

(c) whether the Government propose to investigate the reasons for the dues going into such huge arrears and bring to book those persons and officials;

(d) whether attention of the Government has also been drawn to the news-item appearing in this regard in Dainik Jagaran of June 21, 1998;

(e) if so the facts thereof; and

(f) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Entire outstanding demand of Rs. 42947 crore as on 31st March, 1998 is not recoverable. This amount includes demands not fallen due, demands paid but pending verification, demands stayed by courts/Settlement Commission/Appellate Tribunals and Income-tax Authorities etc. Only Rs. 4270.55 crore is net collectible demand as on 31.3.1998. The major reason for accumulating large arrears is on account of multiplicity of litigations on the same issue in different assessment years. The government is regularly monitoring and analysing the outstanding large arrears and taking necessary steps in this regard.

Income Tax Act, prescribes a statutory procedure for collection and recovery of taxes. The recovery of the outstanding tax is a continuous process. The process starts after the demand falls due after 30 days of the service of the Demand Notice. Thereafter, action is taken by Assessing Officer in respect of unstayed demand by attaching bank accounts, charging interest, levying penalty etc. In difficult cases, matter is referred to Tax Recovery Officer who takes various coercive measures as per the Act like attachment and sale of defaulter's movable and immovable properties, arrest of defaulter and his detention in prison, appointment of Receiver for the management of the defaulter's movable and immovable properties. The recovery action taken by the Assessing officers and TROs is closely monitored by the higher Income-Tax authorities.

Further dossier cases having outstanding demand of Rs. 10 lakhs and above are monitored by higher authorities on a regular periodic basis and necessary instructions are issued for taking various coercive measures for effecting the recovery of demand.

Moreover, proposed "Samadhan Scheme" in the Budget is a major step in the direction of reducing outstanding demand.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) and (f) The facts as stated in the news item in Dainik Jagran of June 21, 1998 are correct, except the fact that cash collection of 8% is out of arrear demand as on 31.3.1997 during financial year 1997-98. Further cash collection of 12% is out of current demand during financial year 1997-98. Moreover, if we include collection under VDIS during financial year 1997-98, Budget targets have been exceeded. However, excluding VDIS collection there is a shortfall during financial year 1997-98.

Government has taken a serious note of this and all out efforts are being made to have a sustained monitoring to ensure that Budget targets during financial year 1998-99 are not only achieved but exceeded too. For this purpose, a "Task Force" has been constituted in the Central Board of Direct Taxes for effective monitoring as reported in the news-item.

Development of Tourism

3617. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether travel and tourism experts have urged the Union Government to pay more concentration on developing tourism industry;

(b) if so, whether the experts have pointed out that the country's vast tourism potential has not been exploited properly till now;

(c) if so, whether some States such as Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh have prepared the ambitious plan to promote tourism; and

(d) if so, the details of assistance proposed to be provided by Union Government to these States to develop tourism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG) : (a) and (b) The Government is aware of country's tourism potential. However, it is not possible to develop all the places at present primarily due to financial constraints.

(c) and (d) Development of tourism is primarily the responsibility of State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. Ministry of Tourism provides assistance for development of tourism infrastructure based on specific project proposals received from the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations.

During the 8th Plan period, Rs. 437 lakhs and Rs. 741 lakhs were sanctioned to States of Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh respectively. Further assistance of Rs. 206 lakhs and Rs. 221 lakhs has been sanctioned to Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh respectively during 1997-98.