

AT SCO MEET, MODI CALLS FOR RESPECTING SOVEREIGNTY, TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF ALL

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New Delhi: Taking a swipe at China and Pakistan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said all member nations of the Eurasian grouping the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) should respect each others' sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Modi's comments at a virtual summit of the eight-member SCO came against the backdrop of the India-China border faceoff in eastern Ladakh getting into its seventh month. It also came amid relentless efforts by Pakistan to draw international attention to the Kashmir dispute with India.

The virtual address by Modi at the SCO event was the first time that he and Chinese president Xi Jinping have been at the same event simultaneously since the border standoff began in May. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan was also among the heads of governments attending the virtual summit, chaired by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Referring to connectivity initiatives among member nations, Modi said: "India believes that to enhance connectivity it is important that we move forward while respecting one another's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

He also slammed what he described were attempts to "unnecessarily" bring bilateral issues to the SCO forum in violation of the grouping's foundational principles – a reference to Pakistan's propensity to raise the Kashmir issue at all international fora.

"India has always been resolute in working in sync with principles laid out in the SCO charter. But it is unfortunate that there have been repeated efforts to unnecessarily bring bilateral issues in the SCO agenda which is in violation of the SCO spirit," Modi said.

Referring to covid-19 pandemic, Modi said India will use its capacity in production and distribution of vaccines to help the entire humanity in fighting the pandemic. In this difficult time of unprecedented epidemic, India's pharmaceutical industry had sent essential medicines to over 150 countries, he said.

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