

## VICE PRESIDENT EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT STATES THAT LEVERAGE TERRORISM AS AN INSTRUMENT OF STATE POLICY

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: SCO and India

The Vice President of India, Shri M Venkaiah Naidu today expressed his concern about States that leverage terrorism as an instrument of State policy and called upon Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States to enforce internationally recognized legal statutes to comprehensively eradicate safe havens, infrastructure and financial networks supporting terrorism.

Virtually addressing the 19th session of the SCO Council of Heads of Government, hosted by India, the Vice President said India condemns terrorism in all its manifestations. “We remain concerned about threats emerging from ungoverned spaces and are particularly concerned about States that leverage terrorism as an instrument of state policy. Such an approach is entirely against the spirit and ideals and the Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization”, he pointed out.

Stressing that peace was an essential prerequisite for progress, Shri Naidu told the dignitaries participating in the meeting that the most important challenge faced by the region was terrorism, particularly cross-border terrorism. “Terrorism is truly the enemy of humanity. It is a scourge we need to collectively combat”, he added.

He said “elimination of this threat will help us realize our shared potential and create conditions for stable and secure economic growth and sustainable development”.

Observing that the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic has slowed down the economic trajectory of all Member States, Shri Naidu said India has fought it bravely and has shown remarkable resilience in fighting the virus as well as in ensuring economic stability. He said that a people-empowered and people-driven approach has enabled India to keep its COVID-19 death rate at one of the lowest levels in the world.

Stating that more than 60 percent of the vaccines for global immunization programs are being manufactured in India, he said “Thanks to its world-class pharmaceutical industry, India has demonstrated itself as a ‘pharmacy to the world’ during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.”

The Vice President informed the dignitaries that when the whole country was under lock-down, India supplied medicines and equipment to more than 150 countries, including to the Member States of the SCO.

While expressing India’s readiness to share its experience with the SCO Member States in the fight against the pandemic, Shri Naidu said the sociopolitical impact of COVID-19 has exposed the weakness of global institutions.

Emphasizing that this was the time to bring in much-needed reforms to our global institutions, including WHO, and rework our development strategies to face a post-COVID-19 world, the Vice President said: “ For this, we need a Reformed Multilateralism that reflects today's realities, gives voice to all stakeholders, addresses contemporary challenges and puts human beings at the center of our thought and policies”.

He said India was emerging as an economic force at the global level and the country's GDP was expected to reach \$ 5 trillion by 2025. To ensure stable economic growth, he said India has launched a new economic strategy: Atmanirbhar Bharat or Self-reliant India. "It prioritizes building the national economic strength, resilience and enhanced capacities to be a trusted partner and a responsible global player", he added.

Underscoring the importance of collective efforts to overcome the ongoing crisis which has exposed the world to vulnerabilities, the Vice President said "Our hope is pinned on trade and investment as an engine of reviving growth and driver of economic recovery. For trade to play its part in the recovery process, all the partners must be trustworthy and transparent", he pointed out and added that nations must demonstrate their compliance with multilateral rules of trade.

He also congratulated SCO Trade Ministers for approving the Action Plan for the implementation of the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation for the period 2021-2025.

The Vice President asserted that India was committed to taking its cooperation within SCO to new heights by playing a proactive, positive and constructive role in the organization.

He said that India has proposed to create a Special Working Group on Startups and Innovation. It will lay the foundation for multilateral cooperation among the SCO Member States to develop and hone their startup ecosystems through knowledge-sharing workshops, training young entrepreneurs, enabling access to investors, and exchanging best practices. He said that since the launch of Startup India initiative, India has more than 38,000 recognized startups across 590 districts that have created nearly 400,000 jobs.

India offers to annually host the Special Working Group on Startups and Innovation and also the SCO Startup Forum, he added.

Referring to India's second proposal to create an Expert Group on Traditional Medicine, he referred to the limitations of modern medical system, which is under tremendous pressure due to the unprecedented global spread of COVID-19 pandemic. "In such a scenario, traditional medicine systems have played an important supporting role in providing effective and low cost alternative to save the lives of millions in the region", he pointed out.

The Vice President said the creation of an Expert Working Group in Traditional Medicine would effectively help to synergize our efforts in creating a holistic approach to health-care in the Eurasian region.

Observing that Ayurveda and Yoga were playing a crucial role in improving the quality of life of people, he said that India's Ministry of AYUSH was ready to annually host the Expert Working Group on Traditional Medicine in India under the mechanism of SCO Health Ministers Meeting.

