

Foreign Policy

2097. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the messed up Foreign Policy of the country has resulted into China possessing a port in Sri Lanka, huge interest in Bangladesh and Pakistan and also in the failure in Maldives as Indian workers are not getting visas any-more due to this; and

(b) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) and (b) No, the Government of India has a well articulated policy of 'Neighborhood first' with a focus on creating mutually beneficial, people-oriented, regional frameworks for stability and prosperity. The Government attaches high priority to our relationships with our neighboring countries. These engagements cover a wide canvas of subjects like projects on greater connectivity, improved infrastructure, stronger cooperation in sectoral areas (like education, culture, trade and investments, defense and security) and broader people-to-people contacts. India's relations with its neighbours stand on their own footing and are independent of the relations of those countries with third countries.

India and Maldives have traditionally enjoyed close and friendly relations. These have been further strengthened under current Governments in both countries. The visa facilitation agreement signed between the two countries in December 2018 has further eased the visa regime and made it easier for Indians in Maldives.

Agreement with China to speed up boundary talks

2098. SHRI R. VAITHILINGAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and China have agreed to speed up boundary talks;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that China has highlighted the need for regional cooperation and connectivity like Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor; and