

LAST MINUTE PRELIMS RECKONER 2025

ART AND CULTURE

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN INDIA

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India

UNESCO World Heritage Sites:

- ✓ A World Heritage Site is a place that is listed by UNESCO for its **special cultural or physical significance**.
- ✓ The list of World Heritage Sites is maintained by the international '**World Heritage Programme**', administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.
- ✓ **UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection, and preservation of cultural and natural heritage** around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.
- ✓ This is embodied in an international treaty called the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by **UNESCO in 1972**.
- ✓ At present, India has **43 world heritage sites** that include **35 cultural sites, 7 natural sites, and 1 mixed site**.

UNESCO Natural World Heritage sites in India

Sl No.	Natural World Heritage Site	State	Year of Notification	Features
1	Kaziranga National Park	Assam	1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conservation efforts focused on the big four species – One-horned Rhino, Elephant, Royal Bengal Tiger and Asiatic water buffalo. ✓ Diphlu river runs through this park.
2	Keoladeo Ghana National Park	Rajasthan	1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Part of the Montreux Record under the Ramsar Convention. ✓ Gambhir and Banganga rivers pass through this national park.
3	Manas Wildlife Sanctuary	Assam	1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ It is a national park, WHS, Tiger reserve, Elephant reserve and biosphere reserve.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Park is known for its rare and endangered endemic wildlife such as the Assam roofed turtle, hispid hare, golden langur and pygmy hog. ✓ Manas River, a major tributary of the Brahmaputra, passes through here.
4	Sundarbans National Park	West Bengal	1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Located in the delta of the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers. ✓ It is home to Royal Bengal Tiger, Estuarine Crocodile, Gangetic Dolphin, Water Monitor Lizard.
5	Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks	Uttarakhand	1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Home to rare and endangered animals, including the Asiatic black bear, snow leopard, brown bear and blue sheep. ✓ Unique transition zone between the mountain ranges of the Zaskar and Great Himalaya.
6	Western Ghats	Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and, Kerala	2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ One of the world's biodiversity hotspots.
7	Great Himalayan National Park	Himachal Pradesh	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Endangered western tragopan, lammergeiers, Himalayan griffon vultures and golden eagles are found here.
UNESCO Cultural World Heritage sites in India				
Sl No.	Cultural World Heritage Site	State	Year of Notification	Important Features
1	Moidams – the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty	Assam	2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Located in the Charaideo district at the foothills of Patkai ranges. ✓ This is the first time a site from the North East has made it into the UNESCO World Heritage List under the cultural category.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Charaideo is home to the royal necropolis of the Tai-Ahom dynasty (13th–19th century CE) and are comparable to the Egyptian Pyramids. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Moidam means 'Home for Spirit' and it symbolizes heaven- earth continuum. ✓ They contain the remains of kings and other royals together with grave goods such as food, horses and elephants, and sometimes queens and servants. ✓ The Tai-Ahom rituals of “Me-Dam-Me-Phi” and “Tarpan” are practiced at the Charaideo necropolis. ✓ During Ahom's reign, Moidams were protected by special officers called Moidam Phukans and a guard group known as Moidamiya. ✓ Banyan trees and the trees used for coffins and bark manuscripts were planted and water bodies created.
2	Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas	Karnataka	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Chennakeshava temple at Belur, ○ The Hoysaleswara temple at Halebidu and ○ The Keshava Temple at Somnathapura constructed between the 12th and 13th centuries. ✓ These temples are examples of the vesara style of architecture.
3	Santiniketan	West Bengal	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Built by Debendranath Tagore, father of Rabindranath Tagore. ✓ Originally called Bhubadanga, was renamed Santiniketan by Debendranath Tagore due to its conducive environment for meditation. ✓ In 1901, Rabindranath Tagore established a school based on the Brahmachary Ashram model. It later evolved into the Visva Bharati University.
4	Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple	Telangana	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Constructed in 1213 AD during the reign of the Kakatiya Empire by Recherla Rudra, a general of Kakatiya king Ganapati Deva. ✓ It is known as the Ramappa temple after the sculptor who executed the works in the temple.

5	Dholavira (Harappan City)	Gujarat	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Discovered in 1968 by archaeologist Jagat Pati Joshi. ✓ It is located on the Tropic of Cancer, in the island of Khadir bet. ✓ A sign board and several water reservoirs have been found here.
6	The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement	Chandigarh	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 17 sites comprising this transnational serial property are spread over seven countries. ✓ Complexe du Capitole in Chandigarh is the Indian monument.
7	Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensemble of Mumbai	Maharashtra	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The ensemble consists of 94 buildings primarily of 19th century Victorian Gothic revival and early 20th century Art Deco style of architecture.
8	Historic City of Ahmedabad	Gujarat	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Located on the eastern bank of Sabarmati River. ✓ Founded by Sultan Ahmad Shah in the 15th century.
9	Jaipur City	Rajasthan	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Also known as the Pink City, the walled city of Jaipur was founded in 1727 AD under the patronage of Sawai Jai Singh II. ✓ Unlike other cities in the region located in hilly terrain, Jaipur was established on the plain and built according to a grid plan interpreted in the light of Vedic architecture. ✓ The streets feature continuous colonnaded businesses that intersect in the centre, creating large public squares called chaupars. ✓ The iconic monuments in the city include the Govind Dev temple, City Palace, Jantar Mantar, Hawa Mahal etc.
10	Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara (Nalanda University)	Bihar	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Remains of the most ancient University in the Indian subcontinent. ✓ Established by Kumaragupta I of the Gupta dynasty in the 5th century CE.

