GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

RAJYA SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO. 201
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.08.2026

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

***201 # SHRI MAYANKKUMARNAYAK:**

Will the Minister of **CULTURE** be pleased to state:

(a) whether any national framework has been developed for the digital archiving of museum collections, collection management and virtual public access thereto;
(b) if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether any steps have been taken to strengthen collaboration among museums,academic institutions and technology partners for heritage conservation and digital innovation;
(d) if so, the details thereof; and
(e) the steps taken by Government to expand technology-enabled visitor experiences and digital heritage initiatives in museums and other institutions under the Ministry?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) to (e) : A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (A) TO (E) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.201 FOR 06.08.2026

(a) & (b): The Ministry of Culture has undertaken several technology-enabled national level initiatives for digitisation, digital collection management and public access to museum collections.

The Ministry has standardized the use of JATAN (Virtual Museum Builder), an indigenous digital collection management software developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune, for documentation, cataloguing and management of museum collections. The digitised collections are made accessible to the public through the **Museums of India Portal**, which provides online access to museum collections from participating museums. As on **31.07.2026**, over **3.82 lakh museum records** have been digitised and made available through the Portal. Museums under the Ministry are increasingly adopting digital interpretation tools, including virtual exhibitions, digital galleries, immersive displays, QR code-based object interpretation and multilingual digital content to enhance visitor engagement. Several museums have also expanded their digital outreach through platforms such as Google Arts & Culture, enabling virtual exhibitions and wider global access to India's cultural heritage.

The Ministry is continuously expanding these initiatives by undertaking digitisation of collections in 52 **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) site museums**and progressively onboarding State Museums as well as interested private museums, custodians and collectors onto the digital platform, thereby broadening public access to India's museum heritage.

In addition to museums, the Ministry has undertaken digital preservation and public access initiatives across other cultural institutions. The **National Archives of India** is digitising archival records and making them accessible through its online archival information management system.

Under the **Gyan Bharatam Mission**, announced in the Union Budget 2025–26, the Ministry is undertaking a nationwide programme for the survey, registration, documentation, conservation and digitisation of manuscripts through a network of **Cluster Centres** and **Independent Centres** comprising universities, museums, libraries, temples, mutts and other knowledge institutions. The Mission has onboarded technology partners for metadata creation, deployment of AI-enabled digital platforms and long-term digital preservation through the National Digital Repository. More than **8 lakh manuscripts** have been digitised across the country, of which **over 4.40 lakh manuscripts** are currently available for public access through the **Gyan Bharatam Portal**. The Portal leverages Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled technologies, including **Optical Character Recognition (OCR), Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR), script recognition,**

semantic search and machine-assisted translation, to facilitate intelligent discovery, interpretation and wider public access to India's manuscript heritage.

The Ministry is also promoting digital access to cultural resources through the **National Mission on Libraries**, under which the **National Virtual Library of India (NVLI)** and the **Indian Culture Portal** provide multilingual access to digital resources from museums, libraries, archives and other cultural institutions.

Further, the **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and The Asiatic Society** have developed digital repositories and are undertaking digitisation and digital preservation of manuscripts, rare books, archival collections and other cultural resources to improve long-term preservation and public accessibility.

(c) & (d): Yes. The Ministry of Culture has fostered collaborations among museums, academic institutions, research organisations and technology partners to promote heritage conservation, digital documentation, research and innovation.

As part of these efforts, the **Indian Museum, Kolkata** has collaborated with the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur** for AI-based restoration and digital preservation of archaeological artefacts. The project also envisages the display of 3D-printed restored replicas alongside original artefacts to facilitate interpretation and enhance visitor engagement.

Under the **Gyan Bharatam Mission**, the Ministry has established a nationwide network of collaborations comprising universities, museums, libraries and other knowledge institutions including IIIT, Hyderabad, supported by technology partners for digitisation, metadata creation, AI-enabled digital platforms and the development of the National Digital Repository for manuscripts.

In addition,IGNCA has signed MoUs with technical institutes like IIT-JODHPURto digitize books, manuscripts and historical documents and**The Asiatic Society** is collaborating with academic institutions and technology partners for manuscript digitisation and digital preservation through AI-enabled initiatives for optical character recognition (OCR), transcription and translation, aimed at improving research, accessibility and long-term preservation of cultural heritage.

(e) The Ministry of Culture is progressively leveraging digital technologies to enrich visitor experiences, improve interpretation of cultural heritage and expand public access across museums and other cultural institutions through immersive exhibitions, digital galleries, virtual platforms and technology-enabled learning initiatives.

Museums under the Ministry are increasingly adopting digital interpretation tools, including virtual exhibitions, digital galleries, immersive displays, QR code-based object interpretation and multilingual digital content to enhance visitor engagement. At the **National Museum, New Delhi**, the **Virtual Experiential Museum on Ajanta Caves**

(VEMA) enables visitors to experience the Ajanta Caves through immersive technologies, including Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR), offering an interactive understanding of India's cultural heritage.

The **National Council of Science Museums (NCSM)** is integrating technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Artificial Intelligence (AI), computer vision and sensor-based interactive exhibits across its museums and science centres to create engaging and accessible learning experiences for visitors. Birla Industrial & Technological Museum (BITM), Kolkata, a constituent unit of NCSM has developed a National Science & Technology Digital Archive containing papers, letters & manuscripts of eminent Indian scientists which was opened on 5. 12. 2024 (URL: https://nstad.in/home-login/)

The Ministry is also supporting the modernization of museums through the **Museum Grant Scheme**, which provides financial assistance for establishment of new museums and modernization of existing museums, including upgradation of galleries, adoption of digital technologies and interpretation systems, creation of immersive exhibition spaces, strengthening of conservation infrastructure and improvement of visitor amenities. In addition, under the **Scheme for Promotion of Culture of Science (SPoCS)**, support is provided for the establishment and modernization of Science Cities and Science Centres with interactive exhibits and technology-enabled science communication.

These initiatives collectively aim to make museums and cultural institutions more accessible, engaging and inclusive by integrating digital technologies with heritage interpretation, education and public outreach.

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