

development of Africa in order to tap the massive economic and strategic potential of the continent; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, including a list of strategic agreements, if any, signed with nations in the continent during 2004-13 along with details, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) Our historical relationship with Africa has been revitalized keeping in view functional cooperation in the 21st century. Our political support for Africa has been augmented by closer bilateral, mutually beneficial economic cooperation including economic assistance, functional cooperation, soft loans and private sector investment. Following the first India-Africa Forum Summit in 2008, nearly US\$ 6 billion in new funds were committed for economic engagement with Africa including a significant proportion committed to capacity building and human resource development. In May, 2011, the second Africa India Forum Summit (AIFS-II) was organized in Addis Ababa. This summit built upon the foundations of the historical relationship that existed between India and Africa, and further contributed to designing structure of an enhanced engagement between India and our African partners, in the 21st century. Nearly, US\$ 2.7 billion were further made available for Africa's development.

(b) India enjoys strategic partnership with a number of countries in Africa, including Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa etc. Strategic partnership does not entail signing of any separate agreement but is sum total of bilateral, regional and international cooperation on issues of mutual interest and concern, as reflected in Joint Statements and other documents that are usually the outcomes of high-level visits and exchanges.

Reduction in quota for Haj pilgrimage

2057. SHRIMATI NAZNIN FARUQUE:

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI:

SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Saudi Government has reduced his intake quota of Haj pilgrims by 20 per cent for International Haj pilgrims, with the result, 34,000 Indian Haj pilgrims would have to cancel their journey, and if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;

(b) since Indian Haj pilgrims have already initiated and are fully prepared to go for Haj after being successful in Haj draw, whether at this stage this matter would create great problems for Haj pilgrims; and

- (c) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) Yes. The Embassy of Saudi Arabia, New Delhi informed the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on June 05, 2013 that the Saudi authorities had imposed a 50% reduction in the Haj-2013 quota on local (Saudi) applicants and 20% on all foreign Haj pilgrims to facilitate the infrastructure work being carried out around the Haram Sharif and to keep the area safe and secure for the pilgrims.

(b) and (c) MEA took up the matter with the authorities in Saudi Arabia and conveyed its concern on the 20% reduction in our quota and sought reconsideration of the decision. On June 21, 2013, Government of Saudi Arabia affirmed the reduction of 20% quota leaving a quota of 1,36,020 seats for Indian Haj pilgrims for Haj-2013.

Since the Haj-2013 pilgrims of Haj Committee of India (HCOI) had already been selected and partial payments received from them by then, it was decided to effect the 20% reduction (34005 seats) for Haj-2013 from the allocation (45000) of Private Tour Operators (PTOs). Cancellations anticipated by HCOI pilgrims (3605 seats) were transferred to the eligible Haj-2013 PTOs.

Resolution on issue of nuclear disarmament

2058. SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has been abstaining on a series of resolutions relating to treaties on landmines, cluster munitions and arms trade in addition to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution relating to the Open-Ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament, and if so, the reasons therefor; and

(b) whether such recalcitrance in taking a bold stand on issues of nuclear disarmament is compatible with our continuing advocacy of the 1988 Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan (RGAP) for a Nuclear Weapons-Free (NWF) and Non-violent World Order (NWO)?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) and (b) India is not a signatory to the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention and the Cluster Munitions Convention, both of which were negotiated outside the UN and do not meet India's security interests. India is also not a signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty as the final text of the treaty was below our expectations. With regard to the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Nuclear