11	Rani-Ki-Vav	Gujarat	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A vav is a stepwell. ✓ On the banks of the river Saraswati, it was built by Rani Udayamati as a memorial to her husband, the 11th century-king Bhima I of the Chaulukya or Solanki dynasty. ✓ The vav is designed to appear like an inverted temple, signifying the sanctity of water.
12	Hill Forts of Rajasthan	Rajasthan	2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Includes six majestic forts in Chittorgarh; Kumbhalgarh; Sawai Madhopur; Jhalawar; Jaipur, and Jaisalmer. ✓ Built by various Rajput dynasties.
13	The Jantar Mantar, Jaipur	Rajasthan	2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Constructed by Maharaja Jai Singh II of Jaipur. ✓ Astronomical observation site.
14	Red Fort Complex	Delhi	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Constructed by Shah Jahan as he moved the Mughal capital from Agra to the newly constructed Shahjahanabad in Delhi. ✓ Initially named 'Qila-i-Mubarak' or Blessed Fort. ✓ The Red Fort was almost completely demolished in 1739 with the invasion of Persian ruler Nadir Shah who plundered the fort of many valuable artefacts, including the infamous Peacock Throne.
15	Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park	Gujarat	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Includes prehistoric (chalcolithic) sites, a hill fortress of an early Hindu capital, and remains of the 16th-century capital of the state of Gujarat. ✓ The Kalikamata Temple on top of Pavagadh Hill is considered to be an important shrine. ✓ The site is the only complete and unchanged Islamic pre-Mughal city.
16	Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus	Maharashtra	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Formerly known as Victoria Terminus Station. ✓ An outstanding example of Victorian Gothic Revival architecture in India, blended with themes deriving from Indian traditional architecture ✓ Designed by the British architect F. W. Stevens.

17	Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka	Madhya Pradesh	2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The rock shelters span the prehistoric Paleolithic and Mesolithic periods. ✓ It exhibits the earliest traces of human life in India.
18	Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya	Bihar	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ One of the four holy sites related to the life of the Lord Buddha. ✓ The original structure was built by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka. However, it was reconstructed entirely in brick in late Gupta period.
19	Mountain Railways of India	West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This site includes three railways: Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, Nilgiri Mountain Railway, Kalka Shimla Railway.
20	Humayun's Tomb, Delhi	Delhi	1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Built in 1570, it was the first garden-tomb on the Indian subcontinent. ✓ Built under the patronage of Emperor Akbar. ✓ It is also called the 'dormitory of the Mughals' as in the cells are buried over 150 Mughal family members. ✓ It is an example of the charbagh (a four quadrant garden with the four rivers of Quranic paradise represented), with pools joined by channels.
21	Qutb Minar and its Monuments, Delhi	Delhi	1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ It is a five-storeyed red sandstone tower started by Qutub-ud-din Aibak in 1193 and finished by Iltutmish. ✓ The surrounding archaeological area contains funerary buildings, notably the magnificent Alai-Darwaza Gate, the masterpiece of Indo-Muslim art (built in 1311), and two mosques, including the Quwwatu'l-Islam, the oldest in northern India, built of materials reused from some 20 Brahman temples.
22	Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi	Madhya Pradesh	1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The major monument Sanchi stupa was built by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka in the third century BC.

