

and cooperation. The momentum in the bilateral relationship has been kept up through regular high level exchanges. In this context, the External Affairs Minister had visited Maldives on a bilateral visit in July 2011 and the Raksha Mantri visited Maldives in August 2009 to hold discussions on bilateral cooperation with the Government of Maldives and to review the ongoing cooperation. India has traditionally extended assistance to Maldives in its developmental priorities, which we continue to undertake in close cooperation and consultation with the Government of Maldives.

Talks with US and Canada over Visa Issue

3772. SHRI PARSHOTTAM KHODABHAI RUPALA:

SHRI BHARATSINH PRABHATSINH PARMAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for Government not taking very strongly with US and Canadian Government for difficulties faced by our bona-fide citizens to obtain tourist visa of these countries despite the fact that both foreign Governments have declared that they want to strengthen bilateral relationship with India;

(b) the reasons for Government not taking up this matter with these countries and requests them to amend their visa policy for our honest citizens; and

(c) whether Ministry is aware that visa of MLAs and State Minister have been denied by these countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) to (c) The Government is aware that not all Indian applicants for United States and Canada visas are successful in getting visas. While Government recognizes that visa policy and procedures are the prerogative of the host country, the Government, in its dialogue with the United States and Canada emphasizes that policies to facilitate movement of people, professionals and business travellers strengthens bilateral relations, including through people to people contacts and mutually beneficial economic ties.

Maltreatment of Indian labourers abroad

3773. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been cases of maltreatment of Indian labourers who are working abroad;