



ASIAN FESTIVAL 2026

# WONDERS of ASIA

WIPO, Chem. des Colombettes  
34, 1202 Genève

Wednesday, 2nd September 2026  
10.00 - 16.00

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# Greetings from President

ASIAN FESTIVAL 2026



*AAWAG Executive Committee 2026 : Mrs. Maryam Bahreini (Iran), Mrs. Uzma Tauqir (Pakistan), Mrs. Maria Soretta (AAWAG President 2026, Philippines), Mrs. Disala Jayasekera (Sri Lanka), Mrs. Almalia Habib (Indonesia).*

Welcome to the 2026 Asian Festival - **"Wonders of Asia!"**

On behalf of the members of the Asian Ambassadors' Wives Association Geneva (AAWAG), and with the generous partnership of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) under the leadership of Director General Daren Tang, it is with great joy that we welcome you to the 2026 Asian Festival: Wonders of Asia!

This year's theme celebrates the breathtaking richness of Asia—its vibrant landscapes, abundant natural resources, including hundreds of UNESCO heritage sites that holds great cultural and historic importance, and most importantly, its people. Their creativity, resilience, and cultural brilliance transform every corner of the region into a place of wonder.

As we mark our 6th anniversary, we take pride in our continued commitment to supporting programs that uplift women and children across Asia. Through this festival and our fundraising efforts, we are honored to contribute to meaningful initiatives that make a lasting difference.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to our loyal sponsors and donors whose unwavering support brings excitement and color to every festival we hold.

To our dedicated members and Missions – your boundless energy, creativity, and passion are the heartbeat of AAWAG. Each festival shines because of you. And to our husbands and children, thank you for guiding us through new technologies and helping us bring fresh, modern touches to our projects.

Together, let's celebrate the colors, cultures, and wonders of Asia with full hearts and festive spirits.

Warm Regards,

**Mrs. Maria Soretta - President of AAWAG 2026**

# ASIAN FESTIVAL 2026

## Participating Countries



Bangladesh



Bhutan



Cambodia



China



Egypt



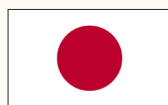
India



Indonesia



Iran



Japan



Jordan



Lao PDR



Lebanon



Malaysia



Mongolia



Myanmar



Nepal



Oman



Pakistan



Philippines



Saudi Arabia



Sri Lanka



Syria



Thailand



Türkiye



Vietnam



ASIAN FESTIVAL 2026

# AAWAG Members



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(Bangladesh)



H.E. Ms. Tshering  
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Mrs. Liv Vutha  
(Cambodia)



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Mrs. DO Tuy Ngán  
(Viet Nam)



Mrs. Madhu Seth



Mrs. Shivani Berry  
(UNICC)

## ASIAN FESTIVAL 2026

# Team



**Standing behind (L to R):** Mrs. Su Ratnam (Singapore), Mrs. Shivani Berry (UNICC), Mrs. Jyoti Rijal (Nepal), Mrs. Ananya Bagchi (India), Mrs. Reem Maguid (Egypt), Mrs. Disala Jayasekera (Sri Lanka), Mrs. Maryam Bahreini (Iran), Mrs. Maryam Al Ali (Jordan), Mrs. Dewi Suryodipuro (Indonesia).

**Sitting at the front (L to R):** Mrs. Almalia Habib (Indonesia), Mrs. Maria Soretta (Philippines), Mrs. Uzma Tauqir (Pakistan), Mrs. Joyce Tamayo (Philippines).

# Bangladesh

## Paharpur Buddhist Monastery (Somapura Mahavihara)



**Paharpur Buddhist Monastery**, also known as Somapura Mahavihara, is one of the most important archaeological sites in Bangladesh. It is located in Naogaon District and was built during the reign of King Dharmapala of the Pala Dynasty in the late 8th century. It was one of the largest Buddhist monasteries in South Asia and served as a renowned center of learning, attracting scholars and monks from different countries.

The monastery is famous for its unique architectural design. It has a massive central temple surrounded by 177 monks' cells, courtyards, prayer halls, and other structures. The walls are decorated with beautiful terracotta plaques that depict religious stories, daily life, animals, and floral patterns, reflecting the rich artistic traditions of the time.

Somapura Mahavihara played a significant role in the spread of Buddhism across South and Southeast Asia. Its architectural style also influenced the design of many Buddhist temples in neighboring countries such as Myanmar, Nepal, and Indonesia.



In recognition of its historical and cultural importance, **UNESCO** declared Paharpur a **World Heritage Site** in 1985. Today, it is one of Bangladesh's most popular tourist attractions and a valuable source of information about the country's ancient history, religion, and architecture. Paharpur remains a symbol of Bangladesh's rich cultural heritage and continues to inspire historians, archaeologists, and visitors from around the world.



# Bhutan

## The Tigers Nest



Perched dramatically on a sheer cliff approximately 900 metres above the Paro Valley at an altitude of 3120m above sea level, Paro Taktsang, widely known as the Tiger's Nest Monastery, is one of Bhutan's most revered cultural and religious landmarks. Seamlessly blending with the rugged Himalayan landscape, the monastery stands as a timeless symbol of Bhutan's spiritual identity and architectural heritage.



