



Santiniketan Becomes India's 41st World Heritage Site

For Prelims: [Santiniketan](#), [UNESCO's World Heritage List](#), [Rabindranath Tagore](#), Debendranath Tagore, Visva Bharati University, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

For Mains: Importance of declaration of Santiniketan as UNESCO world heritage sites.

[Source: TH](#)

Why In News?

Recently, [Santiniketan](#), which is a town located in [Birbhum district of West Bengal](#), was included in the [UNESCO's World Heritage List](#).

- The efforts to have **Santiniketan** recognized as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** have been ongoing since **2010**. **Santiniketan** has been recognized by **UNESCO** as India's **41st World Heritage Site**.

Why is Santiniketan Well Known?

- **Historical Significance:** In **1862**, [Rabindranath Tagore's father, Debendranath Tagore](#), spotted this scenic landscape and decided to establish an **ashram**, building a house called **Santiniketan**, meaning "**abode of peace**".
- **Name Change:** The area, originally called **Bhubadanga**, was renamed **Santiniketan** by **Debendranath Tagore** due to its conducive environment for **meditation**.
- **Educational Legacy:** In **1901**, **Rabindranath Tagore** chose a significant portion of land and established a school based on the **Brahmachary Ashram model**. This school later evolved into [Visva Bharati University](#).
- **UNESCO World Heritage Site:** The [Ministry of Culture](#) proposed **Santiniketan** for inclusion in the **UNESCO World Heritage List**, emphasising its importance in **human values**, [architecture](#), **arts**, **town planning**, and **landscape design**.
- **Archaeological Preservation:** The [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) has been involved in the **restoration** of several structures in **Santiniketan**, preserving its **historical and cultural heritage**.

Who was Rabindranath Tagore?

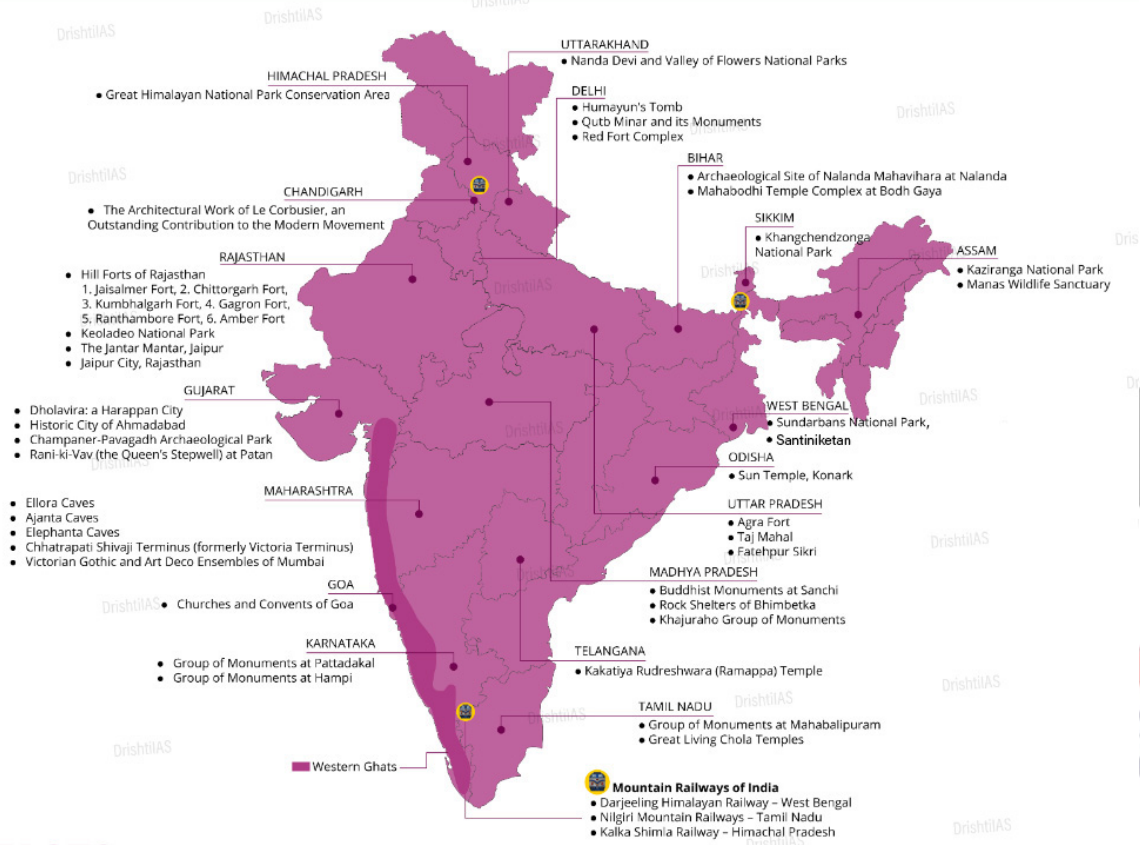
- **Early Life:**
 - **Rabindranath Tagore** was born on **May 7, 1861**, in **Calcutta, India**, into a prominent **Bengali family**. He was the **youngest of thirteen children**.
 - **Tagore** was a **polymath** and **excelled** in various fields. He was not only a **poet** but also a **philosopher**, **musician**, **playwright**, **painter**, **educator**, and **social reformer**.
- **Nobel Laureate:**
 - In **1913**, **Rabindranath Tagore** became the first Asian to be awarded the **Nobel Prize in Literature** for his collection of poems titled "**Gitanjali**" (**Song Offerings**).

- **Knighthood:**
 - **Rabindranath Tagore** was awarded with **Knighthood** for **Services to Literature** by **King George V** in **1915**.
 - **Tagore** renounced his **title of Knighthood** after the **1919 Jallianwala Bagh Massacre**.
- **Composer of National Anthems:**
 - He wrote the **national anthems of two countries**, "[Jana Gana Mana](#)" (the [Indian national anthem](#)) and "**Amar Shonar Bangla**" (the [Bangladesh national anthem](#)).
- **Literary Works:**
 - His literary works include **poems, short stories, novels, essays, and plays**. Some of his notable works include "**The Home and the World**," "**Gora**," **Gitanjali**, **Ghare-Baire**, **Gora**, **Manasi**, **Balaka**, **Sonar Tori**, and "**Kabuliwala**."
 - He is also remembered for his song '**Ekla Chalo Re**'.
- **Social Reformer:**
 - He was an advocate for **social reform, promoting ideas of unity, harmony, and tolerance**. He criticised British colonial rule and worked for **Indian independence**.
- **Tagore's Philosophy:**
 - His **philosophy** emphasised the **importance of humanism, spirituality, and the connection between nature and humanity**.
- **Literary Style:**
 - **Tagore's writing style** was marked by its **lyrical and philosophical qualities**, often exploring themes of **love, nature, and spirituality**.
- **Death:**
 - He passed away on **August 7, 1941**, leaving behind a rich legacy of **literature** and a lasting impact on **Indian and world culture**.

What are UNESCO's World Heritage Sites?

- A **World Heritage Site** is a place that is listed by **UNESCO** for its special **cultural or physical significance**.
- The list of **World Heritage Sites** is maintained by the international '**World Heritage Programme**', administered by the **UNESCO World Heritage Committee**.
- This is embodied in an **international treaty** called the Convention concerning the **Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**, adopted by **UNESCO** in **1972**.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites



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) Nandadevi National Park
- (c) Neora Valley National Park
- (d) Namdapha National Park

Ans: (d)

Mains:

Q. What was the difference between Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore in their approach towards education and nationalism?(2023)

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