Touching upon the importance of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector in the economic growth of all countries, Shri Naidu said that India, on its part, was ready to share its best practices in this sector. MSMEs not only play a crucial role in providing large scale employment opportunities, but also help in industrialization of rural and backward areas, thereby, reducing regional imbalances, and assuring a more equitable distribution of national income and wealth, Shri Naidu stressed.

He said India's National Chapter in the SCO Business Council Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) has proposed to organize an annual SCO MSME Bazaar and to establish a digital SCO MSME Center.

India's Minister of External Affairs, Dr S. Jaishankar, Secretary to the Vice President of India, Shri I.V. Subbarao, Secretary (West) at India's Ministry of External Affairs, Shri Vikas Swarup and other senior officials from MEA participated in the event. From other countries, H.E Mr. Askar Mamin, Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, H.E. Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, H.E. Artem Eduardovich Novikov, Acting Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, H.E. Andleeb Abbas, Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pakistan, H.E. Mikhail Mishustin, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, H.E. Mr. Qohir Rasulzoda, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan, H.E. Abdulla Nigmatovich Aripov, Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, H.E. Amrullah Saleh, 1 st Vice President of Afghanistan, H.E. Golovchenko Roman, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, H.E. Eshaq Jahangiri, First Vice President of Iran, H.E. SODBAATAR Yangug (Sc. Dr) Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia, H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs Turkmenistan, SCO Secretary-General- H.E. Mr. Vladimir Norov, Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) - H.E. Mr. Jumakhon Giyosov, Chairman of the SCO Business Council - Mr. Sergey Katyrin, Chairman SCO Interbank Association- Mr. Igor Shuvalov were among the dignitaries who attended the virtual summit.

**Following is the full text of the Vice President's opening address –**

“Namaskar!

**Dobree Den ! (Good day!)**

**Dama ee gaspada (Ladies and gentlemen),**

**Darageey druzeyaa(Dear friends)**

**Yaa raad vaas veedit ! (I am glad to see you)!**

Excellencies,

It gives me an immense pleasure to welcome you all to the 19<sup>th</sup> Council of Heads of Government Summit.

I extend a warm welcome to Honourable Prime Ministers of SCO Member States and Honourable Ministers/representatives of Observer States, and our Special guest from Turkmenistan. I would also like to welcome SCO Secretary General, the Executive Director of SCO RATS, Chairman of the SCO Business Council, and Chairman of the SCO Interbank Association.

Excellencies,

We were very much looking forward to welcoming you in India and to meet you in person this year. Unfortunately, the continuing impact of COVID-19 pandemic did not allow for such a meeting. I do hope that we can host you sometime in future.

Excellencies,

India and the SCO region share ancient historical, cultural and civilizational linkages. We share a common geographical space, which has facilitated continuous exchange through the millennia of people, ideas and goods in both directions and left indelible imprints on our customs, traditions and languages. In fact, barring the last few centuries, relations between India and SCO region have flourished uninterrupted for thousands of years.

Excellencies,

India today is an emerging economic force at the global level. In 2019 Indian economy has reached around 2.8 trillion dollars. In PPP terms we are the third largest economy in the world. By 2025, India's GDP is expected to reach \$5 trillion and it will be the youngest nation with average age of 29 yrs. With more than 1 billion mobile subscribers and over 600 million internet users, India has the potential to emerge as one of the largest digital ecosystems in the world.

However, the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic has slowed down the economic trajectory of all Member States. India has bravely fought the global pandemic and has shown remarkable resilience in fighting the virus as well as in ensuring economic stability.

Thanks to a people-empowered and people-driven approach, India has kept its COVID-19 death rate at one of the lowest levels in the world. India has one of the highest recovery rate of over 93%. India's outstanding efforts in managing COVID-19 crisis has found global recognition, including from the WHO.

India has also been at the forefront of producing quality medicines and vaccines at low cost. More than 60 percent of the vaccines for global immunization programs are being manufactured in India and this global vaccine production and delivery capacity will be used to help all countries in fighting this crisis. More than 30 indigenous vaccines are currently being developed in our country, three of them are in an advanced stage. Thanks to its world-class pharmaceutical industry, India has demonstrated itself as a '**pharmacy to the world**' during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Excellencies, even when the whole country was under lock-down, we have supplied medicines and equipment to more than 150 countries, including to the Member States of the SCO. We are ready to share our experience with you in the fight against this common menace.

