

'SCO MEMBERS SHOULD GIVE FULL TRANSIT RIGHTS'

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

In his speech, Mr. Sharif, who focused on Afghanistan and the flood situation in Pakistan for most part, responded to Mr. Modi's remarks, calling for a more "structured" SCO approach to connectivity in the region, adding that "if there is connectivity, transit rights will automatically come".

India has developed Iran's Chabahar port as an alternative to Pakistan for the land route to Central Asia and Russia.

At present, delays by Pakistan have meant that even India's plan to send 50,000 tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan by the land route has not been completed over several months, as permissions for the last tranche of 10,000 tonnes to be transported have not been granted.

Briefing the media, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said Mr. Modi also raised the issue of terrorism during the "restricted" meeting between the SCO leaders, and that all the SCO countries had agreed to prepare a consolidated list of terrorist entities and individuals in their respective countries.

The SCO summit declaration ended with an expansion of the group of eight countries — four Central Asian states, China, Russia, India and Pakistan — by inducting Iran as a full member, as President Ebrahim Raisi signed an MoU acceding membership. Among other membership hopefuls are Belarus, indicating that the grouping in future would have a large number of countries facing Western sanctions. The group also adopted more than 40 documents, including an agreement on cooperation and good neighbourliness and a joint statement on climate change.

Mr. Modi said that among the other problems the world was facing was ensuring "food security", an issue that Mr. Mirziyoyev referred to in his opening remarks, pointing out that the SCO countries made up a majority of the world's grain exporting nations. "SCO member countries contribute about 30% of global GDP, and 40% of the world's population also lives in SCO countries," Mr. Modi said, adding that one possible solution to this problem was to promote the "cultivation and consumption of millets".

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