



Kashmir's Magic Carpet

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Why in News?

Recently, the famous **Hazratbal Dargah** in **Srinagar** is attracting locals for a rare spectacle of the washing and clipping of the **largest carpet** woven in Kashmir so far.

What is Kashmir's Magic Carpet?

▪ About:

- **Kashmir's magic carpet made in Kashan Style is an intricate marvel**, 72 feet in length and 40 feet in width, weighing 1,685 kg, and **featuring over three crore knots**.
- It has taken **eight years** to weave, with artisans returning to the traditional trade and overcoming several challenges including the 2014 floods, the [abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir](#) in 2019, and the waves of the [Covid-19 pandemic](#).
 - At least 30 people are required to unroll this mammoth carpet.
 - A dedicated team of 30-35 professional washers diligently tends to it on a daily basis.
 - It is likely to embellish a palace in the [Middle East](#).
- Kashmiri artisans are competing for the first time against their long-standing **Iranian competitor**, who have crafted a carpet the size of a soccer field at 60,468 square feet.

▪ Kashan Style:

- The carpet follows the **Kashan style**, a historic design borrowed from the **Iranian city of Kashan**.
- The **Kashan style of ceramic art**, originating from the historic city of **Kashan in Persia** (modern-day Iran), has captivated art enthusiasts for centuries.
- Known for its **exquisite execution and intricate patterns**, Kashan ware represents a harmonious blend of tradition, innovation, and artistic finesse.

▪ Historical Context:

- **Legacy of Zain-ul-Abidin:** The carpet craft traces its roots back to the **15th century when Badshah Zain-ul-Abidin** invited artisans from Persia and Central Asia to settle in Kashmir.
- **From Shawls to Carpets:** Initially, the focus was on weaving exquisite [pashmina shawls](#). However, with the decline of demand due to **jacquard looms in Europe**, artisans shifted their skills to **carpet weaving**.
- **British Recognition:** Kashmiri carpets gained global acclaim after being exhibited at the Great London Exhibition of 1851.
- **Prizes and Distinction:** These carpets continued to shine at exhibitions in Chicago, Paris, and London during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- **Weaving Secrets:** The secret blueprints, known as **talim**, guide artisans across generations, preserving the ancient techniques.



Government Initiatives for Empowering Kashmir's Carpet Weavers:

- **Revival of Namda Craft under PMKVY 3.0:**
 - **Objective:** The [Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship \(MSDE\)](#) launched a special pilot project under the [Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana \(PMKVY\)](#) to revive the traditional **Namda craft of Kashmir**.
 - **Namda Craft:** [Namda](#) is a unique **rug made of sheep wool using the felting technique** instead of the normal weaving process.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Artisans and Weavers:**
 - The **RPL** component of PMKVY focuses on upskilling artisans and weavers.
 - The initiative aims to upskill 10,900 artisans and weavers in Jammu and Kashmir.
 - By enhancing productivity through RPL assessment and certification, the project ensures the continuation of Kashmir's weaving legacy.
- **Geographical Indication (GI) Tag for Kashmiri Carpets:**
 - **GI Registry:** The Jammu and Kashmir government initiated a Geographical Indication (GI) registry for the **famed Kashmiri carpet**.
 - **QR Code:** Each [GI-tagged](#) carpet now comes with a **quick response (QR) code**, providing details of artisans and materials used.
 - **Export:** The first consignment of GI-tagged carpets was exported to Germany, marking a significant step in safeguarding this craft.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims:

Q. Which of the following has/have been accorded 'Geographical Indication' status? (2015)

1. Banaras Brocades and Sarees
2. Rajasthani Daal-Bati-Churma
3. Tirupathi Laddu

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
 (b) 2 and 3 only
 (c) 1 and 3 only
 (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c)

Q. Consider the following pairs: (2009)

	Tradition	State
1.	Gatka, a traditional : martial art	Kerala
2.	Madhubani, a : traditional painting	Bihar
3.	Singhey Khababs : Sindhu Darshan Festival	Jammu and Kashmir

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
 (b) 3 only
 (c) 2 and 3 only
 (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c)

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