However, the sociopolitical impact of COVID-19 has been more acute and has exposed the weakness of global institutions. This is the time to bring in much needed reforms to our global institutions, including WHO, and rework our development strategies to face a post-COVID-19 world. For this, we need a **Reformed Multilateralism** that reflects today's realities, gives voice to all stakeholders, addresses contemporary challenges and puts human beings at the center of our thought and policies.

To ensure stable economic growth, we have launched a new economic strategy: **Atmanirbhar Bharat or Self-reliant India**. It prioritizes building the national economic strength, resilience and enhanced capacities to be a trusted partner and a responsible global player. It recognizes the importance of reciprocity, transparency and fairness in the context of trade. It is gratifying that the Indian economy is steadily moving on the path of recovery.

Excellencies,

While undertaking individual efforts, we must underscore the importance of collective efforts to overcome this situation. The ongoing crisis has exposed the world to vulnerabilities, forcing us to explore ways to support each other. Our hope is pinned on trade and investment as an engine of reviving growth and driver of economic recovery. For trade to play its part in the recovery process, all the partners must be trustworthy and transparent. It is trust and transparency that determine the sustainability of global trade and nations must demonstrate their compliance with multilateral rules of trade to remain a part of this system.

However, economic growth and trade can only operate in an environment of peace and security.

Peace is the essential prerequisite for progress. The most important challenge faced by us in the region is terrorism, particularly cross-border terrorism. Terrorism is truly the enemy of humanity. It is a scourge we need to collectively combat.

India condemns terrorism in all its manifestations. We remain concerned about threats emerging from ungoverned spaces and are particularly concerned about States that leverage terrorism as an instrument of state policy. Such an approach is entirely against the spirit and ideals and the Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Elimination of this threat will help us realize our shared potential and create conditions for stable and secure economic growth and sustainable development.

We consider the SCO as an important regional group to promote cooperation in various fields based on universally recognized international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality. It is unfortunate to note that there have been attempts to deliberately bring bilateral issues into SCO and blatantly violate the well-established principles and norms of SCO Charter safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of SCO Member States. Such acts are counterproductive to the spirit of consensus and cooperation that define the SCO as an organization.

Dear colleagues

India is committed to take our cooperation within SCO to new heights by playing a proactive, positive and constructive role in the organization.

During our Chairmanship in this year, we have proposed to create a **Special Working Group on Startups and Innovation**. As you are aware, India has the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest startup ecosystem in the world and has created a robust and dynamic environment for startups and innovators to thrive. Since the launch of Startup India initiative, India has more than 38,000 recognized startups across 590 districts that have created nearly 400,000 jobs.

India offers to annually host the Special Working Group on Startups and Innovation and also the SCO Startup Forum.

Excellencies,

Our second proposal is to create an **Expert Group on Traditional Medicine** under the annual SCO Health Ministers meeting. We have witnessed the limitations of modern medical system, which is under tremendous pressure due to the unprecedented global spread of COVID-19 pandemic. In such a scenario, traditional medicine systems have played an important supporting role in providing effective and low cost alternative to save the lives of millions in the region.

India's Ministry of AYUSH is ready to annually host the Expert Working Group on Traditional Medicine in India under the mechanism of SCO Health Ministers Meeting. We look forward to cooperating with all SCO Member States in this field.

Excellencies,

In the past five decades, the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector has emerged as a vibrant and dynamic sector, in the economic growth of all countries. MSMEs not only play a crucial role in providing large scale employment opportunities, but also help in industrialization of rural and backward areas, thereby, reducing regional imbalances, and assuring a more equitable distribution of national income and wealth.

India, on its part, is ready to share its best practices in this sector. On 23 November, we have hosted **the SCO Business Conclave in B2B format with special emphasis on MSMEs** to achieve these objectives. Our National Chapter in the SCO Business Council Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) has proposed to organize an annual SCO MSME Bazaar and to establish a digital SCO MSME Center.

I also congratulate SCO Member States for participating in the first ever Consortium of SCO Economic Think Tanks hosted by India. The **Delhi Action Plan** developed by the Consortium provides an excellent road-map for future economic cooperation.

I am also happy to note that the **National Service Scheme (NSS) from India has formally joined the SCO Youth Council**. Their exemplary work in nation-building through our youth, will bring a new vibrancy to our engagement with SCO.

