

# UNESCO'S Heritage Sites in India

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# UNESCO'S Heritage Sites in India

A UNESCO World Heritage Site is a location that is designated as having “outstanding universal value”. The sites are judged to contain cultural and natural heritage that is of outstanding value to humanity.

Criteria for a World Heritage Site

1. Be a unique landmark that is geographically and historically identifiable.
2. Have special cultural or physical significance.
3. Demonstrate international significance
4. Transcend national boundaries
5. Be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.
6. Represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.
7. Exhibit an important interchange of human values.
8. Be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history.
9. Contain superlative natural phenomenon or areas of exceptional natural beauty & aesthetic importance.

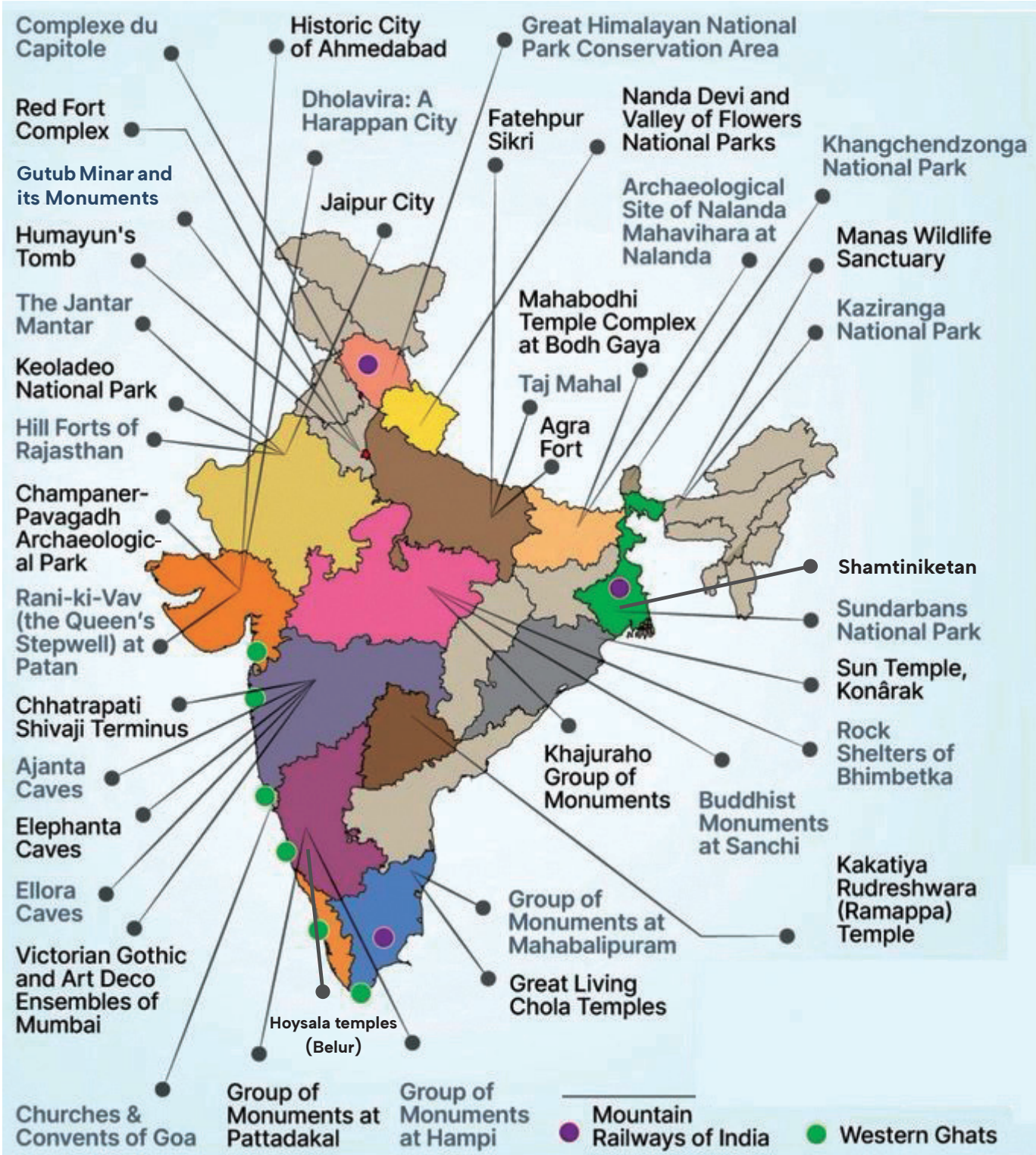
## UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India (State-wise)

