

Rajnath Singh mentions COVID-19, stronger alliances and Afghanistan in SCO Defence Ministers' Meet in Dushanbe

Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is in Dushanbe to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Defence Minister's Meet. The SCO meeting is being held at a time when there are tons of tensions in Asia, with regards to the constant exchanges of turmoil between the Afghan Government and the Taliban. India's commitment to SCO has always been to aid and associate with actions that will eliminate any element of terrorism and extremism in Central Asia and South Asia. However, with the changing dynamics in statecraft and foreign policies, these organizations and their policy implementation have become challenging. However, India has served its purpose of protecting the country's national interests within the SCO, especially when EAM Jaishankar had mentioned India's position with regards to border disputes and calling out China for unilaterally changing the status quo. Although the SCO meeting is still underway, there were few highlights from Rajnath Singh as he swore commitment to India's fight against the raging pandemic and defence and security for the region.

Addressing the [#ShanghaiCooperationOrganisation](#) (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, today, Raksha Mantri Shri [@rajnathsingh](#) reaffirmed India's resolve to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Press Release: <https://t.co/WpOgDmKYWJ> [pic.twitter.com/Wz0VttKrVS](https://t.co/Wz0VttKrVS)

— A. Bharat Bhushan Babu (@SpokespersonMoD) [July 28, 2021](#)

The visit started with the Defence Minister laying a wreath as a tribute to the Tajik National Hero at the Somoni Memorial. Soon after this and minutes away from the main meeting, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met his Belarus counterpart Lieutenant General Viktor Khrenin. The Belarusian Government and the Indian Government have fairly shared a cordial relation over time. The meeting started with Rajnath Singh reiterating India's long-standing commitment to the framework of SCO as an organization. He tweeted, "India supports and participates in the SCO activities, including in defence cooperation programme, reflecting the commitment to work closely within the SCO framework." Apart from that, he mentioned how these organizations have always laid down a framework for better prospects of multilateralism and regionalism. With growing concerns over Chinese activity in and around the Indo-Pacific region, and the worry of major disputes as India still recovers from the incident of the Galwan Valley, Rajnath Singh mentioned, "It must be appreciated that the geo-strategic location of India makes it both a Eurasian land power as well as a stakeholder in the Indo-Pacific. Our intent and aspirations are therefore focused towards prosperity and development of the entire region."

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Terrorism and the agenda on Afghanistan were equally mentioned by Rajnath Singh. Afghanistan is currently under serious threats from the Taliban and the US withdrawing its troops have left the country in an extremely unsettling position. He mentioned, "It is in the same spirit India helps people of Afghanistan, which is facing violence and devastation over decades. So far India completed 500 projects in Afghanistan and continuing with some more with total development aid of US dollar 3 billion." India will be committed to fighting terrorism and extremism in the region within the bounds and the framework of the SCO was assured by him as well.

Attended the SCO Defence Ministers' meeting at Dushanbe today and reiterated India's resolve to work within the SCO framework for helping create and maintain a peaceful, secure and stable region. Sharing the full text of my speech:
<https://t.co/M036LmVcr9> pic.twitter.com/qsvA9yEDc8

— Rajnath Singh (@rajnathsingh) [July 28, 2021](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has touched every corner of events and the severity of it passed through the loss of human lives. Expressing his utmost sincerity and condolences, he stated that India "plans" to produce at least 2.5 billion doses of vaccine with an aim to also help 'friendly' countries. The challenges to food security and providing an equitable distribution of resources especially with the simultaneous crisis of the vaccine doses will be ensured by the Indian government. The mention of the International Solar Alliance was also brought by him.

In what seems like a successful meeting in Dushanbe, Rajnath Singh concluded his speech with utmost optimism and faith in the SCO, India's roadmap to stabilizing geopolitics continues. India will continue delivering its visions and missions through bilateral and multilateral associations with the other members of the SCO and thrive to be "the leading voices of the world in every way."

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