

World Heritage Sites: Two More Indian Sites Added

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Two more sites from Gujarat have been included by UNESCO among the list of World Heritage Sites. These are:

1. Sun Temple of Modhera
2. Buddhist Vihar and other ancient structures at Vad Nagar.

1. **Sun Temple of Modhera** is a Hindu temple dedicated to the solar deity Surya located at Modhera village of Mehsana district, Gujarat, India. It is situated on the bank of the river Pushpavati.

It was built after 1026-27 CE during the reign of Bhima I of the Chaulukya dynasty. No worship is offered now and the protected monument is maintained by Archaeological Survey of India.

The temple complex has three components:



Gūḍhamanḍapa, the shrine hall



Sabhamanḍapa, the assembly hall

The Sabha Mandapa has a carved ceiling, as shown below:



ceiling of Sabhamandapa

The third part is the Kunda (The Reservoir):



Panoramic view of the Kunda (Reservoir)

The halls have intricately carved exterior and pillars. The reservoir has steps to reach the bottom and numerous small shrines.

Two other Sun Temples of India are well-known.

1. The Konark Sun temple at the Eastern coast of India in the Puri district of Orissa was declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1984. The temple was built by king Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga dynasty in about 1250 CE.

The temple was destroyed by Vasco da Gama of Portugal by using the guns, mounted on his ships. Vasco da Gama was the first European, who discovered the route to reach India, which was known all over Europe as a very rich land.

Note: *The temple was destroyed during the second journey of Vasco da Gama to India. Please read a Brief Description of the Journey of Vasco da Gama, from 8 July 1497 to August 1499, when he discovered the route to India for Europe at <https://diginews360.com/discovery-of-india-by-europe/>*

2. Martand Sun Temple: It is located near the city of Anantnag in the Kashmir Valley of Jammu and Kashmir (union territory), India. It dates back to the eighth century AD. The Martand temple was built on top of a plateau from where one can view whole of the Kashmir Valley.



Central Shrine of the temple ruins

The temple was destroyed by Sikandar Shah Miri (1389-1413). The rule of Miri was an era of extreme persecution of Hindus and forcible conversion of Hindus to Islam.

2. **Buddhist Vihar and other ancient structures at Vad Nagar**

Vadnagar has the remains of a large Buddhist monastery, which flourished for hundreds of years. Vadnagar is mentioned often in the Puranas and even in the travelogue of the great Chinese traveler, Hieu-en-Tsang (7th century), as a rich and flourishing town.

The fortifications of the town were built by King Kumarpal, as mentioned in an inscription on the Arjun Bari Gate.



Vadnagar Kirti Toran

Vadnagar has the Samadhis of two sisters Tana and Riri. They could sing Rag Megh Malhar so well that it could bring solace to Tansen, the topmost singer at the court of the Mughal king, Akbar. When the two sisters were invited to sing in Akbar's court, they refused to go since a Brahmin is not supposed to sing in a King's Durbar. When the King sent an army to forcibly bring the two sisters, to save the city from the depredations by Akbar's army, the two sisters committed suicide.

*Our readers can read the news in **Gujarati language** in **Gujarat Guardian** at <https://gujaratguardian.com/happy-news-for-the-people-of-gujarat-this-02-place-was-noted-at-the-international/>*
