



# SARNATH – INDIA'S 45th UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

## Why in News?



- ▶ Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh) has been inscribed as India's 45th UNESCO World Heritage Site during the 48th Session of the World Heritage Committee held in South Korea.
- ▶ Uttar Pradesh now has 4 UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

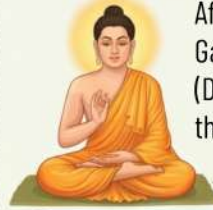


## Sarnath at a Glance

| Particular            | Details                                |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Location              | Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh                |
| Religion              | Buddhism (also Jainism)                |
| UNESCO Status         | India's 45th World Heritage Site       |
| UNESCO Tentative List | 1998                                   |
| Historic Importance   | Buddha delivered his First Sermon here |



## Why is Sarnath Famous?



After attaining enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, Gautama Buddha delivered his First Sermon (Dhammachakkappavattana) at Sarnath, marking the beginning of the Buddhist Sangha.

## Four Holiest Buddhist Sites

## LIFE OF BUDDHA



## Important Monuments at Sarnath

### Stupas



**Dhamek Stupa**  
Marks Buddha's First Sermon; Gupta floral carvings (c. 500 CE)

**Chaukhandi Stupa**  
Marks meeting with the first five disciples; octagonal tower added in 1588 by Govardhan (son of Raja Todarmal)

**Dharmarajika Stupa**  
Built by Ashoka (3rd BCE) to enshrine Buddha's relics



## Ashokan Pillar & Lion Capital



| Feature         | Details                     |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Built By        | Emperor Ashoka              |
| Period          | 250 BCE                     |
| Material        | Polished Chunar Sandstone   |
| Symbol          | Four Lions                  |
| Abacus Animals  | Bull, Horse, Elephant, Lion |
| Between Animals | 24-spoked Dharma Chakra     |
| National Emblem | Adopted by India in 1950    |



## Excavation History

| Person                              | Contribution                         |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Babu Jagat Singh (1787-88)          | Rediscovered relics                  |
| Jonathan Duncan & Colonel Mackenzie | Early colonial documentation         |
| Alexander Cunningham (1834-36)      | Systematic archaeological excavation |



## UNESCO World Heritage Sites

### What is the World Heritage Committee?

- Selecting World Heritage Sites
- Monitoring conservation
- Managing the World Heritage Fund
- Providing financial & technical assistance



## India & UNESCO

| Particular                                     | Details      |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| India's Rank                                   | 6th globally |
| Total UNESCO World Heritage Sites              | 45           |
| India's Membership in World Heritage Committee | 2021-2025    |
| Sarnath on Tentative List Since                | 1998         |