The sacred site is closely associated with Guru Padmasambhava (widely revered as Guru Rinpoche in Bhutan), who is credited with introducing Vajrayana Buddhism to Bhutan in the eighth century. According to Bhutanese tradition, Guru Rinpoche manifested as Guru Dorji Drolo (one of his eight manifestations) and journeyed to Taktsang on the back of a tigress to subdue negative forces and sanctify the site. He meditated in the sacred caves, which continue to be the spiritual heart of the monastery today. In 1692, Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye (A Bhutanese leader and a religious figure of that time) established the present monastery around these revered meditation caves, transforming Taktsang into one of Bhutan's most important pilgrimage destinations.



Today, Paro Taktsang remains a place of profound devotion, where pilgrims and visitors alike experience Bhutan's living Buddhist traditions amidst breathtaking natural surroundings. Its tranquil atmosphere, intricate Bhutanese architecture, and spectacular setting inspire reflection, reverence, and admiration.

Renowned as one of the world's most rewarding hikes, the trek to Paro Taktsang winds through fragrant pine forests and scenic viewpoints, offering an enjoyable and unforgettable journey that perfectly combines adventure, spirituality, and the timeless beauty of Bhutan.

# Cambodia

Where Ancient Civilization Lives and Heritage Endures

Cambodia is a land where ancient civilization and living traditions exist in harmony, from the majestic temples of Angkor to the enduring river communities that have shaped the nation's cultural identity for generations.



At the heart of the nation stands **Angkor Wat**, the enduring symbol of Cambodia and one of the world's greatest cultural treasures. Built in the 12th century and recognized as the world's largest religious monument, it is the crowning achievement of Khmer art, architecture, and engineering. Its iconic towers, intricate carvings, and sacred design reflect the spiritual vision, creativity, and cultural identity of the Khmer people. As the centerpiece of the Angkor Archaeological Park – a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Angkor Wat remains a powerful symbol of national pride and the enduring legacy of Khmer civilization.



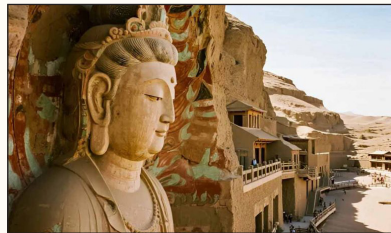
Beyond its monuments, Cambodia's heritage thrives in everyday life. Fishing is more than an occupation. It is a way of life deeply rooted in Cambodian culture, connecting people to the rhythms of nature and the rich ecosystems of the **Tonlé Sap Lake** and the Mekong River. For generations, families have passed down traditional fishing knowledge, preserving customs that remain essential to local identity and community life.

From the sunrise over Angkor Wat to the sunset on Cambodia's waterways, Cambodia reveals two enduring wonders: the legacy of a great civilization and the living traditions that continue to shape its identity.

# China

China boasts 60 UNESCO World Heritage sites. Many of these extraordinary places are more than breathtaking landscapes or historic monuments—they are living wonders shaped by the harmonious coexistence of people and nature, and by the mutual learning of diverse cultures.

For thousands of years, China's many ethnic groups have lived, worked and flourished together across this vast land. Each has preserved its unique traditions while enriching one another through exchange and shared development, creating a vibrant cultural mosaic.



Today, China continues to promote ethnic unity, advance ecological conservation, protect biodiversity, and safeguard its rich cultural heritage. By preserving both its spectacular natural environments and its diverse cultural traditions, China is ensuring that its mountains, rivers and communities continue to thrive together.

The true wonder of China lies not only in what nature has created, but also in the harmony between people, culture and the natural world.



# Egypt

## Sinai's Three Treasures: Faith, Writing, and Fortresses

Sinai is more than desert and sea—it is a living museum of human civilization. Three remarkable sites tell its story across millennia.



**Saint Catherine's Monastery**, nestled at Mount Sinai's foot, is one of the world's oldest operating Christian monasteries. Founded by Emperor Justinian I (527-565 AD), it guards the Chapel of the Burning Bush, where Moses is believed to have received the Ten Commandments. Its library holds the second-largest collection of early manuscripts globally, including the Codex Sinaiticus.



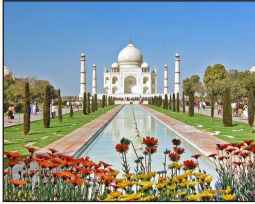
**Serabit el-Khadim**, in southwestern Sinai, tells a different tale. This ancient turquoise mining site, active since the Old Kingdom, features the Temple of Hathor, "Mistress of Turquoise," built under Senusret I and expanded by Hatshepsut. Here, Canaanite workers carved Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions—the ancestor of nearly every modern alphabet, from Hebrew and Arabic to Latin and Greek.

**Pharaoh's Island (Coral Island)**, near Taba in the Gulf of Aqaba, holds a Crusader fortress captured and expanded by Saladin in 1170. From its summit, you can see Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. The surrounding coral reefs make it a premier snorkeling destination.

Together, these sites reveal Sinai's layered identity: a place of divine revelation, linguistic revolution, and strategic power, where faith, writing, and history converge in one peninsula.



# India



## **The Taj Mahal – A Timeless Symbol of Love**

The Taj Mahal at Agra in the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh is a timeless symbol of love, beauty, and Mughal architectural excellence. Built by Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of Mumtaz Mahal, it is renowned for its white marble, symmetry, intricate carvings, and changing colours in different light. A UNESCO World Heritage Site and New Seven Wonder, it reflects India's rich cultural heritage and artistic brilliance.

