

# AT KAZAKHSTAN MEETING, INDIA TERMS PAKISTAN EPICENTRE OF TERRORISM

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: SCO and India

Paying tribute: Meenakshi Lekhi unveiling the statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Kazakhstan on Thursday. [Twitter/@M\\_Lekhi](https://twitter.com/M_Lekhi)

India desires “normal” relations with Pakistan, but it must take “credible, verifiable and irreversible actions” to end cross-border terrorism, said Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi, slamming India’s neighbour for supporting terror groups and for attacks on minorities, in response to a speech made by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, at a conference in Kazakhstan.

Speaking at the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) held in Astana, Ms. Lekhi also announced that India would host a number of high-profile conferences on countering terror this year, indicating that the government intends to keep its focus on stopping terror financing from Pakistan, even as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is due to meet next week on October 18-21 to discuss taking Pakistan off its “greylist”.

“Pakistan is the global epicentre of terrorism and continues to be the source of terrorist activities. Pakistan continues to make no investment in human development but provides their resources for creating and sustaining infrastructure of terrorism,” said Ms. Lekhi, taking exception to Mr. Sharif’s speech.

Mr. Sharif had in his speech said India had “trampled the will of the people of Jammu and Kashmir”. “India today is a threat towards minorities, to its neighbours, and to this region,” Mr. Sharif continued. He said Pakistan still hoped for peace with India, adding “however, until India brings its atrocities in Kashmir to a grinding halt, a just and lasting peace will remain elusive.”

In her intervention, Ms. Lekhi slammed Pakistan for raising Jammu and Kashmir and referred to Pakistan’s human rights violations in Pakistan-Occupied Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh (PoJKL).

“With its own record of the dismal treatment of minority communities, Pakistan would be well advised to set its house in order instead of lecturing the world community,” she added, referring to reports on attacks on places of worship, forced conversions and the abduction of women from minority communities in Pakistan.

India, that is a founder of the 27-nation CICA peace and confidence-building grouping of Asian countries, became its coordinator for counter-terrorism this year, and Ms. Lekhi said India would soon host a workshop with members.

## Third conference

Next month, New Delhi will also host the third “No Money for Terrorism” Ministerial conference with more than 100 countries expected to attend. The two-day conference on November 18-19 would be addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, and would include sessions on terror financing in South Asia, new cyber financing trends and global cooperation mechanisms.

On October 28-29, India will also host a special meeting of the UNSC Counter-Terrorism

Committee, ambassadors and representatives of all countries in the Security Council, including the P-5 members the U.S., Russia, China, the U.K. and France. The group will travel to Mumbai and lay wreaths at a memorial for victims of the Mumbai 26/11 terror attacks, and also hold meetings in Delhi, officials told *The Hindu*.

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