

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