

28-yr wait ends: UP's Sarnath is Unesco World Heritage Site

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Lucknow: Sarnath in Varanasi, where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon after attaining enlightenment, has been accorded the Unesco World Heritage Site status.

The site is the fourth inclusion from UP and 45th from India in the World Heritage Site list. The other three sites from UP are in Agra — Taj Mahal (1983), Agra Fort (1983), and Fatehpur Sikri (1986).

The announcement was made at the 48th session of the Unesco World Heritage Committee in Busan, South Korea, on Saturday.



The recognition will give a big boost to the state's Buddhist Circuit, while reinforcing UP's position as the heartland of Buddhist pilgrimage on global stage and enhancing its appeal among

international travellers.

What adds to the celebration is that the recognition comes 28 years after Sarnath was placed on Unesco's Tentative List in July 1998. The Unesco tag will cover the

Chaukhandi Stupa and the Archaeological Remains of Sarnath, located about 626 metres apart.

Chaukhandi Stupa commemorates Buddha's meeting with his five companions after enlightenment, while the archaeological complex includes the Dhamek Stupa, Dharmarajika Stupa, the Ashoka Pillar and extensive monastic remains.

Together, they preserve the site where Buddha delivered the Dhamma-chakra-pravartana (First Sermon), setting the Wheel of Dhamma (or dharma) in motion and laying the foundation of the Buddhist Sangha.

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