



Research Unit

Press Information Bureau
Government of India

SMRITIVAN EARTHQUAKE MUSEUM

Smritivan Finds Place In World Selection For The Prix Versailles Museums

June 16, 2024

The **Smritivan Earthquake Memorial and Museum**, located in Bhuj, Gujarat, which **pays homage to the people** who lost their lives in the devastating **earthquake** that struck the region on **January 26, 2001**, has been **shortlisted by UNESCO for the prestigious Prix Versailles Award**, becoming **the first museum in India to be selected for the award**. Prime Minister Shri Modi, Home Minister Shri Amit Shah and other senior leaders hailed Smritivan being shortlisted for the prestigious award.

The earthquake, which claimed thousands of lives of almost 13,000 people and caused widespread destruction, left an indelible mark on the people of Gujarat. Prime Minister Modi envisioned the Smritivan Memorial and Museum to serve as a poignant reminder of the lives lost and to celebrate the spirit of resilience shown by the people of the state. PM Modi inaugurated the state-of-the-art memorial and museum on August 28, 2022.

The museum was established not only to honour the earthquake victims but also to educate the public about earthquakes and disaster management.



Smritivan in Kutch is a tribute to those we lost in the tragic Earthquake of 2001. It is a reminder of human resilience and courage as well. Glad that this Museum has found a place on the World Selection for the Prix Versailles Museums 2024





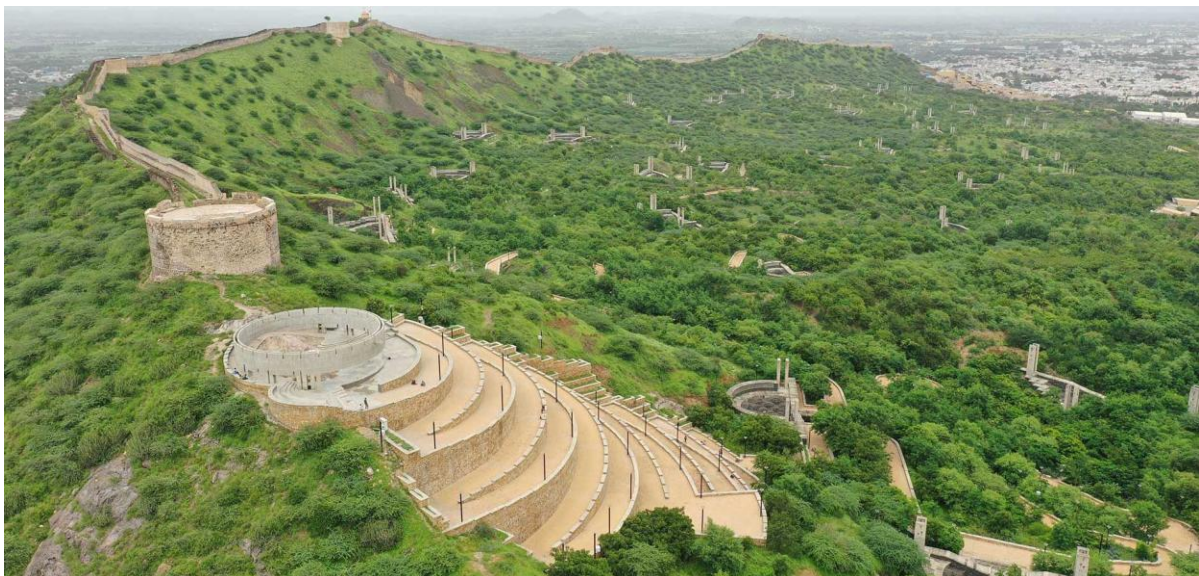
BHUJ 2001 EARTHQUAKE

The 2001 earthquake was a massive earthquake that occurred on January 26, 2001, in the state of Gujarat. The earthquake struck near the town of Bhuj on the morning of Republic Day, and it was felt throughout much of northwestern India and even in parts of Pakistan.

Measuring 7.9 on the Richter scale, and with Bhuj as the epicentre, the earthquake killed around 12,932 people and impacted 15.23 lakh individuals from the Kutch district alone. As many as 890 villages were affected, moreover, the earthquake also destroyed food and water supplies, and devastated the stock of ration in homes, and other necessities.

ARCHITECTURAL MARVEL

Smritivan is a marvel of modern architecture and sustainable design. Smritivan, which can be translated as the forest of memories, is the largest memorial and museum to ever be built in modern India. Situated on the Bhujiyo Dungar (a small hill) on the outskirts of Bhuj, the complex covers a vast area over 470 acres. It also shares the area with the Bhujia fort, which is more than 300 years old.



The site integrates contemporary architectural elements with the natural landscape, creating a harmonious blend that enhances the visitor experience. The design incorporates renewable

energy sources and sustainable practices, reflecting a commitment to environmental sustainability. There's a locally installed 1.1 Megawatt solar power plant that powers the museum. The plant aims to provide a source of self-sustainable, renewable green energy that might support any future projects in the area.

