

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO.51**  
ANSWERED ON 23.07.2026

**DISSEMINATION OF INDIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE**

\*51#. SHRI SANJAY KUMAR JHA:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the extent to which the National Digital Heritage Archive has been expanded to digitize Indian cultural heritage, folk traditions and rare archival materials;
- (b) whether Government is encouraging academic partnerships with foreign universities to promote the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) globally; and
- (c) the steps being taken to place the cultural, archaeological and Ramayana Circuit heritage of Mithila and Sitamarhi regions on the international cultural map?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM  
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (A) TO (C) IN RESPECT OF  
RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 51 FOR REPLY ON 23.07.2026  
REGARDING DISSEMINATION OF INDIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE ASKED BY  
SHRI SANJAY KUMAR JHA.**

- (a) The National Digital Heritage Archive has been expanded through multiple initiatives of this Ministry to preserve and provide wider access to India's cultural heritage, including manuscripts, archival records, antiquities, and traditional knowledge.

GyanBharatam Mission has been structured as a Central Sector Scheme (2025–31) with the objective of surveying, documenting, conserving, digitizing, and making accessible manuscripts across academic institutions, museums, libraries, temples, mutts, and private collections. A National Digital Repository of manuscripts is being developed for long-term preservation and public access.

The National Archives of India (NAI) has significantly expanded its digital archival repository through Abhilekh-Patal. As of June 2026, more than 22 crore digitized pages have been uploaded, ensuring preservation and online access to historical records and rare archival materials.

Under the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA), the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has, up to June 2026, digitally documented approximately 1.84 lakh unprotected monuments (built heritage and sites) and 17.27 lakh antiquities across the country. A repository of built heritage in the form of a user-friendly mobile application named, “Indian Heritage” as a single access platform for protected monuments of National Importance and sites has been launched in September, 2023.

Further, as of June 2026, the Central Archaeological Library (CAL), ASI has digitized 12,247 books and approximately 10 lakh pages, falling outside the copyrighted materials domain.

- (b) The Ministry of Culture promotes India's art, culture and Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) globally with a view to strengthening cultural relations and enhancing India's cultural outreach. This is undertaken through Cultural Agreements, Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEPs), Memoranda of

Understanding on Cultural Cooperation and other bilateral and multilateral cultural initiatives.

India has Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) arrangements with 98 countries, which provide an institutional framework for promoting Indian Knowledge Systems through academic exchanges, exhibitions, cultural events and other collaborative activities.

The Ministry also administers the Global Engagement Scheme (GES), under which Festivals of India are organized abroad to showcase India's rich and diverse cultural heritage. The Scheme also provides Grants-in-Aid to Indo-Foreign Friendship Cultural Societies through Indian Missions abroad to promote cultural exchanges and strengthen people-to-people ties with partner countries.

- (c) The Government is committed to the preservation, promotion and global dissemination of India's rich cultural and archaeological heritage, including sites associated with the Ramayana tradition. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) undertakes conservation, preservation and maintenance of Centrally Protected Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains, including those located in the Mithila and Sitamarhi regions, in accordance with the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. Further, the Ramayana Circuit is one of the fifteen thematic circuits identified for development under the Swadesh Darshan scheme of Ministry of Tourism.

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