

Pakistan at the 48th Session of the World Heritage Committee

Busan, Republic of Korea · 19-29 July 2026

A 48COM Session Brief · prepared July 2026

1. About this brief

The Pakistan World Heritage Initiative (PWHI) is an **independent civil-society initiative**. It is not a government body, and it is not affiliated with UNESCO or the Department of Archaeology and Museums. This brief is prepared from public UNESCO records, Pakistani heritage statutes, and PWHI's own structured national heritage dataset. Throughout, verified UNESCO and legal information is distinguished from PWHI analysis, and draft decisions of the Committee are treated as provisional until adopted.

2. Pakistan at the 48th Session

The 48th session of the World Heritage Committee is held at BEXCO, Busan, Republic of Korea, from 19 to 29 July 2026 — an opening on 19 July followed by working sessions to 29 July, and the first time the Republic of Korea hosts the Committee. Across the session the Committee examines nominations for 30 new sites, proposals concerning three already-listed properties, and the state of conservation of 147 inscribed properties.

For Pakistan, the session turns on **state of conservation**, not new inscription. Two inscribed properties — the Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro and the Historical Monuments at Makli, Thatta — are before the Committee for state-of-conservation examination. Pakistan's five new nominations, including the Port of Banbhore, are advancing procedurally toward the 2027 cycle and are not proposed for inscription at 48COM.

3. Pakistan's six World Heritage properties

Pakistan ratified the World Heritage Convention on 23 July 1976. It has six inscribed properties, all cultural:

Property	Province	Type	Inscribed
Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro	Sindh	Cultural	1980
Taxila	Punjab	Cultural	1980
Buddhist Ruins of Takht-i-Bahi and Sahr-i-Bahlol	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Cultural	1980
Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore	Punjab	Cultural	1981
Historical Monuments at Makli, Thatta	Sindh	Cultural	1981
Rohtas Fort	Punjab	Cultural	1997

4. Twenty-nine years without a new inscription

Pakistan's most recent inscription was **Rohtas Fort in 1997** — nearly three decades ago. The pipeline is now moving again: Pakistan advances five new nominations — the Port of Banbhore and the Nagarparkar cultural landscape (Sindh), the Karez water-management system (Balochistan), Hiran Minar (Punjab) and the Buddhist ruins of Ranigat (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) — which, if inscribed, would raise the national total from six to eleven. These are directed at the 2027 cycle.

Pakistan's **Tentative List now stands at 29 properties**, following 2026 additions including the Kalash Valleys and the Sindh forts of Kot Diji, Naukot and Umerkot. The Tentative List is the antechamber of the World Heritage List; its length against a 29-year inscription gap is the central story of Pakistan's engagement with the Convention.

5. State of conservation at 48COM

Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro

Moenjodaro remains under active monitoring. The Committee's 2024 decision (46 COM 7B.38) took note of the findings of the **March 2024 joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission** and requested implementation of its recommendations on conservation and management, further research, vulnerability assessment, and drainage. The persistent threats are salinity, a rising water table, monsoon rainfall and resource constraints. The draft decisions before the Committee (documents WHC/26/48.COM/7B and addenda) continue to press for an overall drainage system, an Integrated Management Plan, and a revised Disaster Risk Reduction Plan, and reiterate that Heritage Impact Assessments and project documentation must reach the World Heritage Centre before works begin or irreversible decisions are taken.

Historical Monuments at Makli, Thatta

Makli is before the Committee following Pakistan's state-of-conservation report of 20 November 2025. On record are post-2022-flood assessments, conservation work including at the Sheikh Jiyo Tomb, and progress toward the Conservation Plan, the Revised Management Plan (2023–2028) and the Disaster Risk Reduction Plan (2023–2030). Continuing concerns include flooding, illegal activity, land conversion, housing encroachment, waste, and structural instability. (A 2025 state-of-conservation report for the Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore is also on record.)

6. Port of Banbhore — a nomination in progress

The Port of Banbhore, an early-Islamic trading port on the Sindh coast dating to the first millennium CE, has passed UNESCO's completeness check and is set for examination at the 49th session in 2027. This is a procedural milestone only: no evaluation or inscription decision has yet been made, and none is expected at 48COM.

7. The national protection gap

Beyond the six inscribed and 29 tentative properties lies the wider national record. PWHI maintains a structured inventory of approximately **6,200 catalogued heritage places**. Within that dataset, PWHI identifies **676 places** as carrying some form of legal protection and **5,524 — about 89% — as not carrying identified statutory protection**, subject to

gazette verification. Of the protected records, PWHI's data attributes 382 to the Antiquities Act 1975, 226 to the Punjab Special Premises (Preservation) Ordinance 1985, and the remainder to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Sindh instruments.

This is PWHI analysis on PWHI's inventory, transparently labelled as such. Protection status for any individual site is treated as unverified unless an identifiable statute or gazette notification is confirmed.

8. Taxila Watch

Taxila (inscribed 1980) is a dispersed property of many component sites — among them Bhir Mound, Sirkap, Sirsukh, Dharmarajika, Jaulian and Mohra Moradu — spread across a valley under development pressure. PWHI monitors master-planning and infrastructure proposals in the Taxila valley and calls for project-level Heritage Impact Assessment, aligned to the buffer-zone and management requirements of the Operational Guidelines, before any intervention. This is PWHI monitoring and advocacy, not a formal heritage-impact determination.

9. Recommendations

To the State Party (federal and provincial authorities)

- Submit the outstanding management instruments on UNESCO's timelines — the drainage system and Integrated Management Plan for Moenjodaro; completion of the conservation, management and disaster-risk plans for Makli.
- Route every development near a World Heritage property or its buffer zone through a Heritage Impact Assessment, submitted to the World Heritage Centre before irreversible decisions are taken.
- Begin closing the protection gap by prioritising statutory notification for the highest-value unprotected sites in the national inventory.

To UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies

- Sustain reactive monitoring for Moenjodaro and Makli and support disaster-risk-reduction capacity for flood- and salinity-exposed properties.

To universities, institutions and civil society

- Support documentation, field verification and independent monitoring of both inscribed properties and the wider 6,200-site inventory.

10. Methodology, sources and independence

PWHI distinguishes verified UNESCO and statutory information from its own analysis. Draft decisions are provisional until adopted by the Committee. Inventory figures are drawn from PWHI's heritage dataset and its Heritage Intelligence research engine, and are labelled as analysis. PWHI is independent, non-governmental, and not a UNESCO or official platform.

SOURCES

- UNESCO — 48th session of the World Heritage Committee — <https://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/48COM>
- 48th WHC Busan 2026 (host) — <https://48whcbusan2026.kr/>

- UNESCO — Pakistan State Party page — <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/pk>
- List of World Heritage Sites in Pakistan (inscription years) — https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_World_Heritage_Sites_in_Pakistan
- Pakistan nominates five new sites (Banbhore, Nagarparkar, Karez, Hiran Minar, Ranigat) — <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2609389/pakistan>
- Kalash Valleys and Sindh forts added; Tentative List rises to 29 — <https://pamirtimes.net/2026/04/29/kalash-valleys-added-to-unesco-tentative-list-pakistans-heritage-count-rises-to-29/>
- UNESCO decision 46 COM 7B.38 (Moenjodaro, 2024) — <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/8564>
- UNESCO decision 45 COM 7B.170 (Makli, 2023) — via PWHI decision corpus — <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/>
- PWHI Heritage Intelligence — national inventory (~6,200 records) — *internal dataset*