

Friday, Apr 28, 2023

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# Pak listening, Rajnath to SCO: End terror, fix accountability

Stating that security challenges are not limited to any one country, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said India is moving forward with a collaborative approach in the field of defence partnership.

Written by **Amrita Nayak Dutta**

New Delhi | Updated: April 29, 2023 03:39 IST



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Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu during a bilateral meeting

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Defence Minister Rajnath Singh told member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to collectively work towards eliminating terrorism in all forms and fix accountability on those aiding or funding such activities.

In his address to the SCO Defence Ministers in New Delhi, Singh said any kind of terrorist act or support to it in any form is a major crime against humanity, and peace and prosperity cannot coexist with this menace.

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“If a nation shelters terrorists, it not only poses a threat to others, but for itself too,” he said, adding that radicalisation of youth is a cause for concern not only from the security point of view, but is also a major obstacle in the path of socio-economic progress of society.

“If we want to make the SCO a stronger and more credible international organisation, our top-most priority should be to effectively deal with terrorism,” he said.

Singh's remarks came days after a terror attack in Poonch claimed the lives of five Army soldiers. While the perpetrators of the attack are yet to be identified, investigations have pointed towards the involvement of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and terrorists from across the border.

Minister on defence, attended it through video conference.

Later, Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane said all member states reached a consensus on several areas of cooperation, including dealing with terrorism, security of vulnerable populations in various countries as well as HADR (humanitarian assistance and disaster relief). All member states, he said, were unanimous in their statements that terrorism, in all its forms, must be condemned and eliminated.

At the meeting, the ministers discussed issues of common concern including issues of regional and international security under the SCO charter.

Singh said India sees 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.

The subject of ensuring territorial integrity was also brought up by Singh on Thursday during a bilateral meeting with General Li Shangfu, visiting State Councillor and Minister of National Defence of China, when he said that Beijing's violation of existing agreements had eroded the entire basis of bilateral relations between India and China.

## EXPLAINED

### Poonch wake-up call

The Defence Minister's remarks on dealing with terror come days after 5 Army soldiers were killed in a terror attack in Poonch near the LoC.

Investigations suggest the involvement of Pak-based terror outfits. Pakistan's Defence Minister gave the SCO meeting a skip and a special advisor attended the proceedings via virtual mode.

He said 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

All the SCO member countries signed a protocol, expressing their collective will to make the region secure, peaceful and prosperous.

“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’,” Singh said.

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He urged member countries to ensure food security under an integrated plan which will establish SCO as a role model for the whole world. To deal with the issue of climate change, he called for working on a common strategy, giving priority to mitigation and adaptation. Energy security, he said, should be a part of the common strategy.

First published on: 28-04-2023 at 10:08 IST



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