



1954 Hague Convention

For Prelims: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), “Blue Shield” emblem, 1954 Hague Convention, Red Cross, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For Mains: Cultural Heritage Protection and Preservation.

Why in News?

Recently, the [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#) has pitched for protective measures **to preserve Ukraine’s endangered cultural heritage in light of Russia’s invasion over Ukraine.**

- To avoid deliberate or accidental damages, the agency is marking cultural sites and monuments in Ukraine with the distinctive **“Blue Shield” emblem** of the **1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.**

What is the Hague Convention 1954?

- **Background:** Through history, armed conflicts always **wrought havoc on the lives of people.** In addition to its humanitarian toll, conflicts also led to the **large-scale destruction of cultural heritage,** weakening the foundations of communities, lasting peace and prospects of reconciliation.
- **Origin:** Considering that the preservation of cultural heritage is of great importance for all peoples of the world and thus needs universal protection, the **Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict was adopted in 1954** under the auspices of UNESCO.
 - This convention is referred to as the **1954 Hague Convention.**
 - It is the **first and the most comprehensive multilateral treaty** dedicated exclusively to the protection of cultural heritage in times of peace as well as during an armed conflict.
- **Aim:** The convention aims **to protect cultural property, such as monuments of architecture, art or history, archaeological sites, works of art, manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest, as well as scientific collections** of any kind regardless of their origin or ownership.
- **India is party to Hague Convention 1954.**

What is the Blue Shield Emblem?

- **Need:** Article 6 of the **1954 Hague Convention** states that **cultural property may bear a distinctive emblem** so as to facilitate its recognition.
- **Origin:** In pursuance of this, the Blue Shield, formerly the **International Committee of the Blue Shield** was founded in 1996.
- **About:** It is a **non-governmental, non-profit, international organisation** committed to the protection of heritage across the world.
 - The Blue Shield network, often referred to as the **cultural equivalent of the [Red Cross.](#)**

Logo of Blue Shield Emblem

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- **Function:** The Blue Shield is a network of committees of dedicated individuals across the world that is committed to protect the world's cultural heritage from threats such as armed conflict and natural disasters.
 - This includes museums, monuments, archaeological sites, archives, libraries and audio-visual material, and significant natural areas, as well as intangible heritage.
- **Associated Issue:** Some States have refrained from marking their cultural **property**, arguing that it would make that property more vulnerable to attack by an enemy determined to destroy its symbols of national identity.
 - Unfortunately, this proved to be the case during the war in the former Yugoslavia where cultural property marked with the Blue Shield was intentionally targeted.

What is UNESCO?

- **About:**
 - It is a specialized agency of the **United Nations (UN)**. It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture.
 - It was **founded in 1945** and is **located in Paris, France**.
 - It has **193 Members and 11 Associate Members**. India joined UNESCO in 1946.
 - In 2019, the USA and Israel formally quit UNESCO.
- **Major Initiatives of UNESCO:**
 - [Man and Biosphere Programme](#)
 - [World Heritage Programme](#)
 - [Global Geopark Network](#)
 - [Network of Creative Cities](#)
 - [Atlas of World Languages in Danger](#)
- **Reports:**
 - UNESCO Science Report
 - Global Education Monitoring Report
 - [State of the Education Report for India](#)

PYQ

Q. Recently, which one of the following was included in the UNESCO's World Heritage list? (2009)

- (a) Dilwara Temple
- (b) Kalka-Shimla Railway
- (c) Bhitarkanika Mangrove Area
- (d) Visakhapatnam to Araku valley railway line

Ans: (b)

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