

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.73
ANSWERED ON 20/07/2026

REPATRIATION OF STOLEN ANTIQUITIES

73. SHRI MANICKAM TAGORE B:
SHRI VIJAYAKUMAR ALIAS VIJAY VASANTH:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:-

- (a) the details of the total number of antiquities repatriated since 2014 and the steps taken to ensure authenticity, if not, the reasons for lack of transparent verification mechanisms;
- (b) whether it is a fact that most recoveries rely on foreign law enforcement rather than domestic efforts, if so, the details of India-led initiatives and if not, the reasons for limited independent action;
- (c) whether the Government has taken steps to strengthen Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) capacity for tracking stolen artefacts globally, if so, the budgetary and operational details thereof and if not, the reasons for institutional under-preparedness;
- (d) whether a comprehensive national database of stolen antiquities has been created and regularly updated and if so, the access details thereof and if not, the reasons for absence of transparent digital tracking systems; and
- (e) whether the Government has taken steps to prevent ongoing smuggling of temple idols and artefacts and if so, the enforcement measures thereof and if not, the reasons for continued illicit trafficking networks?

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

- (a) A total of 655 antiquities have been repatriated and authenticated since 2014 to June 30, 2026.
- (b)&(c) Government of India with the help of law-enforcement agencies takes-up the repatriation process as per provisions of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act 1972 and the international Conventions and Practices. Further, the staff and officers of the Archaeological Survey of India participate in the various training sessions, seminars and workshops organised from time to time for the purpose of dealing with matters to stop the illicit trafficking of antiquities.
- (d) A database in respect of the theft from Monuments of National Importance, Sites and the museums is available on the website of Archaeological Survey of India <https://asi.nic.in>.

- (e) The government takes necessary steps towards prevention of the theft of antiquities. Besides regular watch and ward staff, private security guards and Central Industrial Security Force have been deployed as per requirement at Monuments of National Importance, Sites and Museums. Whenever any theft of antiquity is reported; FIR is lodged and 'Look out Notice' is issued to the law-enforcement agencies including Custom Exit Channels to keep vigil to trace stolen antiquity and prevent export.
