

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4894
ANSWERRED ON 23.03.2026

**FOLK PERFORMING ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE
PROGRAMMES**

4894. ADV PRIYA SAROJ:
SHRI PUSPENDRA SAROJ :

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the number of folk performing art troupes empanelled or sponsored under Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and other Central international cultural exchange programmes during the last five years, year and State/UT-wise and particularly district-wise for Uttar Pradesh;
- (b) the details of the total Central funds sanctioned, released and utilised for international promotion of folk arts from Uttar Pradesh vis-à-vis classical and metropolitan art forms, State/UT-wise, particularly district-wise for Uttar Pradesh;
- (c) the criteria adopted for the selection of artists for overseas cultural festivals and whether any regional imbalance has been identified, State /UT-wise, particularly Uttar Pradesh;
- (d) the concrete roadmap for 2026–27 to ensure systematic inclusion of Uttar Pradesh’s folk traditions in bilateral cultural diplomacy initiatives; and
- (e) the accountability and measurable targets fixed to prevent token representation and ensure sustained global exposure for grassroots artists from the said State?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) Ministry of Culture implements “Global Engagement Scheme” (GES) to promote India’s rich cultural heritage internationally. Under the Scheme, the Ministry has empanelled Artists/Groups under various art forms for performing in the Festival of India (FoIs) abroad. Currently, 627 Artists/Groups are empanelled with the Ministry. Out of which, 31 artists/groups are from Uttar Pradesh.

ICCR, under the Ministry of External Affairs has sponsored 52 folk art troupes, including 3 from the state of Uttar Pradesh to present cultural performances abroad during the last five years.

(b) In the current Financial Year 2025-26, an amount of Rs. 2.58 Crore is allocated and the same has been sanctioned to Indo-Foreign Friendship Societies through Indian Mission abroad for international promotion of Arts and Culture of India including folk arts from Uttar Pradesh.

(c) The following criteria is adopted for selection of artists to perform in Festival of India abroad:

- (i) Any artist/group interested in applying should have performed/participated at State, National and/or international level. Requirement of number of performances/shows is at State/National/International level.
- (ii) The artist/group should be equipped to explain to the audience about the art form and the performance.
- (iii) In respect of Category VII, applications for curated exhibitions only will be considered.
- (iv) Foreign nationals applying for empanelment must be Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) cardholder.

ICCR also sponsors groups from its empanelled artists on the recommendations received from Indian Missions/ Posts/ Indian Cultural Centers abroad, based on local preferences and demand for different genres in different foreign countries. From Uttar Pradesh, 03 troupes were sponsored by ICCR in the last five years.

(d) & (e) Every year, ICCR draws up an Annual Plan of Action based on the proposals received from Indian Missions/Posts/Indian Cultural Centers abroad. In this, priority is given to under-represented arts and artists from rural and remote areas of India. In fact, the theme for ICCR's cultural projection abroad this year is "Connecting the World through Tribal, Folk and Rare Indigenous Arts".

ICCR has a feedback and monitoring mechanisms to ensure optimal impact of its outgoing cultural troupes. It has also reached out to all State Governments with whom it has signed MoUs to elicit their support in promoting India's rich and diverse folk traditions in a sustained manner.
