



High Commission of India **Canberra**

Heritage achievements of States of India at UNESCO

India, with several millennia of history, boasts of a diverse and rich heritage. As of today, 28 cultural, 7 natural and 1 mixed sites of India are inscribed on the World Heritage List. Latest addition to this list is the world's largest congregation of pilgrims - the Kumbh Mela which has been inscribed on the UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Cultural-heritage tourism in India

India's heritage and cultural diversity attracts millions of tourists every year. World heritage sites in India form the backbone of the tourism industry. As a result of sustained endeavour of stakeholders, the last few years have yielded significant dividends, with Khangchendzonga in Sikkim; the ancient city of Ahmedabad and 'Kumbh Mela' getting listed in UNESCO World Heritage List.

I. Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP)

Located at the heart of the Himalayan range in the State of Sikkim, includes a unique diversity of plains, valleys, lakes, glaciers and spectacular, snow capped mountains including the world's third highest peak. The site has rich flora and fauna such as snow leopard, red panda, lammergeier, blood pheasant and rhododendron. UNESCO recognition has given a further push to sustainable ecotourism in Sikkim. The site entered the World Heritage list on 17 July 2017.



II. City of Ahmedabad

The 606 year old walled city of Ahmedabad, which was founded by emperor

Ahmed Shah, has become India's first World Heritage City. The city is filled with rich architectural heritage notably the Bhadra citadel, numerous mosques and tombs as well as important Hindu and Jain temples. The city is an excellent example of peace and unity.



In this regard, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) started the Heritage Cell way back in 1996 to preserve the historical legacy of the city. The city entered the World heritage list on 12 July 2017.

III. Kumbh Mela

In 2003, the UNESCO General Conference adopted the convention for the safeguarding of the intangible heritage as an international treaty acknowledging that cultural heritage is more than tangible places, monuments and objects. Based on these criteria, UNESCO has identified the World's largest congregation of pilgrims - the Kumbh Mela, as the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2017, since people from all walks of life, without any discrimination of religion, cast and creed, participate in the festival with equal fervor. As a religious festival, the tolerance and inclusiveness that Kumbh Mela demonstrates has been recognized as especially valuable for the contemporary world. The Kumbh Mela is held at Allahabad, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nasik every 3 years and is a monumental event in the States concerned.



India has registered significant growth in tourism in the last few years, especially since additional initiatives were taken by the Government of India to boost India's image as a destination for heritage tourism. GoI is in contact with all the state governments requesting that necessary directions be given to relevant departments to take proactive initiatives to shortlist the sites/cities having historical depth and heritage footprints. The government is endorsing the heritage festivals held across the states like Hampi festival, Konark festival, Khajuraho festival, the Kumbh mela etc. to highlight the world heritage status of the sites.

Cultural-heritage tourism plays a major role in increasing national as well as international goodwill and understanding. Inclusion of the site in the World-heritage list can quickly enable the place to become a major tourist attraction.