

# Gingee Fort Nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Site

### **Source: TH**

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Gingee Fort** in **Tamil Nadu's Villupuram** district has been nominated for **UNESCO's World Heritage Site** list as part of the **Maratha Military Landscapes** proposal, which includes 11 other forts.

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## What are the Key Facts Regarding Gingee Fort of Tamil Nadu?

- Geographical Feature and Significance: Gingee Fort is renowned for its historical importance and strategic location atop three hillocks: Rajagiri, Krishnagiri, and Chandragiri.
  - It is also known as the **"Troy of the East,"** as it is one of the most impregnable fortresses in peninsular India.
  - Its strategic location and robust defences, including a 60-foot-wide rampart and an 80-foot-wide moat, made it vital during the <u>Carnatic Wars</u> between the French and British.
- Historical Overview: The fort was originally built by Ananta Kon of the Konar Dynasty in 1200 CE and named it Krishnagiri.
  - Vijayanagar Empire undertook significant renovations of the fort.
  - In 1677, the fort was captured by **Chhatrapati Shivaji** and remained under **Maratha control until 1698**, when it fell to the **Mughals**.
    - The Fort became the **last stronghold for the Marathas (Rajaram I, son of Shivaji)** during their resistance against the Mughal forces.
  - Briefly ruled by Raja Desingh (Tej Singh), it was taken over by the Nawabs of Arcot in 1714 and remained under their dominion until 1749.
  - From 1750 to 1770, the French held the fort before it eventually passed into Britishers.
- Architectural Features:
  - The fort complex houses several temples and shrines.

- It includes significant structures such as a **stepped well, Kalyana Mahal, durbar** hall, cannon, clock tower, armory, elephant tank, stable, granary, gymnasium, Venkataramana temple, and Sadathtulla mosque.
- Water Supply Systems: Gingee Fort features two sophisticated water supply systems, ensuring a continuous water supply even at the highest points of the fort.
- Rajagiri Hill: It is the tallest hill at 800 metres, featuring a citadel and the temple of Ranganatha.
  - **Krishnagiri Citadel** is notable for its **Indo-Islamic architecture**, including an audience hall with a domed roof.
- **Venkataramana Swamy Temple:** It is located in the **Lower Fort complex** and adorned with intricate carvings from Hindu epics.
- **Kalyana Mahal:** It is an architectural jewel with eight storeys, used as the **royal ladies' quarters**.

### **UNESCO World Heritage Site**

- A World Heritage Site is a location recognized by UNESCO for its exceptional cultural or natural significance.
- UNESCO promotes the identification, protection, and preservation of cultural and natural heritage sites globally that hold outstanding value to humanity.
- As of September 2024, India has 43 World Heritage Sites (cultural sites-35, natural sites-7, mixed-criteria site-1) with the latest addition being the Mound-Burial System of Ahom Dynasty.
- Process for nominating a site to UNESCO's World Heritage List
  - A country creates a list of important cultural and natural heritage sites.
  - The country selects sites from the Tentative List and prepares nomination details.
  - The <u>International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)</u> and <u>IUCN</u> evaluate the nominated property.
  - The **Committee meets annually to decide which sites to add** to the World Heritage List, based on advisory recommendations and criteria fulfillment.

Read More: <u>Assam's Moidams to be Considered for World Heritage List</u>, <u>UNESCO</u>, <u>Maratha Military Landscapes</u>

### **UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)**

### **Prelims:**

- Q. Which one of the following National Parks has a climate that varies from tropical to subtropical, temperate and arctic? (2015)
- (a) Khangchendzonga National Park
- (b) Nanda Devi National Park
- (c) Neora Valley National Park
- (d) Namdapha National Park

Ans: (d)

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