Religious Places in India - UPSC

By LotusArise October 2, 2021

In this article, You will read the **Partial list** of **Important Religious Places in India** – for UPSC (Indian Geography Mapping).

Religious Places in India



AMARNATH:

- Situated in the Greater Himalayas in the Anantnag district of J&K
- Amaranth Cave has limestone topography and naturally formed 'Shivling'
- Known for 'the Amarnath Yatra'
- Accessible by the Pahalgam and the Baltal (Sonmarg) routes

PAHALGAM:

- A hill resort located in the Anantnag district, at the altitude of about 2130m
- Lies on the banks of Lidder River, a tributary of Jhelum
- Main route to Amarnath passes through it

VAISHNO DEVI:

- Located near Katra town in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir
- One of the holiest Hindu temples dedicated to Shakti
- Second most visited religious shrine in India after Tirumala Venkateswara Temple
- A rail link from Udhampur to Katra is being built to facilitate pilgrimage

ANANDPUR SAHIB:

- Located in the Rupnagar district of Punjab
- Known as "the Holy City of Bliss"
- One of the most sacred places of Sikhs
- Located on the bank of the Satluj near the Govind Sagar
- Founded in 1665 by 9th Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur

GURUDWARA BANGLA SAHIB:

- Gurudwara Bangla Sahib is one of the most prominent Sikh gurdwara, or Sikh house of worship, in Delhi, and is known for its association with the eighth Sikh Guru, Guru Har Krishan, as well as the holy river inside its complex, known as the "Sarovar."
- It was first built as a small shrine by Sikh General **Sardar Baghel Singh** in 1783, on the bungalow donated by king **Raja Jai Singh of Amer**, who supervised the construction of nine Sikh shrines in Delhi in the same year, during the reign of Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II.
- It is **situated near Connaught Place**, New Delhi on Baba Kharak Singh Marg and it is instantly recognisable by its golden dome and tall flagpole, Nishan Sahib.

JAMA MASJID

- The **Masjid-i Jehan-Numa**, commonly known as the **Jama Masjid** of Delhi, is one of the largest mosques in India.
- It was built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan between 1650 and 1656 and inaugurated by its first Imam, Syed Abdul Ghafoor Shah Bukhari.

- Situated in the Mughal capital of Shahjahanabad (today Old Delhi), it served as the imperial mosque of the Mughal emperors until the demise of the empire in 1857.
- The Jama Masjid was regarded as a symbolic node of Islamic power across India, well into the colonial era. It was also a site of political significance during several key periods of British rule.
- It remains in active use and is one of Delhi's most iconic sites, closely identified with the ethos of Old Delhi.

HAR KI PAURI:

- Har Ki Pauri is a famous ghat on the banks of the Ganges in Haridwar in the Indian state of Uttarakhand.
- This revered place is the major landmark of the holy city of Haridwar. Literally, "Har" means "God", "Ki" means "of", and "Pauri" means "steps".
- Lord Vishnu is believed to have visited the Brahmakund in Har Ki Pauri in the Vedic times

YAMUNOTRI:

- Source of the Yamuna River in the Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand
- The seat of the Goddess Yamuna (Temple)
- It is one of the four sites in India's Chhota Char Dham pilgrimage, the others being Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath
- The Temple of Goddess Yamuna was built by Maharaja Pratap Shah of Tehri Garhwal

GANGOTRI:

- Source of the Ganga, lying in the Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand
- · Has Gangotri National Park
- Hindu pilgrimage town, one of the four Chhota Char Dhams
- Has a temple of the Goddess Gangotri which was built by the Nepalese General,
 Amar Singh Thapa in early 18th century

BADRINATH:

- Situated in the Gangotri Mountain Range in Chamoli District of Uttarakhand
- Located in the Greater Himalayas is an important pilgrimage centre of Hindus
- It is the 'Abode of Lord Vishnu'
- Opened from May to October
- · One of the Char Dhams of Hindus

KEDARNATH:

- Located in the Greater Himalayas to the west of Badrinath and south of Gangotri in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand
- · Has twelfth century temple of Shiva

There is a musk dear sanctuary in the region

HARIDWAR:

- · Located at the foot hills of the Shivaliks on the bank of the Ganga in Uttarakhand
- The Ganga debauches into the plains here
- Kumbh Fair is held after every twelve years
- Sacred city and pilgrimage site for Hindus

RISHIKESH:

- Important Hindu pilgrimage place, located very near to Haridwar (just north of it) in Uttarakhand, on the Ganga River
- Located in the Dehradun district
- Known as the gateway to the Himalayas
- According to legends Lord Rama did penance here after killing Ravana
- Sometimes nicknamed as 'the World Capital of Yoga' has numerous Yoga centres

SOMNATH:

- Located along the southern coast of the Kathiawar Peninsula between Veraval and Kodinar
- Temple is dedicated to Shiva, and was one of the richest, that is why looted and destroyed by the Muslim rulers
- It is the most sacred of the twelve Jyotirlingas shrines of the God Shiva

KUSHINAGAR:

