

(c) The Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Leh has come a long way since its establishment as the School of Buddhist Philosophy in 1959. Today, it offers courses in Sanskrit, Hindi, English, Tibetan Literature and Buddhist Philosophy; optional subjects, like political Science, Economics, Mathematics, Pali, Comperative Philosophy, Tibetan Medicine and Painting are also taught. Its degrees of Shastri, Shiksha Shastri and Acharya have been equated with those of B.A., B.Ed & M.A. respectively of Jammu and Kashmir University.

Every Institute grows according to its own inner dynamics and the demands of the target groups it attempts to reach and serve. Due to its very location and environment, it was extremely important for CIBS to build an out-reach which it has done through its 24 Gonpa schools and the Duzin Pipiting School, Zanskar.

Development of Sports

2376. SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government propose to create a separate sports fund to improve the level of sports in the country;

(b) whether the Government also propose to take the help of voluntary organisations, individuals and different Central/State departments for improving the sports level in the country; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI DHANUSHKODI ATHITHAN R.) : (a) Yes, Sir. There is a proposal to create a National Sports Development Fund.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Central Government proposes to involve all the concerned agencies in improving the level of sports in the country. The development of sports is essentially in the hands of various Sports Federations/Associations which are voluntary organizations. Sports as a subject also figures on the State list of the Constitution of India.

Indian Ocean Rim States Organisation

2377. SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN :
SHRI PINAKI MISRA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether India, Mauritius, South Africa and other Indian Ocean Rim States have been working towards evolution of an 'Indian Ocean Rim States Organisation' for mutual economic cooperation in the context of

formation of WTO and to meet the tough competition these developing countries are inevitably facing from the developed world;

(b) if so, the present status of the initiative

(c) the contemplated objectives of this new organisation and the status of India therein?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) to (c). Yes, Sir. India participated in the first Inter-Governmental Meeting of seven Indian Ocean Rim countries (viz., Australia, India, Kenya, Mauritius, Oman, Singapore and South Africa) convened by Mauritius in March 1995 to initiate contacts for exploring possibilities and scope of economic cooperation and establishment of Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC). The meeting agreed on the principles, objectives and direction of the future action programme for a regional economic grouping to promote cooperation in trade, investment, science & technology, tourism, and human resource development. Two working Group meetings have been held in Mauritius in August 1995 and May 1996 for preparing a Charter and a Work Programme of cooperation projects which have brought the process forward.

A second Inter-Government Meeting of fourteen IOR-ARC countries (viz, Australia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Tanzania and Yemen) was convened in Mauritius in September 1996, which finalised the IOR-ARC Charter and the Work Programme of cooperation.

The Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) is to be formally launched at a Foreign Ministers Meeting being convened by Mauritius in March 1997.

The objectives of the new Association include -

To promote the sustained growth and balanced development of the region and of the Member States; and to create common ground for regional economic cooperation;

To focus on those areas of economic cooperation which provide maximum opportunities to develop shared interests and reap mutual benefits. Towards this end, to formulate and implement projects for economic cooperation relating to trade facilitation, promotion and liberalisation; promotion of foreign investment; scientific and technological exchanges, and tourism, movement of natural persons and service providers; and development of infrastructure and human resources;

To encourage close interaction of trade and industry, academic institutions, scholars and the peoples of the Member States;

To strengthen cooperation and dialogue among Member States in international fora on global economic issues;