State/UT	Cultural	Natural
Uttar Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agra Fort (1983)</li> <li>• Fatehpur Sikri (1986)</li> <li>• Taj Mahal (1983)</li> </ul>	
Maharashtra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ajanta Caves (1983)</li> <li>• Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) (2004)</li> <li>• Elephanta Caves (1987)</li> <li>• Ellora Caves (1983)</li> <li>• Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai (2018)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western Ghats (2012)</li> </ul>

State/UT	Cultural	Natural
Bihar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, Bihar (2016)</li> <li>Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya (2002)</li> </ul>	
Madhya Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi (1989)</li> <li>Khajuraho Group of Monuments (1986)</li> <li>Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka (2003)</li> </ul>	
Gujarat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park (2004)</li> <li>Historic City of Ahmadabad (2017)</li> <li>Rani-ki-Vav (the Queen's Stepwell) at Patan, Gujarat (2014)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Western Ghats (2012)</li> </ul>
Goa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Churches and Convents of Goa (1986)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Western Ghats (2012)</li> </ul>
Tamil Nadu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great Living Chola Temples (1987,2004)</li> <li>Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram (1984)</li> <li>Mountain Railways of India (1999,2005,2008)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Western Ghats (2012)</li> </ul>
Karnataka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group of Monuments at Hampi (1986)</li> <li>Group of Monuments at Pattadakal (1987)</li> <li>Hoysala Temples in Karnataka (2023)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Western Ghats (2012)</li> </ul>
Rajasthan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hill Forts of Rajasthan (2013)</li> <li>Jaipur City, Rajasthan (2019)</li> <li>The Jantar Mantar, Jaipur (2010)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keoladeo National Park (1985)</li> </ul>
Delhi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humayun's Tomb, Delhi (1993)</li> <li>Qutub Minar and its Monuments, Delhi (1993)</li> <li>Red Fort Complex (2007)</li> </ul>	
Chandigarh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement (2016)</li> </ul>	
West Bengal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mountain Railways of India (1999,2005,2008)</li> <li>Santiniketan (2023)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sundarbans National Park (1987)</li> </ul>
Himachal Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mountain Railways of India (1999,2005,2008)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (2014)</li> </ul>
Odisha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sun Temple, Konârak (1984)</li> </ul>	
Assam		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kaziranga National Park (1985)</li> <li>Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (1985)</li> </ul>
Uttarakhand		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks (1988,2005)</li> </ul>
Kerala		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Western Ghats (2012)</li> </ul>
Sikkim	Khangchendzonga National Park (2016) <i>*It is mixed site</i>	



# List of UNESCO World Heritage sites in India





## Important Facts: UNESCO's World Heritage Sites in India

### Agra Fort

- It is the 16th Century Mughal Monument called the Red Fort of Agra.
- Jahangir Palace and the Khas Mahal built by Shah Jahan are part of Agra Fort.

### Ajanta Caves

- These are rock-cut caves.
- There are a total of 29 caves.

### Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda

- Nalanda is the most ancient university in India.
- The archaeological remains of a monastic and scholastic institution dating from the 3rd century BCE to the 13th century CE are found here.

### Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi

- Monolithic pillars, palaces, temples and monasteries are part of it.
- It is considered the oldest Buddhist Sanctuary in existence.

### Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park

- Unexcavated archaeological, historic and living cultural heritage properties are a part of it.
- Structures built between the 8th and 14th centuries like fortifications, palaces, religious buildings, residential precincts, agricultural structures and water installations; are found here.

### Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus

- The former name of CST was Victoria Terminus.
- It represents the Victorian Gothic Revival architecture in India.
- British architect F. W. Stevens built and designed it.

### Churches and Convents of Goa

- The churches of the city which was the Portuguese capital signifies the evangelization of Asia.