- Located in the northeastern part of Uttar Pradesh near the border with Nepal and Bihar
- Important Budhist pilgrimage where Gautam Buddha died
- At the time of Buddha, it was the capital of the Mallas
- Mahaparinirvana Stupa is built on the place of Buddha's Mahaparinirvana

AYODHYA:

- Old capital of Awadh located in the Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh, on the bank of the Sarju River
- Known as the birth place of the Lord Rama
- Babri Masjid demolished by Hindus claiming it to be the site of the Ram Janma bhoomi

NALANDA:

- Old educational and cultural city located a few kms away to the southwest of Bihar Sharif
- Ruins of the old Nalanda University
- Has the Nalanda Open University

• In 2006, Singapore, China, India, Japan and other nations announced a proposed plan to restore and revive the Nalanda International University

GAYA:

- Historical and cultural centre, located in the southern part of Bihar, 100 km south of Patna on the bank of the Falgu River
- Sanctified by both Hindus and Budhists
- Most popular temple Vishnupad Temple
- At Brahmayoni Hills- Buddha preached his First Sermon
- Shrine of Hazrat Makhdoom Syed Shah Durwesh
- Will host the second Officers Training Academy(OTA). The first OTA is in Chennai

BODH GAYA:

- Famous religious and historical town in Bihar to the south of Gaya, near the border with Jharkhand
- · Place of the attainment of enlightenment by Buddha
- Mahabodhi Temple Complex –World Heritage Site

RAJGIR:

- Old historical town, located between Nalanda and Gaya, in the Nalanda district
- The first capital of the kingdom of Magadha
- Jarasandha belonged to this place in the Mahabharata
- Has been developed into a health and winter resort due to its warm water ponds

SHANTI NIKETAN:

- A small town in Birbhum district of West Bengal
- Vishwa Bharati University was established by Rabindranath Tagore in 1921
- Shanti Niketan was named by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore's father
- Indira Gandhi, Satyajit Ray, Amartya Sen studied here

TAWANG:

- Located in the western part of Arunachal Pradesh
- Famous for the Tawang Monastery, founded in accordance to the wishes of the 5th Dalai Lama, agwang Lobsang Gyatso
- It is the largest monastery in India as well as outside Lhasa

PARASURAM KUND:

- Located 13 miles north east of Tezu, is the district headquarters of Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh
- Large number of pilgrims visit every year during Parasuram Mela held in the month of January

• Believed that in the kund (lake) Parashuram washed away all his sins

PALITANA:

- Located 50km southwest of Bhavnagar city, is a major pilgrimage centre for Jains
- Is the place where millions of Jain sadhus and munis got salvation
- Palitana temples (1300) are considered to be the most sacred pilgrimage place of Jains
- Main temple is dedicated to 1st thirthankar Lord Adinath (Rishabhdeva)

UJJAIN:

- Located on the Malwa Plateau on the bank of Sipra River
- It was an important centre of learning and the capital of Avanti
- Important pilgrimage centre Mahakaleshwar Temples.
- Junction of five railways and NH-3 passes
- · Cotton textiles, soyabean processing

SANCHI:

- Historical place located in the Raisen district of Madhya Pradesh, to the northeast of Bhopal
- A stupa here dates back to the 3rd century BC, Largest stupa in India
- A World Heritage Site
- · Located on the bank of the Betwa

KHAJURAHO:

- Located in the Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh in the northern part of the state in the Bundelkhand
- Famous for its numerous temples with excellent architecture with sexual appeals built by the Chandela rulers in the 10th and 11th centuries, from the sandstones of Panna
- A World Heritage Site

MANDU:

- Located in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh near the NH-3 had been centre of many Hindu and Muslim rulers
- Famous for the last Sultan of Malwa, Baj Bahadur and his wife Rupmati
- Attractionas Rupmati Palace, Mandu Fort, Jahaz Mahal, Hindola Mahal, Asharfi Mahal etc.

KONARK:

- Located on the coast of Bay of Bengal in the centre of the Mahanadi Delta
- Famous for the magnificent thirteenth century Sun Temple World Heritage Site
- Some of the temples are adorned with erotic sculptures

PURI:

- Located on the coast of the Bay of Bengal in the southwestern part of the Mahanadi Delta.
- Famous for the Jagannath Temple, where the Rathyatra is held every year

AJANTA:

- Located in the Ajanta Range of Maharashtra
- Has a series of 29 caves containing Buddhist frescoes and sculpture from the first century BC to 7th century AD
- Caves are cut on the gorge of the Waghore River, a tributary of Godavari
- A World Heritage Site

ELLORA:

- Located in the southwestern part of the Ajanta Range in Maharashtra near Aurangabad
- Famous for the rock caves and paintings of the ancient period
- A World Heritage Site

NANDED:

- · Located between the Penganga and the Godavari rivers in Maharashtra
- Sikh pilgrimage Gurudwara built to commemorate the assassination of the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh in 1708
- · Industries- cotton textile, leather

SHIRDI:

- Located in the Ahmadnagar District of Maharashtra
- Best known as the late 19th century home of the popular guru Shirdi Sai Baba
- Shani Shingnapur, a holy place located near Shirdi, is famous for temple of Lord Shani

HAJI ALI DARGAH:

- The Haji Ali Dargah is a mosque and dargah or the monument of Pir Haji Ali Shah Bukhari located on an islet off the coast of Worli in southern Mumbai.
- An exquisite example of Indo-Islamic Architecture, associated with legends about doomed lovers, the dargah contains the tomb of Haji Ali Shah Bukhari.
- Bukhari was a Sufi saint and a wealthy merchant from Uzbekistan.
- Near the heart of the city proper, the dargah is one of the most recognisable landmarks of Mumbai.

