

ASI DECLARED 6 MONUMENTS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE IN 2018

Relevant for: History & Culture | Topic: Promotion and Preservation of Culture Incl. UNESCO

Works of art: The ancient Neemrana Baori, with 170 steps, in Rajasthan is a much-revered holiday destination; and right, the Bombay High Court premises at Nagpur. Special arrangement

The 125-year-old Old High Court Building in Nagpur, Maharashtra, and two Mughal-era monuments in Agra — Haveli of Agha Khan and Hathi Khana — are among the six monuments declared protected and of national importance by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 2018.

Heritage sites

The ancient Neemrana Baori in Rajasthan's Alwar district; the Group of Temples at Ranipur Jharail in Odisha's Bolangir; and the Vishnu Temple in Kotali, Pithoragarh district, Uttarkhand, are the three other monuments that have been listed.

In 2016 and 2017, no new monument was included in the list of sites of national importance. The last monument to be included in the list, in 2015, was the Vishnu Temple in Nadavayal in Kerala's Wayanad district.

The list was presented in the Lok Sabha on December 24, 2018, by the Ministry of Culture in response to a question by the Shiv Sena MP from Ramtek, Krupal Balaji Tumane. Replying to the question, the Ministry said that the ASI takes up a survey for documenting/reporting ancient monuments/sites through exploration, and that a village-to-village survey and conservation of monuments is a continuous process.

According to the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, an "Ancient Monument means any structure, erection or monument, or any tumulus or place of interment, or any cave, rock-sculpture, inscription or monolith which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which has been in existence for not less than 100 years."

There were 3,686 centrally protected monuments/sites under the ASI in the country; the number has now increased to 3,693. Uttar Pradesh (745 monuments/sites), Karnataka (506) and Tamil Nadu (413) have the highest number of ASI-maintained sites.

According to information available with the Ministry of Culture, about 321 of these centrally protected monuments/sites have been encroached upon.

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