### Elephanta Caves

- Gharapuri Caves is the local name of Elephanta Caves.
- There are seven caves.

### Ellora Caves

- There are 34 monasteries and temples.

### Fatehpur Sikri

- Mughal Emperor Akbar built it.
- It had been a Mughal capital for 10 years.
- Jama Masjid is a part of it.

### Great Living Chola Temples

- It includes temples like the Brihadisvara Temple at Thanjavur, the Brihadisvara Temple at Gangaikondacholisvaram and the Airavatesvara Temple at Darasuram.

### Group of Monuments at Hampi

- Hampi has served as the last capital of the Vijayanagar Empire.



Ajanta Caves



Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi



Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus



Ellora Caves



Group of Monuments at Hampi



### Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram

- The group is best known for Rathas, Mandapas, Giant open-air reliefs, etc.

### Group of Monuments at Pattadakal

- The monuments represent the Chalukyan art.
- Hindu temples and Jain sanctuary are a part of it.

### Hill Forts of Rajasthan

- Chittorgarh fort; Kumbhalgarh fort; Sawai Madhopur fort; Jhalawar fort; Jaipur fort, and Jaisalmer fort are part of these hill forts.

### Historic City of Ahmadabad

- Sultan Ahmad Shah founded the walled city in the 15th Century.

### Humayun's Tomb

- It was built in 1570.
- It stands as the first garden-tomb in the Indian subcontinent.

### Jaipur City

- Sawai Jai Singh-II founded the city in 1727.

### Khajuraho Group of Monuments

- It contains Chandely Dynasty-built temples.
- Hinduism and Jainism are two religions to which temples are dedicated.

### Mahabodhi Temple Complex

- It is one of the four holy sites related to the Buddha's life.

### Mountain Railways of India

- Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, Nilgiri Mountain Railway, and Kalka Shimla Railway are three railways included in this site.

### Qutub Minar and its Monuments

- Qutub Minar was built in the 13th century.
- It is the highest tower in India.

### Rani-ki-Vav (the Queen's Stepwell)

- It stands on the banks of Saraswati River.
- It is built in Maru-Gurjara architectural style.

### Red Fort Complex

- It was built as the palace fort of Shah Jahan's capital Shah Jahanabad.
- Salimgarh Fort is a part of this complex.

### Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka

- Dr V. S. Wakankar had discovered the Bhimbetka Caves in 1958.

### Sun Temple

- King Narasimhadeva I built this in the 13th Century.
- It represents the Kalinga architecture.

### Taj Mahal

- Mughal Emperor built Taj Mahal.
- It stands on the Yamuna river banks.

### The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an outstanding contribution to the modern movement

- There are 17 sites on three continents.
- Complexe du Capitole in Chandigarh, India is a part of this.



Humayun's Tomb



Mahabodhi Temple Complex



Rani-ki-Vav (The Queen's Stepwell)



Sun Temple

### The Jantar Mantar

- Rajput king Sawai Jai Singh II built the astronomical observation site.

### Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai

- Victorian Neo-Gothic public buildings and Art Deco in Mumbai buildings are part of this collection.

### Great Himalayan National Park–Conservation Area

- High alpine peaks, alpine meadows and riverine forests in this conservation area in Himachal Pradesh.

### Kaziranga National Park

- It is located in Golaghat and Nagaon, in the Karbi Anglong district of Assam in northeast India.

### Keoladeo National Park

- Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary was the former name of this National Park.
- Siberian Crane is one of those aquatic birds that make this park a wintering area.

### Manas Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is the first reserve included in the network of tiger reserves under Project Tiger in 1973.
- It is also a biosphere reserve.

### Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks

- Nanda Devi West is the second-highest mountain in India.

### Sundarbans National Park

- It forms the part of the Gangetic Delta.

### Western Ghats

- These are one of the biodiversity hotspots.

### Khangchendzonga National Park

- Mount Khangchendzonga is the world's third-highest peak.

### Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple

- Built in the 13th century CE, the temple is a Kakatiyan marvel made of sandstone.
- The structure has decorated beams and pillars of carved granite and dolerite with a distinctive and pyramidal Vimana made of lightweight porous bricks, so-called 'floating bricks', which reduced the weight of the roof structures.