## **Ajanta and Ellora Caves – India's Rock-Cut Marvels**

The Ajanta and Ellora Caves, located at Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar in the state of Maharashtra are masterpieces of India's ancient rock-cut architecture and art. Ajanta is famous for its Buddhist murals and sculptures, while Ellora showcases Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain monuments, including the magnificent Kailasa Temple. Recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, these caves preserve India's rich cultural, artistic, and spiritual heritage from around the world.



## **Akshardham Temple – A Celebration of India's Spiritual and Cultural Heritage**

The Akshardham Temple in New Delhi showcases India's spiritual heritage, traditional architecture, and artistic excellence. Dedicated to Swaminarayan, it features intricate carvings in pink sandstone and white marble. Beyond worship, its exhibitions, gardens, and musical fountain promote India's culture and values. A major landmark, Akshardham offers visitors a memorable experience of devotion, history, peace, beauty, and inspiration..

## **Khajuraho Temples – A Masterpiece of Art and Architecture**

The Khajuraho Temples in Madhya Pradesh are outstanding examples of India's architectural and artistic heritage. Built by the Chandela dynasty, they feature magnificent sandstone carvings depicting religion, nature, and daily life. Dedicated to Hindu and Jain traditions, they symbolize religious harmony. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Khajuraho reflects India's creative genius, spiritual values, and enduring cultural legacy.



# Indonesia

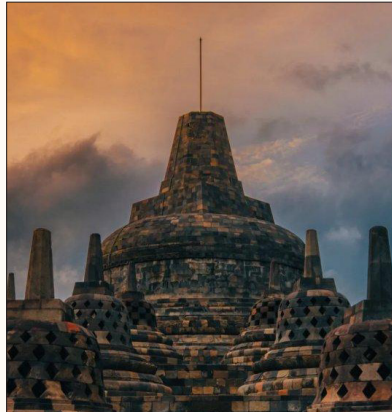
## Borobudur: A Mountain of Wisdom in the Heart of Java

In a nation where the majority is Muslim, there lies the largest Buddhist temple in the world. Rising from the lush plains of Central Java, **Borobudur** is one of Indonesia's most treasured cultural landmarks. Built in the late eighth and early ninth centuries under the Sailendra dynasty, this monumental structure was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991.



Monks in saffron and white robes process past Borobudur, reflecting the temple's enduring life as a place of worship (Photos courtesy of InJourneydestination.id).

Constructed from around two million blocks of volcanic stone, Borobudur rises as a vast stepped pyramid. Its nine stacked platforms are crowned by a central stupa, adorned with more than 2,600 relief panels and 504 Buddha statues, while 72 bell-shaped perforated stupas encircle its summit.



The temple's iconic perforated stupas crown its upper terraces around the great central stupa at dusk (Photos courtesy of InJourneydestination.id).



A monk passes the finely carved stone reliefs that line Borobudur's galleries and narrate Buddhist teachings (Photos courtesy of InJourneydestination.id).

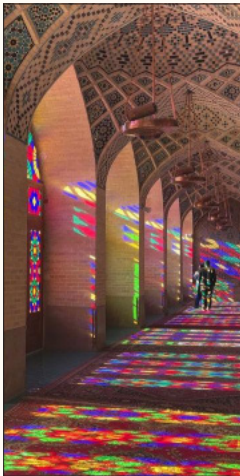
More than a monument, Borobudur is a journey. Pilgrims ascend clockwise through its galleries, moving symbolically from the world of desire, through the world of forms, toward the realm of enlightenment. The reliefs along the way recount the life of the Buddha and timeless lessons of compassion and karma.

Rediscovered in 1814 and painstakingly restored between 1975 and 1982 with international support, Borobudur remains a living sanctuary. Each year on Vesak Day, monks and pilgrims gather in candlelit procession, keeping its spiritual heritage vibrantly alive, a true wonder of Asia that continues to inspire the world.

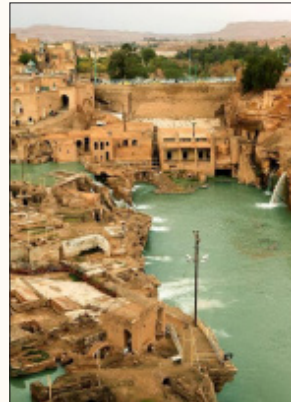


# Iran

Iran, with 29 cultural and natural properties inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, ranks among the top ten countries in the world in terms of registered sites.



Iran's ingenuity is also seen in its adaptation to nature: windcatchers in Yazd, which channel cool air into homes without modern technology, to the ancient Persian qanats that transport water across arid lands primitive form of animation.



It is a land that brings together striking contrasts of nature, from the ancient Hyrcanian forests in the north, dating back 25 to 50 million years, to the vast Lut Desert in the south-east, the 33rd largest desert in the world, and among the hottest places ever recorded on Earth. Beyond its natural wonders, Iran preserves an extraordinary cultural legacy.

The Prehistoric sites of the Khorramabad Valley reveal traces of human life in caves tens of thousands of years ago, while the Burnt City (Shahr-e Sukhteh), a 5,000-year-old settlement, has yielded remarkable discoveries such as an early prosthetic eye, evidence of skull surgery, and even a primitive form of animation.

