

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-2616
ANSWERED ON- 23/03/2023

PROMOTION OF INDIA'S SOFT POWER

2616. SHRI RAKESH SINHA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether Government recognises the utility of soft power in contemporary world as an important tool to influence world community;
- (b) if so, whether there is any perspective plan about India's soft power;
- (c) the details about Government's plan for the Buddhist countries; and
- (d) whether Government has established communication with scholars and thinkers abroad, who are known as Indologists, to utilise their intellectual stamina for promoting India's soft power?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SMT. MEENAKSHI LEKHI)

(a & b) Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) promotes Indian culture worldwide through its Cultural Centres and Missions/Posts abroad. Activities conducted by them include inter-alia, teaching of Yoga, Dance, Music and Hindi, organising/supporting conferences/seminars/ workshops in different fields of Indian culture, supporting Chairs of Indian Studies in the foreign universities; gifting of busts/statues of Mahatma Gandhi and other national heroes, exchanging visual art exhibitions, and celebration of International Day of Yoga at iconic centres abroad. Under the guidance of the Ministry, ICCR has taken various new initiatives as well to develop cultural relations and create mutual understanding with other nations, including new forays in projecting India's democratic credentials, cuisines, arts & crafts etc. ICCR has also enhanced its outreach across the globe through various online activities.

(c & d) Initiatives include, inter alia, awards for promotion of Buddhist Studies and Indology; a new programme "Global Gen Next Buddhist Leaders Network Programme"; Indian Chairs in foreign countries for Buddhism studies; visits of foreign visitors under Distinguished Visitors Programme to prominent Buddhist sites; hosting foreign Buddhist delegates under Buddhist scholars programme; translation of easy-to-read books on Buddhism into foreign languages etc.
