

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2487
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.08.2025

PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION OF ANCIENT MONUMENTS

2487. SHRI NAVEEN JINDAL:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of specific schemes or initiatives to support the preservation and restoration of ancient monuments and historical sites;
- (b) the measures taken/being taken by the Government to document and preserve the country's rich intangible cultural heritage, including folk music, dance and other performing arts;
- (c) the details of the plans to enhance the accessibility of cultural heritage sites and institutions for people with disabilities;
- (d) the details of the steps taken/being taken to address the issue of theft/loot of cultural artifacts and to ensure their safe return to the country along with the number of such artifacts brought back during each of the last five years; and
- (e) the details of the efforts made by the Government to ensure that cultural heritage is being incorporated into the curriculum of schools and educational institutions?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

- (a) There are 3685 centrally protected monuments/sites under the jurisdiction of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in the country. Conservation, preservation and maintenance of these centrally protected monuments/sites is a continuous process and is taken up as per the requirement and availability of resources subject to the Rules and terms of National Policy for Conservation, 2014.
- (b) Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA), an autonomous organization under Ministry of Culture, conducts various programmes for documentation & digital archiving of performing arts and other Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) elements on a regular basis. These efforts contribute towards the digital preservation of the ICH. In addition, regular workshops are carried out for capacity building and raising awareness about ICH. Financial assistance is also provided to organizations, civil society groups, local communities and individuals dedicated to preserving and promoting ICH elements. Similarly Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) across India conduct Research & Documentation for the preservation and promotion of visual and performing arts across disciplines like music, dance, theatre, literature and fine arts. This initiative documents these traditions in both print and audio visual formats, with the selection of art forms done in consultation with State Cultural Departments.

Further, Sahitya Akademi promotes traditional art forms and cultural exchanges at the

Further, Sahitya Akademi promotes traditional art forms and cultural exchanges at the grassroots level through its series of programme called “Loka: The Many Voices”, a programme consisting of lectures as well as demonstrations. The programme was conceived to protect and preserve the folk and tribal art and culture of the country.

- (c) It is ASI's responsibility to make the establishments under its jurisdiction as accessible as possible, aiming to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities and prevent discrimination, while emphasizing the right to equality, dignity, and respect for all persons with disabilities to ensure their full participation in society. Therefore, for effective implementation of the provision of the RPwD Act 2016, ASI follows the accessibility standards and guidelines, as notified by the Ministry of Culture in 2023, at protected monuments, sites, and site museums.
- (d) The Government has taken necessary steps towards the prevention of loot and illicit trafficking of cultural property. Besides regular watch and ward staff, Private Security Guards and Central Industrial Security Force have been deployed as per requirement at monuments, sites and museums. Whenever any theft of antiquity is reported, FIR is lodged and 'Look Out Notice' is issued to law enforcement agencies including Custom Exit Channels to keep vigil to trace stolen antiquity and prevent its export. Details of the antiquities retrieved from foreign countries in last five years are annexed as 'Annexure A'.
- (e) Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) has engaged with NCERT officials to explore various elements of ICH and the integration of performing arts into the school curriculum.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (d) OF THE LOK SABHA
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Details of artifacts brought back during the last five years

S. No.	Year	Country	Artifacts brought back	Year-wise Total
1.	2020	Australia	03	08
		UK	05	
2.	2021	UK	01	159
		Canada	01	
		USA	157	
3.	2022	Australia	29	30
		UK	01	
4.	2023	Australia	02	115
		UK	07	
		USA	105	
		Italy	01	
5.	2024	Thailand	01	298
		USA	297	
			Total	610