**Pasargadae** and **Persepolis** represent the peak of the Achaemenid Empire, where diverse nations once met in a spirit of order and coexistence. Sites such as Bisotun and Takht-e Soleyman further highlight Iran's deep historical and cultural layers.

The Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System, known as the "Capital of Hydraulic Structures," is an ancient engineering masterpiece from the Achaemenid and Sasanian eras, along with 13 other historical sites all located within the city of Shushtar.

Together, these sites form not only Iran's heritage, but part of humanity's shared cultural memory.

# Japan

Mount Fuji, Japan's highest mountain, was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2013 under the title "**Fujisan, Sacred Place and Source of Artistic Inspiration.**" Standing at 3,776 meters, Mount Fuji is one of Japan's most iconic landmarks.



*Mount Fuji and its reflection*

For centuries, Mount Fuji has been regarded as a sacred mountain. People have climbed it not only as a physical challenge but also as an act of prayer, respect, and gratitude toward nature. This spiritual relationship between Mount Fuji and the Japanese people endures today and remains an important part of Japanese culture.



*"Fine Wind, Clear Morning" by Katsushika Hokusai*

Mount Fuji has also played a significant role in Japanese art and literature, and has inspired many artists and writers. In particular, Katsushika Hokusai's ukiyo-e woodblock prints helped introduce the beauty of Mount Fuji to people around the world.

Mount Fuji is more than just a mountain: it represents the deep connection between nature, culture,

and people, and has long been one of Japan's most important symbols and heritage sites. A highly popular destination, it attracts millions of visitors from both within Japan and abroad—particularly during the official climbing season from 1 July to 10 September—to appreciate its majestic beauty and experience its profound spirituality.

# Jordan



## Wadi Rum

Protected Area (WRPA) is located in the southern part of Jordan. It comprises an area of 74,200 hectares. WRPA's natural values include desert landforms developed within continental sandstones. These landforms have been developed under the influence of a combination of various controlling factors, such as lithology, tectonic activities and surface processes representing million years of ongoing landscape evolution.

## Quseir Amra

Built in the early 8th century beside the Wadi Butum, a seasonal watercourse, this desert establishment was both a fortress with a garrison and a residence/pleasure palace of the Umayyad caliphate. The exceptionally well-preserved, small pleasure palace comprises a reception hall and all richly decorated with figurative murals that reflect the secular art of the time. The extensive fresco paintings of the bath building, and reception hall are unique for Islamic architecture of the Umayyad period. The wall paintings show influences from classical pagan themes, Byzantine style portraits and hunting scenes, depictions of animals and birds, and are accompanied by inscriptions.



## Umm al-Jimal

The World Heritage Organization (UNESCO) announced in 2024 the inclusion of Umm El Jimal as the seventh Jordanian site on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Rising out of Jordan's northern basalt plain, beautiful Umm El Jimal is both a modern town and an ancient archaeological site, home to almost 2000 years of fascinating history and culture - Nabataean, Roman, Byzantine, Umayyad, Mamluk, Ottoman and Modern.



# Lao PDR

Discover the World of Heritage site in Laos

Currently, Laos has a total of 4 UNESCO World Heritage Site, all of which are recognized as Cultural Heritage sites of outstanding universal value.



*Laung Prabang Town*

**The ancient town of Laung Prabang** is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the Northern Part of the Lao PDR and often described as the Jewel in Laos. This town represents an exceptional fusion of traditional Lao architecture such as historic wooden house and temple which are European colonial architecture from French period. It is also celebrated for its living traditions and well-preserved cultural practices, such as the daily morning arms-giving ceremony, the boat racing festival, and the Lao New Year celebrations.

**Wat Phou** is located in the Southern Part of Laos in Champasak Province and is an ancient temple complex with a rich history and cultural significance. Wat Phou is remarked as a well-preserved ancient Khmer empire landscape dating back to the 5th to 15th centuries. Wat Phou's grandeur is highlighted by imposing structures, terraces, and reservoirs, all thoughtfully integrated with the natural landscape. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001.



*Wat Phou*



*Hin Nam No National Park*

**Hin Nam No National Park** was recognized as the country's 4th World Heritage Site on July 13, 2025. Hin Nam No is located in Boudalapha District, Khammouane Province, in central Laos, bordering Vietnam. The name "Hin Nam No" translates to "Spiky Rock Shoots" or "Spiky Stone Buds," perfectly describing the sharp, jagged limestone peaks resembling bamboo shoots. It is the first transboundary natural World Heritage Site in the Mekong region.

# Malaysia

## Wonders of Malaysia

**The Gunung Mulu National Park**, Sarawak, also known simply as the Mulu National Park is a national park in Miri Division, Sarawak, Malaysia. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that



*Gunung Mulu National Park, Sarawak, Malaysia*

encompasses caves and karst formations in a mountainous equatorial rainforest setting. The park is famous for its caves and the expeditions that have been mounted to explore them and their surrounding rainforest, most notably the Royal Geographical Society Expedition of 1977-1978, which saw over 100 scientists in the field for 15 months. This initiated a series of over 20 expeditions now named the Mulu Caves. The national park is named after Mount Mulu, the second highest mountain in Sarawak.

**Melaka and George Town**, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca is a UNESCO World Heritage listing, comprising the historic urban centres of two cities, Melaka and George Town, that illustrate 500 years of cultural and trade exchange between East and West.



