

[3 December, 1999]

RAJYA SABHA

(b) Once the Treaty comes into force after it is ratified by both the Contracting States and the instruments of ratification are exchanged, the Government would forward extradition requests to the U.A.E. Government in as many cases as required.

**CIA's Planned Infiltration in Kargil**

336. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item published in the Tribune dated May 28, 1999, captioned 'CIA planned infiltration'; and

(b) if so, whether Government have since caused a probe into the likelihood of CIA's hand behind the massive infiltration in Kargil sector by Pak and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The report does not quote any sources or, in any other way, corroborate the information. All matters relating to the intrusion in Kargil is the subject of a review by a Committee.

**Indo-French Forum**

337. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the decisions taken in the second meeting of Indo-French Forum;

(b) what are the areas in which we can benefit from the French experience and expertise;

(c) whether France has promised direct investment in any field; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) The Indo-French Forum, during its second meeting which was held on February 16 & 17, 1999 in New Delhi, made several recommendations for enhancing co-operation in various fields between India and France. The Forum identified the specific areas of water management, AIDS research, Space, information technology, transportation, Agriculture and food processing, culture, education and tourism for further co-operation between the two countries. The Forum also suggested that a meeting of Indian and French legal experts be organised, that an independent web site for the Indo-French Forum be set up and that an Indo-French Water Technology Week be arranged. Following the recommendations of the Forum, the Indo-French Forum web site has

been established and the Indo French Water Week has been organised in Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkatta. The follow up action on these recommendations was discussed during the third meeting of the Indo-French Forum which was held on 6 & 7 September, 1999 in Paris. This meeting discussed measures to promote economic co-operation, scientific co-operation and cultural co-operation.

**Demand for Larger Haj Quota**

338. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Govt. has sought a larger Haj quota from the Saudi Government this year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) what is the amount of financial assistance for travel and other facilities per pilgrim; and

(d) what is the total number of Haj pilgrims and total financial assistance to them for travel and other facilities during the last five years, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (d) Indian pilgrims go for Haj both through the Haj Committee, Mumbai, and privately through registered private tour operators. The total number of pilgrims from India who went for Haj in the last five years was as follows:—

Year	Total Number of Pilgrims
1995	45,505
1996	75,346
1997	81,766
1998	94,602
1999	98,072

Over the last two years, the Saudi authorities had prescribed a quota of 91,000 for Indian pilgrims. Even though visas beyond this quota were issued both in 1998 and in 1999, thousands of Indian pilgrims who wished to perform Haj still could not obtain visas.

The Haj quota for each country is fixed on the basis of the formula of one pilgrim for every 1,000 persons of the Muslim population in the country. Given that the Muslim population of India is estimated at over 12.5 crores, Government has been seeking an increase in the Indian quota for the last two years. This year, Saudi Government authorities accepted our contention and the Indian quota for Haj-2000 has been fixed at 1,20,000.