

Every act of terrorism is criminal & unjustifiable, SCO must unite in eliminating the menace for collective safety & security: Raksha Mantri at SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting at Qingdao, China

“Peace & prosperity cannot co-exist with terrorism and proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the hands of non-state actors”

“Need to bring perpetrators, organisers, financiers & sponsors of terrorism to justice”

“With Operation Sindoor, India exercised its right to defend against terrorism and pre-empt & deter further cross border attacks”

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Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, on June 26, 2025, laid down the broad contours of India's transitional shift in its policy against terrorism at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' Meeting at Qingdao, China, calling upon the member countries to unite in eliminating the menace for collective safety and security. Addressing the Defence Ministers, SCO Secretary General, Director Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of SCO and other distinguished delegates, Raksha Mantri stated that the biggest challenges faced by the region are related to peace, security and trust-deficit, with increasing radicalisation, extremism & terrorism being the root cause of these problems.

“Peace and prosperity cannot co-exist with terrorism and proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the hands of non-state actors and terror groups. Dealing with these challenges requires decisive action. It is imperative that those who sponsor, nurture and utilise terrorism for their narrow and selfish ends must bear the consequences. Some countries use cross-border

terrorism as an instrument of policy and provide shelter to terrorists. There should be no place for such double standards. SCO should not hesitate to criticise such nations,” said Shri Rajnath Singh.

Raksha Mantri asserted that India launched *Operation Sindoor* in response to the heinous terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir, exercising its right to defend against terrorism and pre-empt as well as deter further cross border attacks. “During the Pahalgam terror attack, victims were shot after they were profiled on religious identity. The Resistance Front, a proxy of UN-designated terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) claimed responsibility for the attack. The pattern of Pahalgam attack matches with LeT’s previous terror attacks in India. India’s zero tolerance for terrorism was demonstrated through its actions. It includes our right to defend ourselves against terrorism. We have shown that epicentres of terrorism are no longer safe and we will not hesitate to target them,” he said.

Shri Rajnath Singh reiterated the need to hold the perpetrators, organisers, financiers and sponsors of reprehensible acts of terrorism, including cross-border terrorism, accountable and bring them to justice. He termed any and every act of terrorism as criminal & unjustifiable regardless of their motivation whenever, wherever and committed by whom-so-ever. SCO members must condemn this evil unequivocally, he said, reaffirming India’s resolve to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Raksha Mantri called for proactive steps to prevent the spread of radicalisation among the youth, acknowledging the significant role of the RATS mechanism in tackling the challenge. “The joint statement of the Council of SCO Heads of State on ‘Countering Radicalisation leading to Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism’ issued during India’s Chairmanship symbolises our shared commitment,” he stated.

Shri Rajnath Singh underscored the importance of countering the technology used by terrorists including drones for cross-border smuggling of weapons and drugs, pointing out that traditional borders are no longer the sole barriers against threats in this interconnected world. He stressed that the world faces an intricate web of challenges that range from transnational terrorism and cyber-attacks to hybrid warfare. These threats, he said, do not respect national boundaries, and demand a unified response rooted in transparency, mutual trust, and collaboration.

Highlighting SCO’s crucial role in the current uncertain geopolitical scenario, Raksha Mantri stated that the member countries contribute around 30 per cent of the global GDP and about 40 percent of the world’s population resides in them. He described the creation of a safe, secure and stable region as a collective stake, which can contribute towards progress and improvement of peoples’ lives.

Shri Rajnath Singh said globalisation has been losing momentum, and the weakening of multilateral systems has made it harder to address urgent challenges, from maintaining peace and security to rebuilding economies after the pandemic. He added that competition between major powers is intensifying, with trade and technology being increasingly used as tools in geopolitical rivalries. “India believes that reformed multilateralism can help build cooperation to prevent conflict between countries by creating mechanisms for dialogue and collaboration,” he said.

Raksha Mantri voiced India’s commitment to increasing its connectivity with Central Asia. “Better connectivity not only enhances mutual trade but also fosters mutual trust. However, in these efforts, it is essential to uphold the basic principles of the SCO charter, particularly respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states,” he said.

Shri Rajnath Singh added that India has been consistent and steadfast in its policy in support of peace, security & stability in Afghanistan. He enumerated the immediate priorities in Afghanistan including providing humanitarian assistance to its people and contributing to overall developmental needs. As Afghanistan’s largest regional development partner, India continues to implement capacity-building initiatives for the Afghan people, he said.

Raksha Mantri also shared insights on how non-traditional security challenges like pandemics, climate change, food & water security, and associated societal disruptions recognise no boundaries and impact peoples’ lives. He stressed that these challenges cannot be addressed without responsible policies and cooperation among nations. “India’s initiative on Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure aims not only at promotion of disaster resilient infrastructure, but also infrastructure risk management, standards, financing and recovery. It is also an example of how countries are coming together to create and share capabilities to

deal with humanitarian assistance & disaster relief,” he added.

Shri Rajnath Singh stated that India’s vision of SAGAR (*Security and Growth for All in the Region*) and MAHASAGAR (*Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions*) are testament to create a conducive environment for growth and economic development, with security & stability being the most essential components. He underlined India’s support to greater cooperation and mutual trust among SCO members, urging them to collectively aspire to fulfill the aspirations and expectations of the people while tackling today's challenges. “We must all be in lockstep in our endeavour in strengthening stability and security in our neighbourhood,” he said.

Raksha Mantri highlighted that India seeks to build consensus on dealing with global challenges on the basis of the motto ‘*One Earth, One Family, One Future*’, which is founded on its civilisational ethos of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is one family). Mutual understanding and mutual benefit must be our guiding principles, he said.

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