

of India and State Governments for examination and decision on their implementation.

Haj pilgrimage

996. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Indians that went for Haj this year;
- (b) out of them how many made the pilgrimage through the Haj Committee; and
- (c) how many people went to Makkah through private tour operators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) 1,16,078 Indians went for Haj this year.

- (b) 69,795 pilgrims went for Haj through the Haj Committee.
- (c) 46,283 pilgrims visited Makkah through Private Tour Operators including Indian nationals resident in third countries.

Committee for foolproof passport system

997. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the terrorists are misusing passports after procuring them under false names;
- (b) whether it is also a fact that a committee to suggest ways to streamline and making the passport a foolproof system was recently appointed;
- (c) if so, what are its recommendations; and
- (d) by when these are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes. There have been a few cases of terrorists fraudulently obtaining passports under false names.

- (b) A Committee was set up in 1987 to look into the question of passport forgeries and advise on ways and means to eliminate forgery of