*Melacca, Malaysia*

This World Heritage site illustrates the development of maritime urban settlements in the region over time and the contributions of diverse ethnic and cultural groups in developing these cities. The government buildings, churches, squares and fortifications of Melaka demonstrate the early stages of this history originating in the 15th-century Malay sultanate, which was followed by Portuguese and Dutch periods of control beginning in the early 16th century. George Town represents the British era from the end of the 18th century and features residential and commercial buildings of the period. In both cities, the cultural and architectural contributions of local Malays as well as Chinese and South Asian immigrants can be seen, and their own evolutions traced over times as well.



*George Town, Penang, Malaysia*

Melaka was inscribed in the listing using the Malay language spelling of the name, as opposed to the more traditional English language spelling of its name, "Malacca".

# Mongolia

## The Heart of Mongolia's Living Heritage

The Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2004, represents one of the most distinguished cultural landscapes of Central Asia, preserving over two millennia of nomadic civilization and imperial statecraft. Situated along the Orkhon River in central Mongolia, the valley contains an exceptional concentration of archaeological remains dating from the 6th century onward, reflecting the political, economic, and spiritual development of successive nomadic states, culminating in the Mongol Empire. Among its most significant features is Kharkhorum, the 13th century capital of Chinggis (Genghis) Khan's vast Empire, which flourished as a cosmopolitan centre of governance, commerce, diplomacy, and intercultural exchange.



The valley's archaeological assemblage, encompassing royal memorial complexes, ancient settlements, monasteries, and monumental inscriptions, provides compelling evidence of the continuity and adaptability of pastoral nomadic societies. Beyond its tangible heritage, the landscape embodies the enduring relationship between human communities and the natural environment, where seasonal pastoral mobility fostered a resilient tradition of sustainable land stewardship.



*Courtesy: The administration office of the Orkhon valley cultural landscape world heritage site*



*Courtesy: The administration office of the Orkhon valley cultural landscape world heritage site*

Serving as a strategic nexus of the Silk Roads, the Orkhon Valley facilitated the exchange of goods, ideas, technologies, and religious traditions across Eurasia. Its significance lies in demonstrating how pastoral societies developed sophisticated political institutions and urban centres while preserving their cultural identity. The coexistence of monumental archaeological remains and living pastoral traditions reinforces the site's authenticity, making the Orkhon Valley an unparalleled testament to the cultural ingenuity, resilience, and enduring legacy of the nomadic civilizations that shaped the history of Asia and beyond.

# Myanmar



## Hkakabo Razi

The mount Hkakabo Razi, approximately 5881 meter high, is the highest mountain in Myanmar and is widely regarded as the highest peak in Southeast Asia. It is located in the far north of Kachin State. Myanmar submitted a draft nomination dossier for Hkakabo Razi landscape to UNESCO's for review. Umayyad period. The wall paintings show influences from classical pagan themes, Byzantine style portraits and hunting scenes, depictions of animals and birds, and are accompanied by inscriptions.



## Pyu ancient cities

Pyu ancient cities (200 BC and AD 900) became Myanmar's first UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2014. They were recognized for the outstanding contribution to the spread of Buddhism, early urban planning and cultural exchanges as well as the earliest evidence of Buddhism. Pyu ancient cities such as Halin, Beikthano and Sri Ksetra are considered as the foundation of Myanmar's early history and laid the cultural and religious groundwork for the later Bagan Kingdom.



## Bagan

The ancient city of Bagan civilization (11th – 13th Centuries CE) is home to more than 2,000 temples, pagodas and monasteries. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2019, it is not only a symbol of Myanmar's rich history and spiritual legacy but also one of Southeast Asia's greatest archaeological treasures. Bagan is a sacred landscape which features an exceptional array of art and architecture, demonstrates the living city with Theravada Buddhist heritage.



# Nepal

## A Journey Through Living Heritage

Crowned by the majestic Himalayas, Nepal is a land of breathtaking landscapes, living heritage, deep spirituality, vibrant cultural diversity, and remarkable natural beauty. Home to Mount Everest (Sagarmatha), the world's highest peak, Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, the sacred Pashupatinath Temple, diverse national parks, and hundreds of indigenous cultures and languages, Nepal offers unforgettable experiences for travelers seeking adventure, culture, and spiritual discovery.

**Pashupatinath Temple**, is situated on the banks of the sacred Bagmati River in Kathmandu, Pashupatinath is one of Hinduism's holiest temples and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, its iconic two-tiered pagoda, gilded roof, silver-plated doors, and intricate wood carvings showcase the finest traditions of Nepali architecture and craftsmanship.



**Sagarmatha National Park**, is home to Mount Everest, Sagarmatha National Park became Nepal's first UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site in 1979. Covering over 1,100 square kilometres, it features dramatic Himalayan landscapes, snow-capped peaks, alpine lakes, deep valleys, and rich biodiversity.



**Lumbini**, is located in the peaceful plains of southern Nepal, Lumbini is the birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama Buddha and one of the world's most sacred pilgrimage sites. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997, it symbolizes peace, compassion, and spiritual enlightenment, attracting visitors from across the globe.



**Swayambhunath Stupa**, is known as the "Monkey Temple," Swayambhunath is one of Nepal's oldest and most revered religious monuments. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is an architectural masterpiece and an enduring symbol of Nepal's rich cultural heritage, peace, harmony, and spiritual tradition.



