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‘हर काम देश के नाम’

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Need to root out terrorism collectively & fix accountability on its supporters: Raksha Mantri to SCO Defence Ministers in New Delhi

India believes in maintaining peace & security based on UN Charter provisions, says Shri Rajnath Singh

Calls for concerted efforts to ensure ‘win-win cooperation for great gain’

“Secure, stable & prosperous region will improve the quality of life of people of each nation”

“PM Modi’s ‘SECURE’ vision reflects India’s commitment towards multi-dimensional welfare of the region”

Committed towards defence capacity building of SCO member states for shared security interests: RM

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has called upon the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states to collectively work towards eliminating terrorism in all its forms and fix accountability on those who aid or fund such activities. Addressing the Defence Ministers of SCO member countries in New Delhi on April 28, 2023, Shri Rajnath Singh asserted that any kind of terrorist act or support to it in any form is a major crime against humanity and peace & prosperity cannot coexist with this menace.

“If a nation shelters terrorists, it not only poses a threat to others, but for itself too. Radicalisation of youth is a cause of concern not only from the point of view of security, but it is also a major obstacle in the path of socio-economic progress of society. If we want to make the SCO a

stronger & more credible international organisation, our top-most priority should be to effectively deal with terrorism,” the Raksha Mantri said.

Shri Rajnath Singh added that India envisions a robust framework of regional cooperation which mutually respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all member states by taking care of their legitimate interests. He asserted that New Delhi strives to further bolster trust and cooperation among the members of the SCO as it believes in maintaining peace and security based on the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

Sharing his insights on the vision to ensure collective prosperity, the Raksha Mantri called for concerted efforts by the SCO member states, so that the region, with limitless possibilities in today’s multilateral world, shifts to the mindset of ‘*great gain from win-win paradigm*’ from ‘*great game of zero sum, win-lose paradigm*’. “India has always followed the principle of ‘*Let us walk together & move forward together*’. Every era has a zeitgeist (defining idea). The zeitgeist of the present era is ‘Win-win cooperation for the great gain’,” he said.

Shri Rajnath Singh also elaborated on the concept of ‘SECURE’ floated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during the SCO summit in Qingdao, China in 2018. He stated that every alphabet of the word ‘SECURE’ reflects India’s commitment towards the multi-dimensional welfare of the region.

- S** - *Security of citizens*
- E** - *Economic development for all*
- C** - *Connecting the region*
- U** - *Uniting the people*
- R** - *Respect for Sovereignty and Integrity*
- E** - *Environmental protection)*

Drawing the attention of the member states to various dimensions of ‘SECURE’, the Raksha Mantri stated that today a large part of the world is passing through a food crisis. He urged the SCO member countries to ensure food security under an integrated plan. This will establish SCO as a role model for the whole world, he said. To deal with the issue of climate change, he called for working on a common strategy, giving priority to mitigation and adaptation. Energy security should be a part of the common strategy, he added.

Shri Rajnath Singh also touched upon the two defence-related activities launched by India, as the SCO chair, to increase interoperability among member states. These are: a workshop on 'Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)' and a seminar on 'defence think-tanks of SCO countries'. Both the events witnessed enthusiastic participation from all SCO countries.

The Raksha Mantri voiced India's commitment towards defence capacity building of SCO member states through training and co-manufacturing & co-development of items. He stated that as security challenges are not limited to any one country, India is moving forward with a collaborative approach in the field of defence partnership, keeping in mind the shared interests.

Shri Rajnath Singh reiterated India's commitment to play the role of a first responder and preferred partner for any HADR operation in the region. "Be it the COVID-19 pandemic or the recent earthquake in Turkiye, India has always moved forward in line with its spirit of '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*' (Whole world is one family)," he said.

Earlier, in his opening remarks, the Raksha Mantri described the SCO as an evolved & strong regional organisation, underlining that India views it as an important entity to promote defence cooperation among member states. He urged the member states to take forward the age-old cultural and civilisational linkages among the nations in line with changing times, emphasising that the ties have enriched the countries economically and culturally for centuries. He called for a secure, stable and prosperous region that helps in improving the quality of life of the people of each member nation.

At the end of the deliberations, all the SCO member countries signed a protocol, expressing their collective will to make the region secure, peaceful and prosperous. In his closing remarks, Shri Rajnath Singh called for joint efforts to ensure prosperity in the region while dealing with contemporary challenges. He stressed on the need to constantly make the SCO stronger and a more vibrant & resilient organisation in line with changing times. "It is our moral responsibility to start a new journey of development in the region through mutual cooperation, harmony and respect," he said.

Addressing mediapersons after the meeting, Defence Secretary Shri Giridhar Aramane stated that all the member nations arrived at the consensus on several areas of cooperation, including dealing with

terrorism, security of vulnerable populations in various countries as well as HADR. He stated that all member states were unanimous in their statements that terrorism, in all its forms, must be condemned and eliminated. He exuded confidence that many areas identified for cooperation will be acted upon in the times to come and India, as the SCO chair, will lead from the front in ensuring a safe and secure future for the region and the world as a whole.

Defence Ministers of China (General Li Shangfu); Russia (General Sergei Shoigu); Iran (Brig Gen Mohammad Reza Gharaei Ashtiani); Belarus (Lt Gen Khrenin VG); Kazakhstan (Col Gen Ruslan Zhaxylykov); Uzbekistan (Lt Gen Bakhodir Kurbanov); Kyrgyzstan (Lt Gen Bekbolotov Baktybek Asankalievich) and Tajikistan (Col Gen Sherali Mirzo) attended the meeting. The Ministers discussed issues of common concern including issues of regional and international security under charter of SCO during the meeting.

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