

**Objection on visit of Home Minister to Arunachal Pradesh by
Chinese Government**

2117. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Chinese Government has raised objections against the visit of India's Home Minister to Arunachal Pradesh in February, 2020;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has raised the matter with Chinese Government;
- (d) if so, the response of China thereto;
- (e) if not, the reason therefor; and
- (f) the number of intrusions by China in Indian territory since January 1, 2019 till date, State-wise and month-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) to (f) The Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China made a critical statement on 20 February 2020 on the visit of Hon'ble Home Minister to Arunachal Pradesh.

The official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs in a statement on 20 February 2020, reiterated that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India and Indian leaders routinely travel to the state of Arunachal Pradesh as they do to any other state of India. The fact that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India has also been clearly conveyed to the Chinese side on several occasions, including at the highest level.

There is no commonly delineated Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the border areas between India and China. From time to time, on account of differences in the perception of the LAC, situations have arisen on the ground that could have been avoided if we had a common perception of the LAC. Government regularly takes up any transgression along the LAC with the Chinese side through established mechanisms including border personnel meetings, flag meetings, meetings of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs and diplomatic channels. India and

China have underscored the importance of maintaining peace and tranquility in all areas of the India-China border region in the larger interest of the overall development of bilateral relations.

BIMSTEC as an alternative to SAARC

2118. SHRI MANISH GUPTA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bay of Bengal Institute for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) can be an alternative to South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), if so, the details thereof;

(b) the areas of cooperation envisaged in BIMSTEC, along with the details thereof;

(c) the progress BIMSTEC has made since its inception, with details thereof; and

(d) whether BIMSTEC fits into the agenda for a greater role for India in the Indo-Pacific region also, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) BIMSTEC and SAARC are two separate regional organizations of which India is a member, BIMSTEC region brings together 1.67 billion people and a combined GDP of around US\$ 3.71 trillion. It is a regional organization comprising seven member states around the Bay of Bengal region. These countries are Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) brings together 1.81 billion people and a combined GDP of US\$ 3.46 trillion. These countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

(b) and (c) BIMSTEC has identified 14 priority areas, viz., Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime; Transport and Communication; Tourism; Environment and Disaster Management; Trade and Investment; Cultural Cooperation; Energy; Agriculture; Poverty Alleviation; Technology; Fisheries; Public Health; People-to-people contacts and Climate change.