### Timeless Treasures of Al Dakhiliyah Governorate

Al Dakhiliyah Governorate is one of Oman's most treasured cultural and natural regions, renowned for its rich heritage, remarkable architecture, and spectacular landscapes within the Al Hajar Mountains. The governorate is home to historic forts, traditional villages, and scenic mountain environments that reflect the enduring character of Omani civilization.



**Bahla Fort**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is one of the largest mud-brick fortresses in the Arabian Peninsula. Built over several centuries, it is an outstanding example of traditional Omani architecture and craftsmanship. Surrounded by a historic oasis and ancient defensive walls, the fort remains one of the country's most important cultural landmarks.



Towering above the plains of Al Dakhiliyah, **Jabal Al Akhdar** (the Green Mountain) is renowned for its dramatic landscapes and temperate climate. Rising to more than 2,000 metres above sea level, it is famous for its terraced farms, traditional mountain villages, and the cultivation of pomegranates, walnuts, apricots, and the Damask roses used to produce Omani rose water.

Situated at the heart of Jabal Al Akhdar, the **Saiq Plateau** is the highest inhabited plateau in Oman and one of the Sultanate's most scenic destinations. Known for its fertile orchards, cool climate, and panoramic canyon views, the plateau is particularly admired during the spring rose season, when its terraced fields bloom with thousands of Damask roses.

Completing this remarkable landscape is **Misfat Al Abriyeen**, a centuries-old mountain village distinguished by its stone houses, narrow alleyways, and lush palm groves nourished by the traditional falaj irrigation system. The village is widely admired for preserving its architectural heritage and harmonious relationship with the surrounding environment.



# Pakistan

## Mohenjodaro & Taxila: Twin Windows into Pakistan's Past

Pakistan is home to two remarkable UNESCO World Heritage Sites - Mohenjodaro and Taxila, offering a fascinating window into the civilizations that shaped the cultural and historical foundations of the sub-continent.



*Mohenjodaro: The Great Bath*



*Taxila: Dharmajika Stupa*



*Taxila: Dharmajika Stupa*

Rising from the plains of Sindh, Mohenjodaro, the Mound of the Dead, was one of the great cities of the Indus Valley Civilization, flourishing around 2500 BCE. Its grid patterned streets, covered drainage system, and the enigmatic Great Bath reveal a society devoted to order and sanitation, yet its undeciphered script and absence of palaces still leave scholars debating the nature of its governance.

Several hundred kilometres north, in the hills of Punjab, lies Taxila, ancient Takshashila, a crossroads city shaped by Persians, Greeks, Mauryans, and Kushans. Once home to one of the world's earliest centres of learning, its ruins include the Dharmarajika Stupa and the monastery of Jaulian, whose carved stucco figures speak to centuries of Buddhist scholarship.

Together, inscribed as UNESCO sites in 1980, Mohenjo-daro and Taxila trace two very different chapters of Pakistan's ancient story, one an early urban civilization built on order, the other a cosmopolitan hub built on the exchange of ideas. Visiting either site is a reminder that this land has long stood at the centre of human history.

# Philippines

Love the Philippines: Where Nature Thrives, History Lives, and Wonders Await.

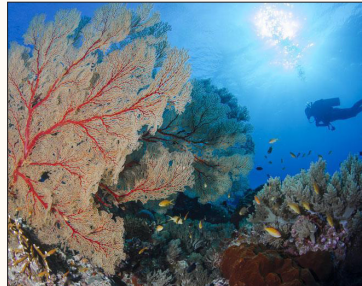
The Philippines is one of the Wonders of Asia, celebrated for its breathtaking islands, crystal-clear waters, and rich biodiversity. Its vibrant culture, warm hospitality, and iconic landmarks make it a truly unforgettable destination in the region.

**Tubbataha Reef** is one of the Philippines' greatest natural treasures, located in the middle of the Sulu Sea. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is a protected marine park famous for its crystal-clear waters, vibrant coral reefs, and incredible biodiversity. Strict conservation measures help preserve its fragile ecosystem, making it one of the best-maintained marine sanctuaries in the world.

**Vigan** in Ilocos Sur, Vigan is a UNESCO World Heritage Site celebrated for its remarkably preserved Spanish colonial architecture and rich cultural traditions.



(Photos courtesy of Government of Vigan City).



(Photos courtesy of Jonathan Ternoy).

**Chocolate Hills** in Bohol features 1,776 perfectly cone-shaped hills spread across a vast area, creating a breathtaking view.

A trip to the Philippines is more than just sightseeing—it is an opportunity to connect with nature and discover the beauty and rich culture of the Philippines.

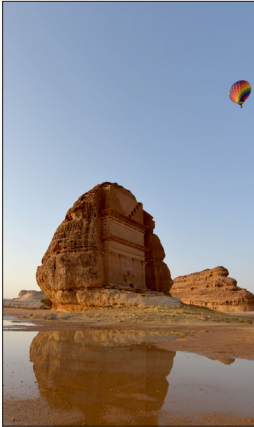


(Photos courtesy of DOT Philippines).



# Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a land where ancient civilizations, Islamic heritage, and breathtaking natural landscapes come together. Located at the heart of the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia is home to the Two Holy Mosques in Makkah and Madinah and has played a central role in regional and global history for centuries.



