

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1312
ANSWERED ON 30.07.2026

UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE

1312#. SHRI GOVINDBHAI LALJIBHAI DHOLAKIA:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that like Dwarka, numerous underwater cultural heritages exist along the coastlines of the country;
- (b) the details of such marine cultural heritages where research and exploration work is currently underway;
- (c) the quantum of budget allocated by Government for such research and exploration work; and
- (d) the Government's plan for this sector during the next three years?

ANSWER

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

- (a) Yes sir. Research and Exploration activities are currently underway at Dwarka and Bet Dwarka (Gujarat), Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu) and Karaikal (Puducherry) by the Underwater Archaeology Wing of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- (b) Further, the Government of India has granted license for underwater excavation/ exploration to the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology at Poompuhar (Tamil Nadu) and to the Marine Archaeology Centre, National Institute of Oceanography at Bet Dwarka and Chhari and Gangata Bet (Gujarat).
- (c) The details of the budget allocated to the Underwater Archaeology Wing of the Archaeological Survey of India is as under:

Year	Allocation till date(in Rs.)	Expenditure till date(in Rs.)
2025-26	75,40,000/-	74,91,064/-
2026-27	66,50,000/-	25,63,894/-

Besides, Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology has earmarked Rs.7crores for archaeological excavations on land as well as underwater.

The National Institute of Oceanography has budgetary allocation of Rs.20 lacs.

(d) The Underwater Archaeology Wing of the Archaeological Survey of India has initiated a focused programme for training archaeologists and conducting surveys of submerged sites.

The following sites have been identified for underwater exploration/excavation up to 2030:

Dwarka and Bet Dwarka (Gujrat)

Vijay Durg (Maharashtra)

Janjira (Maharashtra)

Karaikal (Puducherry)

Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu)
