

## Symbol of eternal love- The Taj, one of the Seven Wonders



Rituparna Goswami Pande · 06:11, 11 Jul 2007 · 17213 views · 3 min read



The timeless beauty of the Taj Mahal- the symbol of love has defied the vagaries of time. This 17<sup>th</sup> century marble mausoleum built by emperor, Shah Jehan in memory of his beloved queen Mumtaz Mahal is the epitome of Mughal architecture and also pride of every Indian. The Taj tells the story of love grief and immortality that is carved in ancient art. And therefore it is no surprise that the Taj was included into the new list of Seven Wonders of the World. The announcements were made in a packed Benfica Stadium in Lisbon where the Taj was declared as one of the seven wonders. In a colourful ceremony in the Portuguese capital Lisbon to coincide with the date 07.07.07, Bollywood star Bipasha Basu announced Taj Mahal as one of the wonders. Agra Mayor Anjula Singh received the award. (<http://www.angelfire.com/in/myindia/images/mumtaz1.jpg>)

(<http://www.angelfire.com/in/myindia/images/agra01.jpg>) *Taj Mahal* stands on the bank of River

Yamuna. Tourists from all over the world flock to Agra to admire India's most famous architectural wonder, the Taj. The postcard picture of *Taj Mahal* does not adequately convey the legend, the poetry and the romance that shrouds what Rabindranath Tagore calls "*a teardrop on the cheek of time*". *Taj Mahal* means "Crown Palace" and is in fact the most well preserved and architecturally beautiful tomb in the world. It is best described by the English poet, Sir Edwin Arnold, as "*Not a piece of architecture, as other buildings are, but the proud passions of an emperor's love wrought in living stones*". It was built by Shah Jahan in 1631 in memory of his second wife, Mumtaz Mahal, a Muslim Persian princess. The Taj immortalizes a queen who died while accompanying her husband in Burhanpur in a campaign to crush a rebellion after giving birth to their 14th child. The death so crushed the emperor that all his hair and beard were said to have grown snow white in a few months. The others that have joined the Taj are the Great Wall of China, the Coliseum of Rome, the ruins of Petra in Jordan, the statue of Christ the redeemer in Rio de Janeiro, the Incan ruins of Machu Pichu in Peru, and the ancient Mayan city of Chichen Itza in Mexico. It may be mentioned that eyebrows have been raised regarding the selection process where a public voting system was introduced that allowed a person to cast unlimited number of votes. Even the UNESCO has distanced itself from the campaign while others termed it a commercial gimmick. Santanu Baruah from Delhi has intimated that being a big fan of the Taj Mahal, he has used all possible modes to vote for the Taj. The important thing to be kept in mind is that with this feat it becomes imperative for the government as well as the public to work towards the conservation of this world heritage as there will be an increase in tourist flow bringing with it further wear and tear of the priceless monument.



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