

## UNESCO PICKS SRINAGAR AS 'CREATIVE CITY'

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A carpet getting ready at a factory in Srinagar.AFP

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has picked Srinagar among 49 cities as part of the creative city network under the Crafts and Folk Arts category.

"It is a proud moment for all of us. The process of nomination of Srinagar under the UNESCO 'Creative City Network' was undertaken and funded under the World Bank-funded Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project. This is the recognition of the historical crafts and arts of the city," said Chief Executive Officer, Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP), Abid Rashid Shah. The inclusion is likely to pave way for the city to represent its handicrafts on the global stage through UNESCO.

Only Jaipur (Crafts and Folk Arts) in 2015, Varanasi and Chennai (Creative city of Music) in 2015 and 2017 respectively have so far been recognised as members of the UCCN for creative cities.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a tweet, said, "Delighted that beautiful Srinagar joins the UNESCO Creative Cities Network with a special mention for its craft and folk art. It is a fitting recognition for the vibrant cultural ethos of Srinagar. Congratulations to the people of Jammu and Kashmir."

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The inclusion is likely to pave way for the city to represent its handicrafts on the global stage through UNESCO. "It's a major recognition for Jammu and Kashmir," Dr. Shah said.

The network involves folk art, media, film, literature, design, gastronomy and media arts. Srinagar was among one more city from India competing for the coveted recognition this year. The dossier for its nomination was filed first in 2019 and then again in 2021.

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"Credit must go to the JTFRP and the Department of Industries and line departments for taking up the task positively. Consultants were hired and work was taken up to complete all the requirements," said Director, Technical, Planning and Coordination, JTFRP, Iftikhaar Hakeem.

Mahmood Ahmad Shah, Director, Industries, said Srinagar has made it to the elite list. "This nomination is the global recognition to the rich craft legacy of Srinagar," Mr. Shah said.

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