GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1377
TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.12.2025

PROMOTION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

1377. SMT. PRATIMA MONDAL:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a)   the details of the initiatives undertaken/being undertaken to promote India's cultural diplomacy and soft power projection through institutions such as the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), especially in fostering people-to-people exchanges and showcasing regional cultural diversity abroad;

(b)   the progress made in digitizing archives, manuscripts and museum collections under the National Mission on Cultural Mapping and the National Virtual Library of India and the manner in which this data is being made accessible to scholars and the public; and

(c)   the details of the steps being taken to modernize museum infrastructure and introduce experiential technologies such as augmented and virtual reality to enhance visitor engagement and educational outreach?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a)   India's cultural diplomacy and soft power projection are promoted through various initiatives of the Ministry of Culture and its organizations. Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), an autonomous body under Ministry of External Affairs, promotes Indian culture worldwide through Indian Missions/Posts and its 38 Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) abroad by organizing programmes in Yoga, Indian classical and folk dance and music, Indian languages, visual arts exhibitions, film screenings, lectures, seminars and celebration of Indian festivals and the International Day of Yoga. Cultural troupes reflecting India's regional diversity are regularly deputed abroad, and folk arts are promoted through MoUs signed with States and Union Territories.

Under the Ministry of Culture's Global Engagement Scheme, "Festivals of India" are organized abroad, providing opportunities to artists from diverse cultural fields to perform internationally. Grant-in-aid is also released to Indo-Foreign Friendship Cultural Societies to foster people-to-people exchanges.

Ministry of Culture also sign Cultural Exchange Programmes(CEPs) with other countries for disseminating Indian art and culture abroad. Museums also collaborate with foreign embassies and cultural institutions as part of India's cultural outreach.

(b)   The National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM) does not have the mandate for digitization of archives, manuscripts or museum collections; its mandate is confined to cultural mapping and documentation through' Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar' portal.

The National Virtual Library of India (NVLI), while not directly undertaking digitization, provides integrated digital access to India's cultural resources through the Indian Culture Portal, a unified and user-friendly platform that aggregates manuscripts, rare books, museum collections, archival records and audio-visual content for the benefit of scholars, researchers and the general public. However, 'Gyan Bharatam Mission', a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture, covers the large-scale digitization of India's manuscript heritage to facilitate preservation and wider access.

Museums under the Ministry of Culture have also made substantial progress in digitizing their collections under initiatives such as JATAN, and the digitized collections are accessible through online repositories and virtual exhibitions.

(c)   The Ministry of Culture has undertaken sustained efforts to modernize museum infrastructure and enhance visitor engagement through the adoption of advanced and experiential technologies. Under the Museum Grant Scheme, the Ministry provides financial assistance for setting up new museums, development and upgradation of existing museums, digitization of museum collections, establishment of virtual museums, and capacity-building and training of museum professionals of museums managed by Central and State Governments, Societies, Autonomous Bodies, Local Bodies, Academic Institutions and Trusts registered under the Societies Registration Act.

The National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) is at the forefront of research and development in museum display technologies and continues to innovate to improve visitor experience by integrating cutting-edge technologies such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence (AI), computer vision and sensor-based interactive systems.

The Victoria Memorial Hall has established a multimedia gallery titled *"Biplobi Bharat"*, which uses modern interpretative tools to showcase the life, struggle and invaluable contributions of Indian revolutionaries to the freedom movement.

The National Museum, New Delhi has commissioned the Virtual Experiential Museum on Ajanta (VEMA) to provide visitors with an immersive and educational digital experience of the Ajanta Caves. The National Museum has also digitized a substantial number of its collections to ensure wider public access and enhanced outreach.

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