

UNESCO adds new sites to world heritage list

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: UNESCO's world heritage committee added 26 new sites to its prestigious world heritage list during its 46th session last August in Riyadh.

The new entries include 20 cultural sites, 5 natural properties, 1 mixed site, and 2 major extensions.

The World Heritage List recognizes places of outstanding universal value, aiming to safeguard them through global cooperation.

Listing provides international visibility, conservation support, and potential boosts in tourism and funding.

Among the most notable new entries are the Carnac Megaliths in France, the Palaces of King Ludwig II of Bavaria, and the Minoan Palatial Centres in Crete.

Meeting in Paris last week, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee inscribed 26 new sites to the World Heritage List.

Among them are Germany's iconic castles built by King Ludwig II—Neuschwanstein, Herrenchiemsee, Linderhof, and the Royal House at Schachen—now joining 54 other German sites on the list.

These 19th-century palaces, visited by 1.7 million people in 2023, reflect the romantic imagination of the so-called "fairy-tale king" and famously inspired Disney's Sleeping Beauty Castle.

Other major additions include France's Carnac Megaliths—one of the world's oldest megalithic complexes with over 3,000 standing stones—and Greece's Minoan Palatial Centres, such as Knossos and Phaistos, key hubs of Bronze Age civilisation.

The session also spotlighted heritage at risk in conflict zones like Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan. In line with its Africa priority, UNESCO added five new sites across South Africa, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Kenya. A site in Senegal was removed from the endangered list following preservation progress.

Marking the 50th anniversary of the Khmer Rouge's rise to power, UNESCO added three former Cambodian prisons used during the regime's brutal rule, now serving as memorials and education centres.

World Heritage designation offers global recognition, boosts tourism, and can unlock funding—but it also brings responsibility. Sites must uphold strict conservation and visitor management standards or risk delisting.

Italy remains the leader with 61 World Heritage Sites. As of 2025, the list includes 1,248 sites across 170 countries.

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