

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO-55
ANSWERED ON- 23/07/2026

REPATRIATION OF ANTIQUITIES AND CULTURAL ARTEFACTS

*55#. SHRI BABURAM NISHAD:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:-

- (a) the number of antiquities and cultural artifacts brought back to India from abroad during the last three years, country-wise;
- (b) the steps taken by Government to identify, trace and ensure the return of illegally exported antiquities through bilateral cooperation and international conventions; and
- (c) whether a comprehensive digital catalogue of antiquities has been prepared to facilitate their source verification and prevent illicit trafficking and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) The measures taken to strengthen coordination among museums, the Archaeological Survey of India, customs authorities and law enforcement agencies, in order to protect movable cultural heritage of India?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

- (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (d) in respect of Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 55 for reply on 23.07.2026 regarding Repatriation of antiquities and cultural artifacts asked by Shri BaburamNishad

- (a) Details of the antiquities retrieved during the last three years are given at 'Annexure I'.
- (b) The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) being nodal organization takes necessary steps towards tracing identification and retrieval of Antiquities with the help of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Indian Embassies/Missions abroad. India has signed Agreements/MOUs with twenty countries under Cultural Exchange Program and a Cultural Property Agreement with the United States of America (USA). India is also a signatory of 1970 UNESCO convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.
- (c) The National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA), established in 2007, has documented and published data for 11,406 Built Heritage and Sites, and 12,49,301 Antiquities. The data has been published at the NMMA website: <http://nmma.nic.in>.
- (d) The Archaeological Survey of India maintains regular Coordination with museums, Ministry of External Affairs and different law-enforcement agencies to protect the Cultural Heritage of the Country.

Annexure I

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO 55 FOR 23.07.2026

DETAILS OF THE RETRIEVAL OF ANTIQUITIES DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS (UPTO 30 JUNE, 2026)

2023	Australia	02	115
	UK	07	
	USA	105	
	Italy	01	
2024	Thailand	01	298
	USA	297	
2025	Hong Kong	01 (349 relic jewels)	01
2026	Australia	11	13
	USA	02	
Total			427
