

21 – 12 – 2022

- News: Three more sites added to tentative list of UNESCO
- Gujarat's Vadnagar town, the iconic Sun Temple at Modhera, and the rock cut sculptures of Unakoti in Tripura have been added to the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
- With this, India now has 52 sites on UNESCO Tentative List.

Sun Temple at Modhera

- The Sun Temple at Modhera, (Gujarat) which is dedicated to the sun god, is the earliest of such temples which set trends in architectural and decorative details, representing the Solanki style at its best.
- Situated in the banks of River Pushpavati, it was built after 1026-27 CE during the reign of Bhima I of the Chaulukya dynasty.

Modhera dance festival

- The Tourism Corporation of Gujarat organizes an annual three-day dance festival known as 'Uttarardha Mahotsav' at the temple during the third week of January, following the festival of Uttarayan (Summer Solstice).

- The objective is to present classical dance forms in an atmosphere similar to that in which they were originally presented.

Vadnagar Municipality

- Vadnagar is a municipality in Mehsana district of Gujarat.
- A multilayered historic town, Vadnagar has a recorded past stretching back to nearly 8th century BC.
- The town still retains a large number of historic buildings that are primarily religious and residential in nature.

Unakoti

- Unakoti is an ancient holy place associated with Shaiva worship located in Tripura.
- The site is a massive gallery set in a forested area displaying a number of towering low relief images in a unique style, making it a masterpiece of human creative genius.

The World Heritage Convention

- The World Heritage Convention recognizes the way in which people interact with nature, and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.
- Defines the kind of natural or cultural sites which can be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List under UNESCO.
- World Heritage Centre (1992) ensures the day-to-day management of the Convention.
- To be included, the sites must meet at least one of 10 criteria.
- The World Heritage Convention's operational guidelines say that a tentative list is like an inventory of properties a country thinks should be on the World Heritage Site. After UNESCO includes a property in the Tentative List, the country prepares a nomination document that will be considered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.
- Italy has the most number of sites (57) followed by China (55).
- India is in the 3rd rank with 52 entries. India has entered super – 40 clubs for World Heritage Site inscriptions along with Italy, China, France, Spain and Germany.
- World Heritage Convention is implemented by UNESCO with the help of International Council on the Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

Benefits of world heritage sites status

- **Brings international attention** to the need for the preservation and conservation of the sites.
- **Brings tourism** to the site ensuring economic benefits.
- **UNESCO can provide funds for restoration**, preservation and training if required.
- Promotes **close ties with UN system and prestige and support it provides**.
- Sites **become protected under the Geneva Convention against destruction or misuse during wartime**.
- Recently, the **UNESCO World Heritage Committee has recommended that the Australia's Barrier Reef should be added to a list of "in danger" World Heritage Sites**.
- Placement on the "in-danger list" is **not considered a sanction**.
- Some nations have their sites added to **gain international attention and help to save them**.
- There are 53 sites enlisted in the List of World Heritage in danger none of which is from India.
- The Great Barrier Reef is proposed to be **enlisted after Australia approved the Carmichael Coal Mine**, a controversial project with impacts for the reef and the climate, to which the World Heritage Convention got a response noting "that

the project's approval is subject to over 180 regulatory conditions and that compliance with these conditions will be monitored.”

- The World Heritage Committee took note of the "**2019 Outlook Report**" of the **Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority**, which says in no uncertain terms that the long term state of the ecosystem has further deteriorated from poor to very poor.