*AlUla, Al Madinah Region.*



*Jabal Al Lawz, Tabuk Region.*



*Jeddah, Makkah Region.*

Saudi Arabia is home to 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, reflecting its rich archaeological and cultural legacy. Among the most remarkable are Hegra (Al-Hijr), the Kingdom's first UNESCO-listed site; At-Turaif District in Diriyah, the birthplace of the First Saudi State; Historic Jeddah, the historic gateway to Makkah; Al-Ahsa Oasis, one of the world's largest natural oases; Hima Cultural Area, renowned for its ancient rock art and inscriptions; and The Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area, the latest Saudi site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

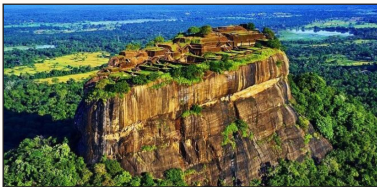
From the towering mountains of Asir to the golden dunes of the Empty Quarter (Rub' al Khali), and from the pristine Red Sea coastline to the lush oases of the Eastern Province, the Kingdom offers extraordinary geographical diversity and unique natural beauty.

Saudi Arabia is also preserving its heritage through Vision 2030, investing in archaeological conservation, cultural initiatives, museums, and sustainable tourism while sharing its history and traditions with the world. Today, the Kingdom combines its deep-rooted heritage with innovation, making it one of the world's most dynamic cultural destinations.

# Sri Lanka

## Sigiriya - The Lion Rock Fortress

Sigiriya is an ancient granite, believed-to-be volcanic plug that rises up to 180 meters above the surrounding forested plains.



*(Photos courtesy of Binuka Poojan Wikimedia Commons)*

**Gardens** - Surrounding Sigiriya are remains of intricately planned pools and fountains, whose ancient hydraulic systems still function at large. Approaching Sigiriya, there are boulder gardens with winding paths through immovable rock, then rising terraced gardens carved into the landscape lead to the base of Sigiriya.

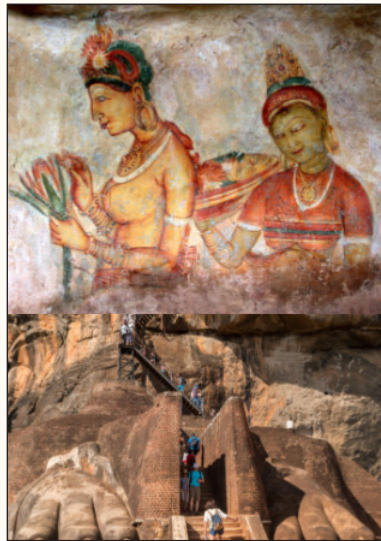
**The Coloured Cliff Face** - Midway up Sigiriya lies frescoes of celestial nymphs, "apsaras"; only around 19 of possibly once 500 frescoes remain. Below the frescoes lies the once reflective Mirror Wall, now with 'graffiti' collected over centuries providing insights into ancient Sri Lanka.

**The Lion's Gate** - Two massive lion paws from a once grand lion gateway decorate stairs leading to the palace on the rock's summit, giving Sigiriya, or Sinhagiri, its name: Lion Rock.

**A Sky Palace** - Today, atop Sigiriya stands the ruins of an elaborate palace complex with remnants of rooms, halls, terraces, gardens, and pools overlooking breathtaking views of below forest and far-off mountains.

**Sigiriya is protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1982 and is a must-visit attraction of Sri Lanka.**

The imposing nature of Sigiriya made it the site for the fortified capital of King Kashyapa I between 477 to 495 CE after he forcefully seized the throne from his father and he feared his exiled half-brother's revenge. This citadel never lacked luxury.



*(Photos courtesy of Dronepicr Wikimedia Commons).*

# Syria

Syria is a treasure trove of human history, home to some of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities and breathtaking archaeological wonders, its cultural landmarks remain profoundly significant to global heritage.



*Umayyad Mosque, Damascus*

At the heart of the capital lies the **Umayyad Mosque** in Damascus. As one of the largest and oldest mosques in the world, it is a masterpiece of early Islamic architecture. Visitors are captivated by its expansive, gleaming marble courtyard and stunning golden mosaics that depict a tranquil paradise.



*Palmyra City, The Bride of Desert*

Moving into the Syrian Desert, the ancient oasis city of **Palmyra** stands as a testament to Greco-Roman brilliance fused with Persian influences. Once ruled by the legendary Queen Zenobia, its towering grand colonnades and monumental arches arise dramatically from the sand, telling stories of a vital Silk Road trading hub.



*Al Madina Souk, Aleppo*

Further north, the **Old Souk of Aleppo** offers a journey into the vibrant pulse of ancient trade. As the largest covered historic market in the world, this sprawling labyrinth of stone-vaulted alleys stretches for miles. Visitors are immersed in a sensory wonderland filled with the rich aromas of Aleppo laurel soap, exotic spices, and traditional textiles.

# Thailand

## Ayutthaya: A Living UNESCO World Heritage Site

As Thailand's renowned UNESCO World Heritage Site, Ayutthaya stands out as a former vibrant capital where the essence of Thai Soft Power comes to life. It is a destination where history is not just remembered but actively lived and tasted



A journey here is incomplete without diving into its rich culinary scene. Food lovers from around the globe indulge in the **charcoal-grilled giant river prawns**, followed by the delicate sweetness of signature Roti Sai Mai, Ayutthaya's cotton candy wrap.



