

[19 August, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

Single visa travel for SAARC countries

1690. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to introduce single visa travel for all SAARC countries; and

(b) the details regarding the efforts made by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) The Government has no plan to introduce single visa travel for all SAARC countries. At present, nationals of all SAARC countries are governed by the visa regulations of individual SAARC countries.

Major Non-NATO Ally status to Pakistan

1691. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Government's reaction to United States decision to give Pakistan the status of their Major Non-NATO Ally;

(b) whether the same has been conveyed to the United States, if so, their response thereto;

(c) to what extent India would be under pressure strategically *vis-avis* their neighbour; and

(d) in what manner Government propose to meet this situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The Government has expressed its disappointment on the announcement by USA designating Pakistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally.

(b) The Government has conveyed its disappointment on this announcement to the United States. The Government of India also issued a statement in this regard on March 20, 2004. The US offered a similar status to India to which we have not given any consideration.