### Dholavira

- Discovered by archaeologist Jagat Pati Joshi in 1968, Dholavira gets its name from the village in Kutch district of Gujarat.
- In ancient India, it has remained a commercial and manufacturing hub for about 1,500 years till its decline by 1500 BC.
- It was Indus Valley Civilization's fifth-largest metropolis after Mohen-jo-daro, Ganweriwala, Harappa and Rakhigarhi.



The Jantar Mantar



Sundarbans National Park



Khangchendzonga National Park

### Santiniketan

- Located in West Bengal's Birbhum district, Santiniketan, meaning "abode of peace," began its development in 1901 and is where Rabindranath Tagore laid the foundation for Visva-Bharati University.
- It was established by Rabindranath Tagore.
- Santiniketan has immense significance in human values, architectural and technological developments, monumental arts, town planning, and landscape design.
- Efforts to get Santiniketan listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site date back to 2010, with the latest nomination proposal initiated in the 2020-21 fiscal year.

### Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas

- The temples are located in Belur, Halebidu and Somanathapura in the Hassan and Mysuru districts of Karnataka.
- The temples included in the ensemble are:
  - (i) Channakeshava Temple, Belur, Hassan district (Commissioned by King Vishnuvardhana, dedicated to God Vishnu)
  - (ii) Hoysalesvara Temple, Halebidu, Hassan district (Commissioned by King Vishnuvardhana, dedicated to God Shiva)
  - (iii) Kesava Temple, Somanathapura, Mysuru district (Consecrated by Somanatha Dandanayaka, a general of the Hoysala King Narasimha III, dedicated to God Vishnu)



**Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas**

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## IAS Prelims Practice Questions

1. **Statement 1 :** It is the 16th Century Mughal Monument called the Red Fort of Agra.

**Statement 2:** It got its status as UNESCO's World Heritage Sites in 1948

Consider the following statement about (Agra fort) and answer accordingly

- (a) Statement 1 is true, and Statement 2 is false.
- (b) Statement 1 is false, and Statement 2 is true.
- (c) Both Statements 1 and 2 are true.
- (d) Both Statements 1 and 2 are false.

2. With reference to UNESCO's World Heritage Sites , consider the following statement.

- 1. 12th-century Hoysala Temples of Karnataka were included in the list by UNESCO.
- 2. Santiniketan, West Bengal, was declared a world heritage site by UNESCO.

Select the correct answer using code given below:

- (a) 1 only                      (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only              (d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. Which of the following temples is part of the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas, located in the Hassan and Mysuru districts of Karnataka?

- (a) Meenakshi Temple, Madurai
- (b) Brihadeeswara Temple, Thanjavur
- (c) Channakeshava Temple, Belur
- (d) Sun Temple, Konark

4. Consider the following statements regarding the criteria for selecting a World Heritage Site:

- (i) To be selected as a World Heritage Site, a landmark must be geographically and historically identifiable and have unique cultural or physical significance.
- (ii) World Heritage Sites must demonstrate international significance and represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.
- (iii) Transcending national boundaries is a required criterion for the selection of a World Heritage Site.
- (iv) World Heritage Sites should contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

Select the correct option:

- (a) Statements I and II are correct.
- (b) Statements II and III are correct.
- (c) Statements III and IV are correct.
- (d) All the statements (I, II, III, and IV) are correct.

5. Which heritage site is known for unexcavated archaeological, historic, and living cultural heritage properties, with structures dating between the 8th and 14th centuries, including fortifications, palaces, religious buildings, residential precincts, agricultural structures, and water installations?

- (a) Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus
- (b) Churches and Convents of Goa
- (c) Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda
- (d) Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park

### ANSWER KEY

1. (a) 2. (c) 3. (c) 4. (a) 5. (d)



## IAS Mains Practice Questions

- 1. Examine the criteria that determine the inclusion of a site on the World Heritage List and the responsibilities of India as a signatory to protect and preserve these sites.
- 2. Analyze the challenges and benefits associated with UNESCO's recognition of sites and their impact on India's cultural heritage and tourism industry."