The museum also has 50 check-dam reservoirs that house the name plates of the earthquake victims. Along with this, the reservoirs are carefully planned to recharge the surrounding water levels, giving life to the surrounding forests. Each element of the museum focuses on regeneration, sustainability, and hope for a better future. The memorial also consists of the world's largest Miyawaki Forest with over 3 lakh plants, spread across the entire memorial to create a living, breathing monument that also serves as the lungs for the city of Bhuj.

The state-of-the-art museum is segregated in seven blocks, which are based on seven themes: **Rebirth, Rediscover, Restore, Rebuild, Rethink, Relive and Renew.**



- The **Rebirth** section depicts the Earth's evolution and its ability to overcome calamities.
- The second, **Rediscover**, showcases Gujarat's topography and various natural disasters that the state is vulnerable to.
- **Restore** block takes one back to the immediate aftermath of the 2001 earthquake. Galleries in this block showcase the massive relief efforts that were undertaken by individuals as well as organisations.
- The fourth block of **Rebuild** showcases Gujarat's rebuilding initiatives and success stories in the last 23 years.
- The **Rethink** block prompts the visitor to think and learn about different types of disasters and future readiness for any type of disaster at any time.
- The sixth section, which is named **Relive** helps us to relive the experience of an earthquake with the help of a simulator. The experience is designed in a 5D simulator and is meant to give the visitor the ground reality of an event of this scale.
- **Renew** is the seventh and the last block provides people with a space for remembrance where they can pay homage to the lost souls.

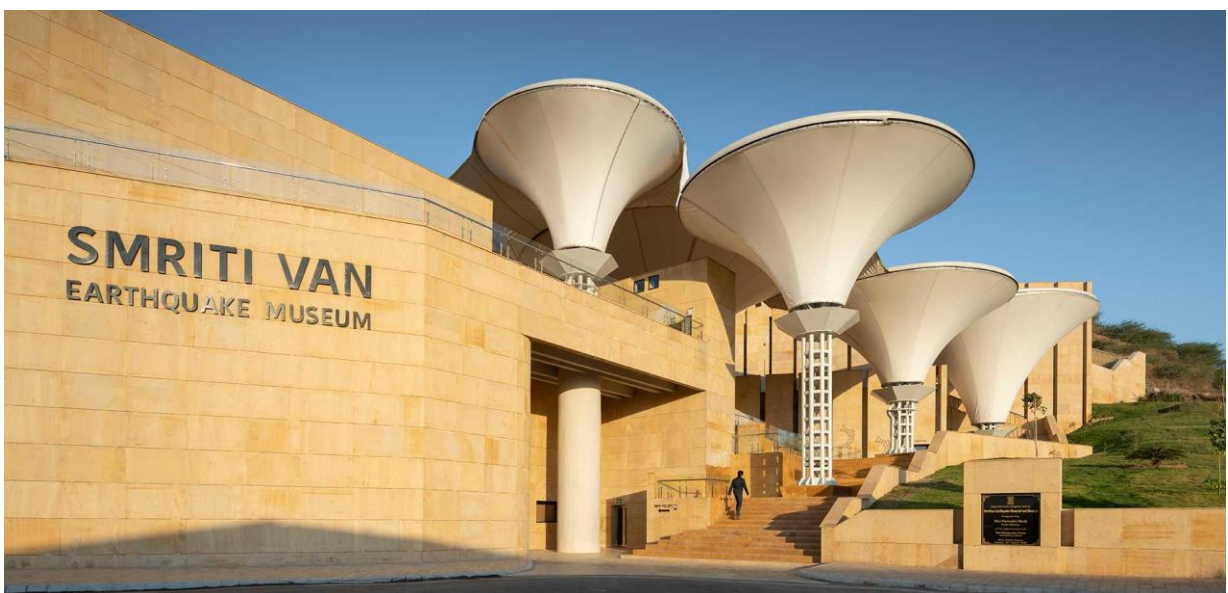
The memorial also consists of a Sun-Point that overlooks the city, from where sunrises and sunsets can be viewed from atop the Bhujiyo Dungar.

GLOBAL RECOGNITION: PRIX VERSAILLES MUSEUMS 2024

Smritivan has achieved a significant milestone by being included in the World Selection for the Prix Versailles Museums. Announced each year at UNESCO since 2015, the Prix Versailles is a series of architectural competitions that shine a light on the finest contemporary projects worldwide. This recognition places Smritivan among the world's top museums, acknowledging its architectural excellence, cultural significance, and educational value.



Its inclusion in the UNESCO list not only cements its status as a site of global significance, but also showcases India's growing prowess in the tourism as well as infrastructure sectors. At the same time, the memorial site provides the bereaved families and others a space for reflection and remembrance, thus serving as a sombre tribute to the souls lost to natural calamities.



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Santosh Kumar/Himanshu Pathak/Ritu Kataria/Arushee Pradhan