.W. RABI BERNARD: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Swiss Government's refusal to acknowledge stolen data has hurt India's probe into a list of 600 accounts of suspected black money holders;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the Swiss Government has approved a bill that would allow the Government to share stolen data with other countries in a move that could add bite to India's war on black money, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY) : (a) and (b) The Tax Administrative Assistance Act (TAAA), which is part of the domestic law of Switzerland and governs the provision of administrative assistance by Switzerland to its treaty partners in accordance with agreements for the avoidance of double taxation. It has come into force on 1st February, 2013.

Article 7(c) of the TAAA reads as under:

“Art. 7 Non-consideration

The request will not be considered if:

- (a) it constitutes a fishing expedition;
- (b) it requires information not covered by the administrative assistance provision of the applicable agreement; or
- (c) it violates the principle of good faith, particularly if it is based on information obtained through a criminal offence under Swiss law.”

Till October, 2014, Switzerland had not provided the information requested by India in respect of the list of account holders in HSBC Bank, Geneva, stating that it represented stolen data and that as per its domestic laws, information cannot be provided if it relates to data obtained through a criminal offence under Swiss Law.

An alternative method of obtaining the information and documents through the taxpayer and from the HSBC bank directly on the basis of consent letters issued by the account holders was also pursued which has led to obtaining of the requisite information/documents in several cases.