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1. Sun Temple at Modhera, Vadnagar town Rock cut sculpture, Unakoti added to tentative list of UNESCO heritage sites (Dec. 20, 2022)

UNESCO heritage sites

The Union Ministry of Culture announced on 20 December 2022 that **Vadnagar town ,Gujarat, Sun Temple Modhera, Gujarat and Rock Cut Sculptures and reliefs of the Unakoti,Tripura** have been added to the tentative list of UNESCO's world heritage sites.

The submissions were made by Archaeological Survey of India, which is responsible for the conservation and preservation of Indian monuments.

With the addition of these three sites, UNESCO has **52** proposals in the tentative list of India.

According to UNESCO, countries are encouraged to submit their Tentative Lists which mentions the properties which they consider to be cultural and/or natural heritage of outstanding universal value and therefore suitable for inscription on the World Heritage List.

The newly included sites in the tentative list;

Vadnagar

Vadnagar also known as Chamatkarpur, Anandpur, Snehpur and Vimalpur is located in the Mehsana district in Gujarat. The city has been mentioned in the Puranas as well by the Chinese traveller, Hieu-en-Tsang (7th century). Vadnagar is famous for its Buddhist sites, torans, a pair of 12th century Solanki-era columns, 40 feet tall and built in red and yellow sandstone to celebrate a war victory.

Sun Temple, Modhera and its adjoining monuments

Modhera is known for the Sun temple situated on the bank of the Pushpavati River. The temple was built after 1026-27 CE during the reign of Bhima I of the Chalukya dynasty. Modhera village is the first solar powered village in the world.

Rock-cut Sculptures and Reliefs of the Unakoti

Unakoti is famous for its massive stone and rock-cut sculptures that have been carved out from the hillside in the Kailashahar Subdivision of Tripura. Surrounded by lush greenery, this place is also a Shaivite pilgrimage site dating back to the 8th or 9th centuries CE.

Unakoti literally means 'One Less Than a Crore'. According to Hindu mythology Lord Shiva once spent a night here en route to Kashi. He was accompanied by 99, 99,999 gods and goddesses. He had asked his followers to wake up before sunrise and make their way towards Kashi. Unfortunately, none awoke, except for Lord Shiva himself. Before he set out for Kashi alone, he put a curse on the others turning them to stone. And that's how the site got its name

Indian sites in the UNESCO World Heritage List

There are 32 cultural, 7 natural, and 1 mixed property in the 40 UNESCO World Heritage sites in India. In 2021 **Dholavira**, an Indus Valley site in Gujarat and **Rudreswara temple**

(Ramappa Temple) at Palampet, Warangal, and Telangana were the 40th and 39th sites respectively.

The first Indian sites to be included in the UNESCO list were **Ajanta, Ellora Caves, Taj Mahal** and **Agra Fort** in 1983.

UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN).

- It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in Education, Science and Culture.
- Headquarters: **Paris, France**
- Director General: **Audrey Azoulay**
- Founded: 16 November 1945 in London, United Kingdom
- The organisation has 193 members and 11 Associate members.