



World Heritage Nomination 2022-2023

For Prelims: World Heritage site, Hoysala architecture, Nagara & Dravidian architecture.

For Mains: Indian Heritage & Culture.

Why in News?

Recently, the **Union Ministry of Culture** has **nominated Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas temples** for consideration as a **World Heritage site for the year 2022-2023**.

- The sacred ensembles of the **Hoysalas**, built in the **12th-13th centuries** and represented by the **three components of Belur, Halebid and Somnathapura in Karnataka**. All these three Hoysala temples are protected monuments of the [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#).
- The '**Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala**' have been on **UNESCO's Tentative list** since **15th April, 2014** and stand testimony to the rich historical and cultural heritage of India.
- Earlier, the **UNESCO's World Heritage Centre (WHC)** had agreed to [publish Hindi descriptions of India's UNESCO World Heritage Sites](#) on the WHC website.

What are the Features of Belur, Halebid, and Somnathapura temples ?

- **Chennakeshava Temple, Belur:**
 - Construction of the temple commenced in 1117 AD and took 103 years to complete.
 - The temple is dedicated to **Lord Vishnu known as Chennakesava**, which means beautiful (chenna) Vishnu (Keshava).
 - The richly sculptured exterior of the temple narrates scenes from the life of Vishnu and his reincarnations and the epics, Ramayana, and Mahabharata.
 - However, some of the representations of Shiva are also included.



- **Hoysaleshwara Temple, Halebidu:**
 - The Hoysaleshwara temple at Halebidu is the **most exemplary architectural ensemble of the Hoysalas extant today**.

- Built in 1121CE during the reign of the **Hoysala King, Vishnuvardhana Hoysaleswara**.
- The temple, **dedicated to Shiva**, was sponsored and built by wealthy citizens and merchants of Dorasamudra.
- The temple is most **well-known for the more than 240 wall sculptures** that run all along the outer wall.
- Halebid has a walled complex containing three **Jaina basadi (temples)** of the Hoysala period as well as a stepped well.



▪ **Keshava Temple, Somanathapura:**

- The Keshava temple at Somanathapura is another **magnificent Hoysala monument, perhaps the last**.
- This is a breathtakingly beautiful Trikota Temple dedicated to Lord Krishna in three forms – Janardhana, Keshava and Venugopala.
- Unfortunately, the main Keshava idol is missing, and the Janardhana and Venugopala idols are damaged.



What are the Characteristics of Hoysala Architecture?

- Hoysala architecture is the building **style developed under the rule of the Hoysala Empire between the 11th and 14th centuries, mostly** concentrated in southern Karnataka.
- Hoysala temples are **sometimes called hybrid or vesara as their unique style** seems neither completely Dravida nor Nagara, but somewhere in between.
 - The Hoysala temples have a **basic Darvidian morphology** but show strong influences of the **Bhumija mode widely used in Central India**, the **Nagara traditions** of northern and western India, and the **Karntata Dravida modes** favoured by the **Kalyani Chalukyas**.
 - Therefore, the **Hoysala architects made considered and informed eclectic selections** of features from other temple typologies which they further modified and then complemented with their own particular innovations.
 - The result was the birth of a completely novel '**Hoysala Temple**' form.
- The Hoysala temples, **instead of consisting of a simple inner chamber** with its pillared hall, contain **multiple shrines grouped around a central pillared hall** and laid out in the shape of **an intricately-designed star (stellate-plan)**.
- Since they are **made out of soapstone which is a relatively soft stone**, the artists were able to carve their sculptures intricately. This can be seen particularly in the jewellery of the gods that adorn their temple walls.

What is a World Heritage Site?

- **About:**
 - Any of various areas or objects inscribed on the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [World Heritage List](#)**.
 - The sites are designated as having **“outstanding universal value”** under the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972.
 - The World Heritage Centre is the **Secretariat to the 1972 Convention**.
 - It **provides a framework for international cooperation** in preserving and protecting cultural treasures and natural areas throughout the world.
 - There are **three types of sites**: Cultural, Natural, and Mixed.
 - **Cultural heritage sites** include hundreds of historic buildings and town sites, important archaeological sites, and works of monumental sculpture or painting. **Example:** Dholavira: a Harappan City.
 - **Natural heritage sites** are restricted to those natural areas that have excellent ecological and evolutionary processes, unique natural phenomena, habitats of rare or endangered species etc. **Example:** Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area.
 - **Mixed heritage sites** contain elements of both natural and cultural significance. **Example:** Khangchendzonga National Park.
- **No. of World Heritage Sites in India:** India has **40 world heritage sites**, including **32 cultural properties, 7 natural properties** and **1 mixed site**. **[Dholavira: a Harappan City](#)** is the recent addition.
- **Nomination Process:** As per Operational Guidelines, 2019 of UNESCO, it is **mandatory to put any monument/site on the Tentative List (TL) for one year** before it is considered for the final nomination dossier.
 - Once the nomination is done, it is sent to the **World Heritage Centre (WHC)**, which will do the technical scrutiny of the same.
 - Once the submission is made, UNESCO will communicate back by early March. After that the site evaluation will happen in September /October 2022 and the dossier will be taken up for consideration in July /August 2023.

[Source: PIB](#)