Dear colleagues,

Science has remained central to the progress of mankind. Every generation faces unique challenges, and it is through scientific breakthroughs in the past that we have been able to overcome these challenges.

I believe that we should nurture and encourage our young scientists to come up with imaginative solutions to the problems of livelihood and sustainable growth.

I congratulate the Member States for successfully participating in the first-ever **SCO Young Scientists Conclave, which was hosted by India in this month**. In order to continue our collaboration in this field, Indian side would like to host this forum on a biannual basis.

The strength of our ties is based on our strong cultural and historical roots. Our way of life was shaped by goods and ideas that crisscrossed our nations.

The trade routes of the past were also the path that carried Buddha's eternal message of peace and coexistence of all countries in our region. To celebrate our civilizational linkages and our shared cultural heritage, we are today inaugurating **the Exhibition on Shared Buddhist Heritage of SCO Member States** in virtual format, hosted by the National Museum of India.

I hope you will agree that deeper knowledge about our culture and diversity will be useful to better understand each other. With this in mind, **10 Books of regional Indian literature** were translated into Russian and Chinese to encourage a wider interest in India's rich literary traditions.

As a part of the activities to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SCO in 2021 India would also be hosting a **SCO Food Festival in Delhi**. I would like to extend invitations to all Member States to participate in this event.

Excellencies,

Through India's initiatives during our chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of Government in 2020, we have aspired to cooperate and contribute substantively to the trade, economic and cultural agenda of the SCO.

Our mantra is simple: **Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas**. India is committed to constructive participation in the SCO growth story.

In fact, Indian tradition views the whole world as a single united family and considers its welfare of utmost importance. Incidentally, we, in India, are celebrating today the 551<sup>st</sup> birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, one of India's greatest saint philosophers who gave the world a timeless message of peace, charity, co-operation and mutual respect. These are the quintessential Indian values that also underpin SCO's vision of peace and progress.

I would also like to extend my warm felicitation to Kazakhstan which will now take over the Chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of Government in 2021. We assure the new Chair of our total support.

Thank you for your attention!

**Spasiba! (Thank you!)"**

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MS/DP

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Emphasizing that this was the time to bring in much-needed reforms to our global institutions, including WHO, and rework our development strategies to face a post-COVID-19 world, the Vice President said: " For this, we need a Reformed Multilateralism that reflects today's realities, gives voice to all stakeholders, addresses contemporary challenges and puts human beings at the center of our thought and policies".

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Underscoring the importance of collective efforts to overcome the ongoing crisis which has exposed the world to vulnerabilities, the Vice President said "Our hope is pinned on trade and investment as an engine of reviving growth and driver of economic recovery. For trade to play its part in the recovery process, all the partners must be trustworthy and transparent", he pointed out and added and that nations must demonstrate their compliance with multilateral rules of trade.

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The trade routes of the past were also the path that carried Buddha's eternal message of peace and coexistence of all countries in our region. To celebrate our civilizational linkages and our shared cultural heritage, we are today inaugurating **the Exhibition on Shared Buddhist Heritage of SCO Member States** in virtual format, hosted by the National Museum of India.

I hope you will agree that deeper knowledge about our culture and diversity will be useful to better understand each other. With this in mind, **10 Books of regional Indian literature** were translated into Russian and Chinese to encourage a wider interest in India's rich literary traditions.

As a part of the activities to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SCO in 2021 India would also

be hosting a **SCO Food Festival in Delhi**. I would like to extend invitations to all Member States to participate in this event.

Excellencies,

Through India's initiatives during our chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of Government in 2020, we have aspired to cooperate and contribute substantively to the trade, economic and cultural agenda of the SCO.

Our mantra is simple: **Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas**. India is committed to constructive participation in the SCO growth story.

In fact, Indian tradition views the whole world as a single united family and considers its welfare of utmost importance. Incidentally, we, in India, are celebrating today the 551<sup>st</sup> birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, one of India's greatest saint philosophers who gave the world a timeless message of peace, charity, co-operation and mutual respect. These are the quintessential Indian values that also underpin SCO's vision of peace and progress.

I would also like to extend my warm felicitation to Kazakhstan which will now take over the Chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of Government in 2021. We assure the new Chair of our total support.

Thank you for your attention!

**Spasiba! (Thank you!)"**

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MS/DP

**END**

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