

The American Council for Southern Asian Art (ACSAA) calls for an immediate halt to the Chief Minister of Bihar's plans to destroy the Curzon Reading Room and the garden of the Khuda Bakhsh Library in Patna. We stand for the preservation and protection of historic spaces of learning rather than their destruction.

Opened to the public in 1891, the Khuda Bakhsh Library has a world-class collection of rare books and manuscripts. These books span several centuries, languages, and artistic practices, and they are a testament to Bihar's rich heritage. The planned destruction of the Curzon Reading Room will take away a valuable study space from the students of Patna. The destruction of the garden will remove a silent buffer between the main building and the Ashok Rajpath Road, exposing it to noise and pollution and making it unsuitable to carry out research. Both of these measures will endanger the safety of the collection. As scholars of the region, we denounce any attempt to endanger the irreplaceable collection and the usability of the library spaces.

We stand with INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) that is working tirelessly to protect and preserve India's living, built, and natural heritage. We urge the Government of Bihar to collaborate with INTACH to protect and renovate Patna's unique heritage buildings. These are not only important works of architecture, but also attract international tourism.

We stand with the staff of the Khuda Bakhsh Library, for whom this planned destruction would create considerable hardship. We implore the Chief Minister to reconsider this planned demolition.

ACSAA denounces the ongoing assault on India's cultural heritage.

*[The American Council for Southern Asian Art (ACSAA) is dedicated to advancing the study and awareness of the art of South and Southeast Asia and the Himalayan regions, spanning all periods and forms of artistic production.]*



The historic library's Curzon Reading Room, currently facing demolition [Amrit Jai Kishan]