

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5865
ANSWERED ON 30.03.2026

INFRASTRUCTURE AND STRUCTURAL DETERIORATION AT ASIATIC SOCIETY

5865. SHRI JAGANNATH SARKAR:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of ageing infrastructure and structural deterioration at the Asiatic Society, affecting preservation due to inadequate temperature and humidity control;
- (b) the present status of conservation of rare manuscripts and artefacts, including the backlog in cataloguing and availability of trained conservators;
- (c) the details of sanctioned strength, working strength and vacancies, category wise of librarians, archivists, conservators and research staff, along with the number of personnel engaged on contractual basis;
- (d) the progress and timelines for digitisation of collections and improving public and scholarly access;
- (e) whether the funding provided is commensurate with the scale and international significance of the collections;
- (f) the details of steps taken by the Government to revive academic output, fellowships and international collaborations; and
- (g) whether adequate disaster preparedness measures are in place to protect collections from fire, flood and climate-related risks?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) Asiatic Society's heritage building is under the jurisdiction of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and necessary steps for its repair and restoration are undertaken through ASI. Adequate temperature and humidity control system are in place in Society's Museum where manuscripts, rare books and artefacts are housed.

The Asiatic Society, Kolkata conducts regular checks on the conditions of the rare manuscripts and artefacts in its collection. Such checks are done by the cataloguers and other officials on regular intervals under the overall supervision of the Curator. The Society has its own Conservation and Binding Section to carry out the conservation and binding work. Since establishing of Manuscript Conservation Centre in 2022, the preventive conservation of 35624 folios of the Manuscripts and curative conservation of 4596 folios of the rare manuscript have been done by the Society. Cataloguing is a regular work of the Museum and Archive Section.

The details of sanctioned strength, working strength and vacancies, category-wise of librarians, archivists, conservators and research staff, along with the number of personnel engaged on contractual basis:

Sl. No	Post	Sanctioned Strength	Working Strength	Vacancies
1	Librarian	1	1	0
2	Assistant Librarian	4	1	3
3	Curator	1	1	0
4	Senior Cataloguer	2	0	2
5	Cataloguer	4	2	2
6	Conservation Officer	1	0	1
7	Conservation Assistant	7	0	7
8	Research Officer	1	0	1

Two Conservation Assistants are working on temporary basis.

(d) The society has digitized 11,528 manuscripts comprising 5,72,890 pages. Further, under the Gyan Bharatam Mission of Ministry, the Society has been designated as a Cluster Centre for Manuscript scanning work. As of 23.03.2026, a total of 2033 manuscripts comprising of 1,46,099 pages have been scanned under this initiative.

(e) The Grant-in-aid provided by this Ministry to Asiatic Society broadly supports its core functions, and the requirements are reviewed from time to time in view of the scale and preservation needs of its collections.

(f) The Society undertakes academic activities, including seminars, lectures, workshops, exhibitions, publications and fellowship programmes to strengthen academic output and expand collaborations with national and international institutions. The details of various Academic Activities undertaken by the organization are as under :-

Financial Year	No of Research Projects	No of Research Fellows	No of Academic Activities
2020-21	39	20	42
2021-22	28	13	42
2022-23	21	09	47
2023-24	21	14	54
2024-25	18	12	28

(g) The Society has basic disaster preparedness measures in place, including fire safety system and standard operating procedures. Close liaison is maintained with the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Fire and Emergency Services Department, Government of West Bengal and the Local Police Authorities.