23	Elephanta Caves	Maharashtra	1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The rock-cut Elephanta Caves were constructed in the mid-5th to 6th centuries AD, and most of them are dedicated to Lord Shiva. ✓ There are two groups of caves on the site of the Elephanta Caves, the first is a large group of five Hindu caves, and the second is a smaller group of two Buddhist caves. ✓ Important images are sculpted here, which include 'Trimurti' or three-headed Shiva, 'Gangadhar', which is a manifestation of the river Ganga as she descends to the earth, and 'Ardhnareshwar', which is a representation of Shiva and Parvati in the same body.
24	Great Living Chola Temples	Tamil Nadu	1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The site includes three great 11th- and 12th-century Temples: the Brihadisvara Temple at Thanjavur, the Brihadisvara Temple at Gangaikondacholapuram and the Airavatesvara Temple at Darasuram.
25	Group of Monuments at Pattadakal	Karnataka	1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ These group of monuments have been built by the Chalukya dynasty. ✓ Includes both Hindu and Jain monuments. ✓ The temple of Virupaksha, built by Queen Lokamahadevi to commemorate her husband's victory over the kings from the South is part of this.
26	Churches and Convents of Goa	Goa	1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Basilica of Bom Jesus which contains the tomb of St. Francis Xavier is part of this monument.
27	Fatehpur Sikri	Uttar Pradesh	1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ It is a city predominantly in red sandstone, situated at a distance of 37 km from Agra, Uttar Pradesh. ✓ It was founded in 1569 by Akbar, and from 1571 to 1585, Fatehpur Sikri was the capital of the Mughal Empire. ✓ The Mughal capital was moved to Delhi in 1586 because of Fatehpur Sikri's inadequate water supply.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Buland Darwaza, the colossal gate is an iconic monument of Fatehpur Sikri.
28	Group of Monuments at Hampi	Karnataka	1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hampi was the last capital of the Vijayanagar kingdom. ✓ Mahanavami Dibba and Vittala temple are important monuments.
29	Khajuraho Group of Monuments	Madhya Pradesh	1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Built during the Chandella dynasty. ✓ Consists of both Hindu and Jain temples. ✓ Located in the Vindhya mountain range. ✓ The temples are famous for erotic imagery and sculpture. ✓ The first mention of these temples can be found in the works of Al Biruni and Ibn Battuta.
30	Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram	Tamil Nadu	1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mahabalipuram or Mamallapuram was founded by the Pallava king Narasimhavarman I. ✓ Also known as Seven Pagodas after the seven monolithic temples or rathas present at the site of which 5 remain at present. ✓ Important monuments include: sculptured rock relief known as Arjuna's Penance or Descent of the Ganga; cave temples; the shore temple.
31	Sun Temple, Konark	Orissa	1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Built by King Narasimha Deva I of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty in 1244. ✓ Classic example of Kalinga style of architecture. ✓ The temple is designed in the shape of a colossal chariot, with two rows of 12 wheels. The chariot is drawn by 7 horses said to symbolise the days. ✓ Built from Khondalite rocks, it is also known as the Black Pagoda due to its dark colour. ✓ Chandrabhaga Mela is an important festival associated with the temple.

32	Agra Fort	Uttar Pradesh	1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 16th century Mughal monument ✓ Fortress made of red sandstone ✓ Comprises: Jahangiri Mahal, Khas Mahal, Shah Jahan's palace, Sheesh mahal, audience halls such as Diwan-i-khas. ✓ Known as the Red Fort of Agra. ✓ Construction started by Akbar; completed by Shah Jahan ✓ Eastern wall is flanked by River Yamuna
33	Ajanta Caves	Maharashtra	1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Rock cut caves in the Sahyadri Ranges (Western Ghats) ✓ On the banks of Waghora river near Aurangabad. ✓ 29 caves (all Buddhist) ✓ Built under the patronage of Vakataka kings ✓ Reference found in the travel accounts of Fa Hien (during the reign of Chandragupta II) and Hieun Tsang (during the reign of Harshavardhana) ✓ Figures in the cave are done using fresco painting
34	Ellora Caves	Maharashtra	1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Group of 34 caves – 17 Brahmanical, 12 Buddhist and 5 Jain ✓ Built by various guilds from Vidarbha, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu ✓ The most remarkable of the cave temples is Kailasa (Kailasanatha; cave 16), named for the mountain in the Kailasa Range of the Himalayas where the Hindu god Shiva resides. ✓ It has the unique characteristic of being excavated from the top down.
35	Taj Mahal	Uttar Pradesh	1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ White marble mausoleum built by Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal. ✓ On the banks of the River Yamuna.
UNESCO Mixed World Heritage Sites (comprises components of both natural and cultural importance)				
Sl No.	Mixed World Heritage Site	State	Year of Notification	Features

1	Khangchendzonga National Park	Sikkim	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ World's third highest peak, Mt. Khangchendzonga, is situated within the Park. ✓ Numerous lakes and glaciers, including the 26 km long Zemu Glacier are a part of the Biosphere reserve. ✓ Sacred site or beyul of Tibetan Buddhism.
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UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN):

- ✓ The UNESCO Creative Cities Network is a project launched by UNESCO in **2004** to “promote cooperation among cities which **recognized creativity** as a strategic factor in their urban development”.
- ✓ UNESCO designates the creative cities in **seven fields** — **Craft, Folk Art, Media Arts, Film Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music.**

Indian Cities on UCCN:

Kozhikode	Literature (2023)
Gwalior	Music (2023)
Srinagar	Crafts and Folk Arts (2021)
Mumbai	Film (2019)
Hyderabad	Gastronomy (2019)
Chennai	Music (2017)
Jaipur	Crafts and Folk Arts (2015)
Varanasi	Music (2015)

List of UNESCO world heritage sites in India