Resonating with the spirit of **Muay Thai**, Ayutthaya offers martial arts enthusiasts a chance to training authentic camps rooted in centuries of tradition. Meanwhile, visitors seeking tranquility can immerse themselves

in wellness through ancient Thai herbal massages, finding a profound sense of peace amidst the stunning architecture of sacred temples

The city's cultural charm also extends to fashion. A favorite ritual for modern travelers is renting traditional Thai attire, stepping back in time to capture timeless photographs against the backdrop of historic ruins.

Deepening this cultural tapestry is Ayutthaya's enduring connection to its waterways. Life still thrives along the rivers, echoing the rhythms of the past. The peaceful sight of monks receiving alms by boat at dawn showcases a heritage that remains deeply woven into the local daily life.

Ultimately, Ayutthaya is far more than a collection of ancient ruins. It is a living, breathing masterpiece where timeless history, rich culture, and daily traditions beautifully intertwine.





# Türkiye

Cappadocia, Göbeklitepe, and Ephesus are among Turkey's greatest treasures, and together they read like a map of human history.



**Cappadocia:** Where Nature and Human Ingenuity Meet. Located in Central Anatolia, Cappadocia is considered a wonder because its landscape and human history are inseparable. Its volcanic rock formations, cave dwellings, early churches, and underground cities show how communities adapted to difficult conditions and created protected settlements in extraordinary ways. More than a place of striking beauty, Cappadocia is a living record of survival, faith, and creativity.



**Ephesus:** A Legacy of Ancient Urban Life. Located in western Türkiye, Ephesus adds another important layer to this remarkable human story. As a major ancient city and UNESCO World Heritage Site, it preserves the achievements of classical urban life in the Mediterranean world. Its temples, theater, streets, and public spaces reflect a sophisticated center of trade, architecture, and cultural exchange. These remains show how advanced and connected city life had become in antiquity.

**Göbeklitepe:** A Turning Point in Early Civilization. Located in Southeastern Türkiye, Göbeklitepe holds extraordinary historical importance. Often described as one of the world's earliest monumental religious centers, dating back about 12,000 years, it changes everything about the timeline of organized ritual and complex social cooperation. In that sense, it is a true wonder of the world because it forces us to rethink how religion and community engagement emerged.



# Vietnam

## Discover Viet Nam's UNESCO Natural Heritage

Viet Nam is home to nine properties on UNESCO's World Heritage List: six cultural, two natural and one mixed cultural-natural property. Together, its three heritage landscapes recognized for outstanding natural values reveal a country shaped by sea, stone, forests and rivers.



*Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago*

In north-eastern Viet Nam, thousands of forested limestone towers rise dramatically from emerald waters. Covering 65,650 hectares and encompassing 1,133 islands and islets, Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago is one of the world's finest examples of marine-invaded tower karst. Its cliffs, caves, hidden lagoons, mangroves and tropical forests form an exceptional mosaic of geology and biodiversity.

Stretching across the border between Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park and Hin Nam No National Park form one of the world's most outstanding and intact limestone karst landscapes. The transboundary property, approved in 2025, covers 217,447 hectares and protects immense cave systems, subterranean rivers, tropical forests and habitats of global importance. In Viet Nam, Phong Nha-Ke Bang is renowned for spectacular caverns and an adventurous landscape that still conveys the mystery of the earth's deep geological past.



*Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park*



*Trang An Landscape Complex*

Located in Ninh Binh Province, Trang An is Viet Nam's first mixed cultural and natural World Heritage property. Towering limestone peaks, rainforest, rice fields and a network of tranquil waterways create a landscape best explored by small rowing boat through caves and enclosed valleys. Archaeological evidence from the complex records more than 30,000 years of human adaptation to major environmental and climatic changes, giving Trang An exceptional significance for both nature and culture.

# Our Donations

ASIAN FESTIVAL 2026



Donated to Myanmar through **The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** in the amount of 10.470,70 chf following the recent earthquake in Myanmar.



To **World Food Program (WFP) In Gaza** for the amount of 9000 Chf.  
The donations has been acknowledge by Ms. Shanon Howard, Director of WFP,  
at 7 November 2025

ASIAN FESTIVAL 2026

# Acknowledgments

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our sponsors for their generous support, to the participating countries and vendors for their enthusiastic involvement, and to all who have assisted us. Your contribution have been invaluable in making the Asian Festival 2026 successful.



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ASIAN FESTIVAL 2026

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- Mission of Syria
- Mission of Thailand
- Mission of Türkiye
- Mission of Viet Nam
- UNICC

# ASIAN FESTIVAL 2026

## Monthly Meetings



**26 January 2026**  
Hosted by Madame Shivani Berry  
(Spouse of Director of UNICC Geneva)



**13 February 2026**  
Hosted by Mrs Reem Maguid  
(Spouse of PR of Egypt)



**25 March 2026**  
Hosted by Madame Maria Soretta  
(Spouse of PR Philippines)



**17 April 2026**  
Hosted by Madame Naila Bilal  
(Spouse of PR of Pakistan)



**13 May 2026**  
May Monthly Meeting at L'Auberge de  
Port-Gitana



**25 June 2026**  
Hosted by Mrs. Makiko Oike  
(Spouse of PR of Japan)

# Asian Festival

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025





# Asian Festival

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025







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