

[25 July, 2002]

RAJYA SABHA

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) An India-EU Troika Senior Officials Meeting took place on 2nd May 2002 in New Delhi at Foreign Secretary level as part of the institutionalized dialogue with the EU. Apart from being India's largest trading partner, India and EU have a shared strategic partnership based on commitment to democracy and rule of law as well as promotion of socio-economic development and prosperity. The strength of the relationship is reflected in the institutionalization of annual summits between India and the European Union.

### **Sponsor for issuance of visas**

947. SHRI SUNIL SHASTRI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the countries who insist for a sponsor before issuing visas to Indian Nationals;

(b) whether Government also propose to adopt similar rules/policy while issuing visas to foreign nationals; and

(c) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the house.

### **Haj Act**

948. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Haj Bill passed by Parliament has received assent of the President; and

(b) if so, by when the Haj Act is going to be notified for implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) The Haj Bill was passed by Parliament as the Haj Committee Act 2002 (35 of 2002) and was assented to by the President on June 11, 2002.