

VARANASI TO BE 'CULTURAL AND TOURISM CAPITAL'

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The holy city of Varanasi, showcasing India's culture and traditions over the ages, will be declared the first "Cultural and Tourism Capital" of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Secretary-General of the bloc Zhang Ming said here on Friday.

The Beijing-headquartered Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is an eight-member economic and security alliance comprising China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan.

"We are about to implement a rotating mechanism. We will rotate the title of Cultural and Tourism Capital among the member states," Mr. Ming said, adding that Varanasi, India's ancient city, will be the first to be granted the title.

Under this initiative, each year, a city of cultural heritage of a member country, that will take over the rotating Presidency of the organisation, will get the title to highlight its prominence, Mr. Ming said.

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