

Hoysala Temples in World Heritage List

Why in news?

Recently, 3 Hoysala-era temples were added as to UNESCO's World Heritage List thus becoming the 42^{nd} site from India.

What is UNESCO World Heritage Site?

- World Heritage Site (WHS) These are the sites are designated as having "outstanding universal value" under the <u>Convention Concerning the Protection of the</u> <u>World Cultural and Natural Heritage.</u>
- It was adopted by UNESCO in <u>1972</u> and formally took effect in <u>1975</u>.
- The list of WHS is maintained by the *International World Heritage Programme*, administered by the *UNESCO World Heritage Committee*.
- The 3 types of site are *Cultural, Natural, and Mixed*.

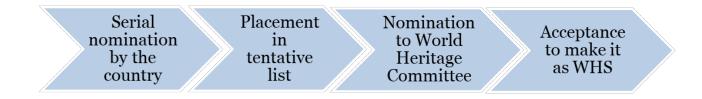
World Heritage List of India

- India has 6^{th} highest number of WHS in the world (Italy is 1^{st} with 58).
- Total number of World Heritage Site 42
- Total cultural heritage sites 34
- Total natural heritage sites 7
- Mixed heritage 1 (Khangchendzonga National Park in Sikkim).
- 1st WHS from India Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Ajanta and Ellora caves all listed in 1983.
- Latest addition in WHS List- 42^{nd} is Sacred Ensembles of Hoysala Temples and 41^{st} is <u>Santiniketan</u> in 2023.
- Dholavira in Gujarat is the only site of Indus valley civilisation in World Heritage List from India.

What is the procedure for including a site in the WHS list?

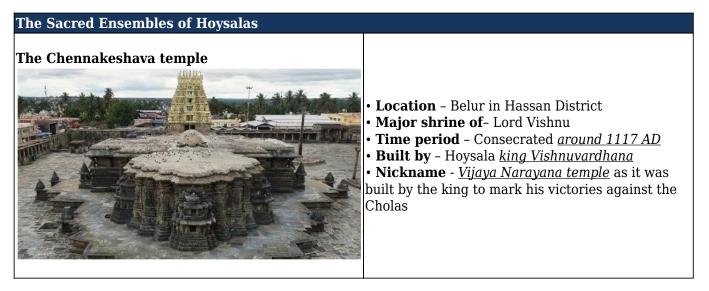
- Selection criteria To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet <u>at least one out of 10 selection criteria</u> of UNESCO.
- <u>Only countries that have signed the World Heritage Convention</u> can submit nomination proposals for properties on their territory to be considered for inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List.

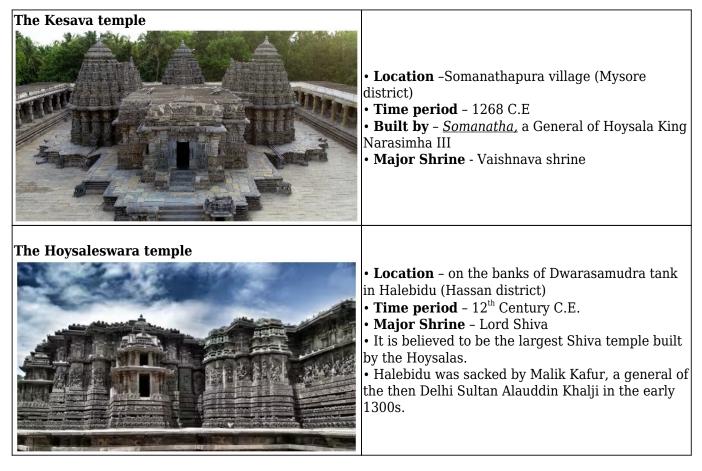
- **Tentative List** The first step a country must take is to make an <u>'inventory</u>' of its important natural and cultural heritage sites located within its boundaries, known as the Tentative List.
- The World Heritage Committee cannot consider a nomination for inscription on the World Heritage List unless the property has already been included on the State Party's Tentative List.
- Evaluation- A nominated property is independently evaluated by
 - $\circ\,$ The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
 - $\circ\,$ The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
 - $\circ\,$ The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)
- **Deciding authority** Once a site has been nominated and evaluated, it is up to the intergovernmental <u>World Heritage Committee</u> to make the final decision on its inscription.



What constitutes the Sacred Ensembles of Hoysalas?

• It includes 3 temples- Chennakeshava temple (Belur), Hoysaleswara Temple (Halebidu), and Keshava Temple (Somanathapura) of Karnataka.





What makes Hoysala architecture stand out?

- Unique confluence of styles These temples are amalgamation of three distinctive temple styles prevalent in India.
 - \circ **Dravidian** style represented in Pallava and Chola temples
 - $\circ~\underline{\textit{Vesara}}$ style, the variant of the Dravida style that emerged in the Chalukya and Rashtrakuta temples
 - <u>Nagara</u> style of North India
- **Construction material** The use of *soapstone*, a malleable stone has made it easy to carve and contributed to abundant intricate sculptures on the temple walls.
- **Elevated platforms** The temples are generally built on <u>stellate (star-shaped)</u> <u>platforms</u>.
 - *Kesava temple* in Somanathapura is built in the shape of a *16-point star*.
- **Beautiful Sculptures** The sculptures themes include *animals, scenes of daily life*, as well as depictions from the *epics and the Puranas*.
- It demonstrates their creativity in translating religious beliefs and stories into sculpture.
- **Differentiated Pillars** The total number of pillars in Chennakesava temple at Belur is 46.
- All of them, except the four in the central bay are of different designs.
- **Signed temples** The temples are given with information of the sculptors and masons who were involved in its construction.
- **Religious significance** These <u>Vaishnava and Shaivya shrines</u> were built at the time Jainism was prominent in the region.
- It thus mark a turn towards Hinduism.

- **Social significance** The *jewellery, headgear, clothes,* etc. of the detailed sculptures give an idea of the society of the times.
- One of the sculptures, <u>*Darpana Sundari*</u> (lady with the mirror), is modelled on Shantala Devi, the queen of Vishnuvardhana who had the built the Chennakesava temple.
- **Other details** No known monuments other than temples, like palaces or forts, survive from the Hoysala period.
- The non-temple buildings were all built in either mud or brick or wood and not stone.
- So, except for some ruins in Hampi, nothing has survived in the form of architecture of Hoysalas.

Quick facts

Hoysalas

- **Origin** Provincial governors under the Western Chalukyas established themselves as rulers, as the two dominant empires of the South the Western Chalukyas and the Cholas, crumbled.
- Geography Karnataka
- Time period 10th century to the 14th century
- Capital It was Belur earlier and moved to Halebidu or Dwarasamudra later.
- Hoysala Emblem Figure representing Sala attacking the tiger

References

- 1. IE| Hoysala Temples as World Heritage Site
- 2. <u>IE| Sacred Ensembles of Hoysalas</u>
- 3. UNESCO | World Heritage List in India





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