BASILICA OF BOM JESUS:

- The Basilica of Bom Jesus is a Roman Catholic basilica located in Goa, India, and is part of the Churches and convents of Goa UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- The basilica is located in Old Goa, the former capital of Portuguese India, and holds the mortal remains of St. Francis Xavier.

BADAMI:

- Formerly known as Vatapi, is located in the Bagalkot district of Karnataka
- It was the regal capital of the Badami Chalukyas from 540 to 757 AD
- Famous for rock cut and other structural temples

HAMPI:

- Located within the ruins of Vijayanagara, the former capital of the Vijayanagara Empire
- Has Virupaksha Temple and several other monuments
- The ruins are a UNESCO's World Heritage Site, listed as the Group of Monuments at Hampi
- Located on the bank of the Tungabhadra near the Tungabhadra Dam

HALEBIDU:

- Located in the Hassan district of Karnataka
- Earlier called as Dwarasamudra, was the regal capital of the Hoysala Empire in the 12th century
- Known for the Hoyasalewara and Kedareswara temples. The former temple is now beingproposed for the World Heritage Site

AIHOLE:

- A temple complex in the Bagalkot district of Karnataka
- Located east of Pattadakkal, along the Malprabha River
- Very popular tourist spot of north Karnataka
- Has the potential to become a World Heritage Site
- Known for the Aihole Inscription

TIRUPATI:

- Situated in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh near the border with Tamil Nadu
- Has Tirumala Hill Temple
- The temple of Venkateshwaram attracts thousands of pilgrims
- · Most visited religious shrine of India

KANCHIPURAM:

- Located to the southwest of Chennai, is also called as 'the Varanasi of the South'
- Located on the bank of the Palar River
- Founded in the third century BC

· 'Sarees' made here are well known.

MAMALLAPURAM:

- Also known as Mahabalipuram, is located to the south of Chennai.
- Ancient port, famous for its monuments of the Pallav dynasty (6-9 centuries AD).
- Rock cut temples at the sea coast
- A World Heritage Site.

RAMESWARAM:

- Located on the central part of the Pamban Island
- Has ancient Lingam and sixteenth and seventeenth century Shiva and Vishnu temples
- One of the four dhams of Hindus, the others being Badrinath, Dwarka and Puri

MADURAI:

- · A million plus city located on the bank of the Vaigai River
- It was the capital of the Pandya Kingdom
- Known for the Minakshi Temple
- · Oldest continuously inhabited city in the Indian Peninsula
- Known as 'the City of Temples' and 'the Cultural Capital of Tamil Nadu'

SHRAVANABELAGOLA:

- Located in the Hassan district of Karnataka
- Known for the statue of Gomteshwara or Bahubali, is one of the most important Jain pilgrimage centres
- The last shrutakevali, Bhadrabahu Swami and Chandragupta Maurya meditated here

FATEHPUR SIKRI:

- A medieval city, 35 km west of Agra in Uttar Pradesh
- Built by Akbar in honour of Salim Chisti
- Has the Buland Darwaja, largest gate in India

AJMER:

- Situated along the Ana- Sagar artificial take, created by the damming of the Luni River in the twelfth century
- Known for the Dargah of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti
- NH-8 and a railway pass through it
- Pushkar Lake is located nearby it where the Pushkar Fair is organised

RAJIM:

- It is located at the confluence of the Mahanadi, Pairi and Sondur rivers, called Triveni Sangam.
- It is known as 'the Pryag of Chhattisgarh'
- It has many temples of them famous are Sri Rajiv Lochan Mandir (Lord Vishnu) and Kuleshvara Mahadeva Mandir.
- The annual Rajiv Mela is promoted as 'the Panchava Kumbha Mela'.

MAIHAR:

- It is a municipality in the Satna district of Madhya Pradesh.
- It is known for the temple of revered mother goddess Sharda situated on Trikuta hill.
- The town was formerly the capital of the princely state of Maihar.
- It is believed that Alha and Udal are associated with this place.
- People believe that Alha performs puja daily at 4 am, even today.

MEHANDIPUR BALAJI:

- It is located in the Dousa district of Rajasthan.
- The temple is located 3 km towards the right on the Jaipur- Agra national highway.
- The temple is dedicated to Lord Hanuman.
- It is believed that the divine power cures any persons possessed by evil spirit.