

# THE IOC PRESIDENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

**B**efore this important meeting in Kuwait, the IOC President had planned to visit four capital cities in the region: Amman in Jordan, Teheran in Iran, Baghdad in Iraq and Manama in Bahrain, in order to meet NOC representatives from the four countries, which he had not managed to do during his first mandate. The President, who has pledged to visit each of the 167 NOCs, now has to visit Lebanon, Afghanistan, Bhutan and Bangladesh in order to have performed a complete tour of the Olympic map.

## IN AMMAN



*In Amman, the President was welcomed by Mr Ibrahim Ghababsheh, NOC President (right) and the Secretary-General (left) Mr Abdullah Abu Nuwar. Right, Sheikh Fahd.*

*The King Hussein Youth City, an impressive sports complex (Photo above right).*

In Amman, where he met Sheikh Fahd who was to accompany him on his tour, Mr Samaranch discovered, under the attentive guidance of Mr Ibrahim Ghababsheh, the Minister of Education and NOC President, the King Hussein Youth City, an impressive multi-sports complex which has just been completed. Another centre of similar size is planned in the south of the Hachemite kingdom. A meeting with the Minister of Education, Mr Muhammad Hamdan was to follow at the end of this first day.



On the following day, the morning was devoted to meetings at the highest level. In the absence of King Hussein, it was Mr Mudar Badran, the prime minister, who received the IOC President, before a meeting with Prince Hassan, heir to the throne and honorary NOC president. The prince stressed the importance of achievements in the sporting sphere: *"In the 27 years that the Jordanian NOC has been recognized by the IOC", he declared, "the Olympic Movement has gained strength in this country because we are deeply convinced that it is above all a human and moral movement which helps to promote peace and friendship throughout the world"*.

## IN TEHRAN

*"Sport is a good instrument for establishing better co-operation between states and peoples",* declared Mr Haschemi Rafsanjani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, during talks with President Samaranch whom he received in Teheran on 17th February. The Iranian head of state added that *"the presence of young people on the international sports stage is a positive point"*. Several sports events, such as a volleyball tournament and football match,

had been scheduled during this visit, but these had to be called off owing to bad weather. President Samaranch praised the Iranian NOC, in his words one of the most active in Asia, and expressed the hope that it would send strong teams to the Asian Games in Beijing next October, before attending the Barcelona Games. After visiting the various sports facilities in the Iranian capital, the President asserted his conviction that the city was fully capable of hosting the Asian Games in the near future. During the inauguration of the new NOC headquarters, which he performed in the presence of all the Committee members, he added that he favoured the creation, in Iran, of an anti-doping laboratory, as Mr Mostafa Hashemi Taba had asked him, and also promised to provide the necessary aid, through Olympic Solidarity, with which to acquire the high technology instruments for training Iranian top level athletes.



*In Teheran, reception at the NOC offices. President Samaranch with Sheikh Fahd with Messrs Mostafa Hashemi Taba, NOC President and Bahram Afsharzadeh.*

## IN BAGHDAD

The Baghdad Sports University, constructed by engineers and architects from the Federal Republic of Germany, possesses top



*Demonstration of traditional gymnastics in the Shahid Fahmideh Gymnasium.*

level facilities for specialist training. Its indoor equipment includes, in particular, a 50-metre pool and a diving pool as well as a 250-metre four-lane running track. President Samaranch paid a detailed visit to this centre, accompanied by members of the NOC, notably the president, Mr Oudai Hussein, son of the President of the Republic and also President of the Iraqi Football Federation. In Iraq, as in many countries, football is the most popular sport, and rightly so since it produces excellent results in international competitions - like when



**The IOC President during his audience with Mr Saddam Hussein, President of the Republic of Iraq.**

*(Above) Discussions, accompanied by Sheikh Fahad with the NOC President, Mr Oudai Hussein (right).*

Iraq qualified for the 1968 World Cup in Mexico. This was stressed by Mr Saddam Hussein during an audience he gave to the IOC President, while acknowledging the need to develop the practice of other sports disciplines in Iraq.

**FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP IN KUWAIT**

In Kuwait, the President not only took part in the "Apartheid and Olympism" Commis-



sion meeting, but also took advantage of his visit to attend the opening of the 10th Gulf Football Championship bringing together teams from Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman. A dazzling ceremony to which we are now accustomed in the Gulf countries, which possess superb sports facilities with a huge capacity, like the Kazma stadium where the ceremony took place. Sports lovers turn out in their thousands for these football matches, a particularly popular entertainment. The Emir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al Sabah, the sovereign of Kuwait, declared the championship open, and it was the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment who set the scene for this tenth encounter by stating that "The goals of nations are not attained by wishes alone, but with able young people who are a force for action". Sheikh Fahd Al Ahmad Al Sabah, who heads the supreme organizing committee of this championship, welcomed the 1,500 players by wishing them good luck.



*An event which draws the crowds : the 10th Gulf Football Championship.*

## IN MANAMA

Before travelling on to Kuwait, the President stopped off in Manama, the capital of Bahrain, where he met Sheikh Isa bin Rashid Al Khalifa, President of the General Organization of Youth and Sports in the emirate and NOC President, with whom he discussed preparations for sending athletes from Bahrain to the Asian Games. President Juan Antonio Samaranch is seen here with Sheikh Isa (left).

