

**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

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) and (b) India and China have each appointed a Special Representative (SR) to explore the framework for a boundary settlement from the political perspective of the overall bilateral relationship. There have been twenty one meetings of SRs so far with the last meeting held in Chengdu on 24 November 2018. At the Wuhan Informal Summit in April 2018, the leaders of India and China expressed their support for the work of the Special Representatives and urged them to intensify their efforts to seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement.

(c) and (d) Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar have agreed to establish a Joint Study Group (JSG) on strengthening connectivity in the BCIM region for closer economic, trade, and people-to-people linkages through the development of a BCIM Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC). There have been three meetings of BCIM-EC JSG so far with the last meeting held in Kolkata on 24-25 April 2017.

#### **Indian MBBS students in Ukrainian universities**

2099. SHRI RAM KUMAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the Indian MBBS students admitted in some of the Ukrainian Universities are being suspended without any reasons due to harassment tactics of the agents and role of Embassy;

(b) if so, whether any inquiry has been conducted in this regard;

(c) if so, the details and the outcomes thereof; and

(d) the steps being taken to protect the career of Indian students?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) The Ministry is aware of the problems being faced by some Indian students of the Donetsk National Medical University (DNMU) Kropivnitsky Campus, Ukraine. There is high demand from Indian students for education in Ukraine due to low costs and less demanding admission requirements. The problems being faced by Indian students in Ukraine are a result of the admission process being conducted through intermediaries and recruitment agencies, and the presence of some unscrupulous agents. The problem is compounded by the shifting of campuses of