

**Project 'Mausam'**

1313. SHRI C. M. RAMESH Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the aims and objectives of Project 'Mausam';
- (b) how Project 'Mausam' helps to counter China's Silk Route strategy and revive India's economic links with the countries in the Indian Ocean region; and
- (c) the initiatives so far taken under Project 'Mausam'?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) Project 'Mausam' is the initiative of Ministry of Culture to be implemented by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) as the nodal agency with research support of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and National Museum as associate bodies. This project aims to explore the multi-faceted Indian Ocean 'world' – collating archaeological and historical research in order to document the diversity of cultural, commercial and religious interactions in the Indian Ocean – extending from East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, the Indian Subcontinent and Sri Lanka to the Southeast Asian archipelago. It also aims to promote research on themes related to the study of Maritime Routes through international scientific seminars and meeting and by adopting a multidisciplinary approach. It aims to encourage the production of specialized works, as well as publications for the general public with an attempt at promoting a broader understanding of the concept of a common heritage and multiple identities.

(b) Project 'Mausam' is not aimed to counter China's Silk Route strategy. Instead it focuses on monsoon patterns, cultural context, maritime trade routes and coastal landscapes and examines key processes and phenomena that link different countries along the Indian Ocean littoral as well as those that connect the coastal centers to their hinterlands.

(c) Project 'Mausam' was launched in the 38th Session of World Heritage Committee meeting which was held at Doha, Qatar in June, 2014. Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in collaboration with State Government of Kerela organized a National Conference on Project 'Mausam' in Kochi in November, 2014. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) has constituted an Academic Committee and is organizing lecture series.