

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-1307
ANSWERED ON- 30/07/2026

RECOGNITION FOR GANGASAGAR MELA

1307. SHRI BISWAJIT SINHA (RAHUL SINHA):

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that Gangasagar mela, the second largest religious congregation in India after Kumbh mela, drawing over one crore pilgrims annually at the confluence of river Ganga and Bay of Bengal, has not been granted national recognition;
- (b) whether any formal proposal has been received from West Bengal Government to develop Gangasagar mela into an international spiritual and cultural festival jointly with the Centre, and if so, the current status thereof; and
- (c) the steps proposed by the Ministry, including infrastructure support, to develop Gangasagar as a premier pilgrimage destination on par with other nationally recognised fairs?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

- (a) Ganga Sagar Mela is a religious festival of India celebrated on Sagardwip (Sagar Island) in the State of West Bengal. On the occasion of Makar Sankranti, millions of devotees reach here and take holy bath in Sagar Sangam while wishing for salvation.

There is no such scheme in the Ministry of Culture for granting the status of National Festival to any festival/event.

- (b) Yes, Sir. A formal communication has been received on 16.07.2026 in the Ministry from Department of Information & Cultural Affairs, Government of West Bengal regarding (i) proposal for according National Mela status to the Gangasagar Mela and (ii) extending financial & institutional support for its preservation and promotion.

As regards point (i), the Ministry of Culture does not have any scheme or provision for according National Mela/National Festival status to any fair, festival or event. As regards point (ii), Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (EZCC), Kolkata has been instructed to take appropriate action.

- (c) The Ministry of Culture does not have any scheme for providing infrastructure support for the development of pilgrimage destinations.
