

India to host Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Tourism Ministers' Meeting (TMM) on 17th - 18th March 2023 in Kashi

Tourism Joint Action Plan to be adopted at Tourism Ministers' Meeting on 17th March 2023.

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India will host the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Tourism Ministers' Meeting (TMM) on 17th - 18th March 2023 in Kashi (Varanasi), which has been designated as the first cultural capital of the SCO. India is the current chair of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

During TMM, Tourism Joint Action Plan on the Development of Cooperation in Tourism among SCO member countries would be adopted. The TMM will be preceded by 2nd Tourism Expert Working Group Meeting on 14th -15th March 2023 which will discuss and finalize Tourism Joint Action before being adopted at the SCO Tourism Ministers' meet on 17th March 2023.

The Joint Action Plan to be discussed during the 2nd EWG meeting will include actions relating to Promotion of the SCO tourism brand, Promotion of the cultural heritage of the SCO Member States in tourism, Sharing and Exchange of information and digital technology in tourism, promoting of mutual cooperation in medical and health tourism., Improving the quality of services. The Joint Action Plan will be adopted during the meeting of SCO Tourism Ministers on 17th March 2023 in Kashi.

India has assumed the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) Chairship for 2023. As part of the tourism track activities under India's chairship, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India planned various activities such as (i) SCO Tourism Mart during SATTE (South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange) from 9th-11th [February 2023](#) (ii) SCO Expert Level Tourism Working Group Meeting and SCO Tourism Minister's Meeting in Kashi (Varanasi) from 13-18th March 2023 and (iii) SCO Food Festival in Mumbai from 13-19 [April 2023](#).

The eight member countries of SCO represent around 42% of the world population and 25% of the global GDP. There is an immense tourism potential in the region which can be promoted by increasing awareness about SCO countries. The total Cultural Heritage of the SCO member states, observers and partners include 207 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. To showcase this unique product of the region, SCO member countries have decided to designate one city (from SCO member countries) as tourism and cultural capital every year under rotating initiative. It is interesting to mention that "Kashi" (Varanasi) has been designated as the first cultural capital of the SCO under this initiative.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an intergovernmental organization founded in Shanghai on 15 June 2001. The SCO currently comprises of eight Member States (China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), four Observer States interested in acceding to full membership (Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, and Mongolia) and six "Dialogue Partners" (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Turkey).

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