

India on board, SCO reiterates condemnation of attacks on Iran

But Declaration Doesn't Name US And Israel

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Expressing deep concern over developments in "the Middle East and around Iran", SCO member states, including India, reiterated the bloc's condemnation of military strikes on Iranian territory that resulted in numerous civilian casualties and significant damage to Iran's economy, said the Bishkek Declaration Tuesday.

India also joined other member states in expressing condolences over the death of former Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei at the SCO summit in Bishkek.

This was the second time that the SCO denounced the strikes on Iran after the war started on Feb 28, the first being in an early March standalone statement that called the attacks unacceptable. India had endorsed that statement too, even though bilaterally it has not explicitly condemned the attacks on Iran the way it has the missile and drone strikes on GCC countries.

TAKEAWAYS FOR INDIA

- Strong condemnation of terrorism, emphasis that 'double standards' in the fight against terrorism unacceptable, and call to combat terrorism, including the cross-border movement of terrorists
- Amending the SCO Charter to include English as an official and working language of SCO
- Strengthening scientific, technical and innovative cooperation through active involvement of young people, and through the regular holding of the SCO Young Scientists Forum (India's Initiative in SCO)
- Leaders welcome the holding of the SCO Civilisation Dialogue Forum in the autumn of 2026 in India
- SCO to promote further strengthening of youth cooperation, noting the contributions of the SCO Young Authors Conference (India's Initiative in SCO)
- Reaffirming the idea of 'One Earth. One Family. One Future' for developing dialogue

However, unlike the Tianjin Declaration last year that had condemned the June 2025 US and Israeli strikes on Iran, the Bishkek Declaration did not name the US and Israel. "Such actions violate the principles and norms of international law and the UN Charter and create serious risks to international peace and security," said the declaration.

India and others backed Iran's sovereignty, advocating a resolution to the conflict solely through political and diplomatic means. They welcomed all efforts aimed at de-escalating the situation and noted that the only possible

way to ensure peace and stability in the region is a comprehensive and just settlement of the Palestinian question.

PM Narendra Modi met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the margins of the SCO summit Monday and backed expansion of ties with Tehran, while the latter sought India's help to end the war. After distancing itself from a statement by SCO in June last year condemning Israel's strikes, India has signed on to joint documents by the bloc censuring the US-Israel military action against Iran.

The declaration reflected a major Indian concern as it

strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms, emphasised that "double standards" in the fight against terrorism are unacceptable, and called on the international community to combat terrorism, including cross-border movement of terrorists. It called for the UN to play a central role by fully implementing relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in accordance with the UN Charter and principles of international law to jointly combat all terrorist groups. "Member states, reaffirming their firm commitment to combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism, emphasise the inadmissibility of attempts to exploit terrorist, separatist, and extremist groups for selfish purposes," said the declaration.

Targeting use of economic sanctions by the West, the leaders also came out in support of a fair multilateral trading system focused heavily on the framework established by WTO, while slamming unilateral coercive measures. "Member states oppose unilateral coercive measures... that are detrimental to the interests of ensuring international security, including its food and energy, and that have a negative impact on the global economy."

US holdings in India rise to \$390 billion

WASHINGTON, Sept 1 (IANS)

THE value of US portfolio holdings in Indian securities rose to \$390 billion at the end of 2025, keeping India among the leading overseas destinations for American capital, according to preliminary data released by the US Department of the Treasury.

The figures are contained in the Treasury's Preliminary Annual Report on US Portfolio Holdings of Foreign Securities at Year-End 2025, released on August 31.

The survey was conducted jointly by the Treasury Department, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

India ranked 12th among the countries and jurisdictions attract-



ing the largest amount of US portfolio investment, unchanged from the previous year.

US holdings in India increased by \$7 billion from \$383 billion at the end of 2024, a rise of about 1.8 per cent, according to a comparison with the Treasury's corresponding report for the previous year.

The overwhelming majority of the American holdings were in Indian equities.

US investors held \$380 billion in Indian stocks at the end of 2025, compared with \$373 billion a year earlier. Holdings of Indian long-term debt securities stood at \$11 billion, up from \$10 billion. American holdings of Indian short-term debt securities were below \$500 million, according to the Treasury's reporting system.

The figures measure the market value of Indian securities held by US investors.

They do not include foreign direct investment in factories, infrastructure or other physical assets.

The survey placed India ahead of mainland China, where American portfolio holdings were valued at \$318 billion. US investors held \$300 billion in Chinese equities and \$17 billion in long-term Chinese debt securities.

Modi meets Presidents of Tajikistan, Laos; discusses bilateral ties



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon (R) Lao PDR President Thongloun Sisoulith on the sidelines of the 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit in Bishkek on Tuesday. (ANI)

BISHKEK, Sept 1 (IANS)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi met Laos President Thongloun Sisoulith on the sidelines of the 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Kyrgyzstan's Bishkek on Tuesday, with discussions held on boosting bilateral linkages.

In a post on X, PM Modi stated, "Met Mr. Thongloun Sisoulith, President of Lao PDR on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Bishkek. Had a great conversation on boosting bilateral linkages between our nations." The Prime Minister also met Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon and expressed India's readiness to strengthen cooperation with Tajikistan across various sectors.

"Great conversation with Mr. Emomali Rahmon, the President of Tajikistan. India looks forward to boosting cooperation with Tajikistan across diverse sectors," PM Modi posted on X.

MODI, XI SHAKE HANDS, INTERACT AT SCO SUMMIT: PRIME Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping shook hands and interacted while walking together as they arrived to participate in the 26th Shanghai

Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Bishkek on Tuesday.

The two leaders were seen having a conversation after they posed for a group photograph with other leaders. They then walked side by side and shook hands as both proceeded towards the event venue.

Later Prime Minister Narendra Modi concluded his two-nation visit to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, during which he held bilateral meetings with several heads of state and attended the annual SCO summit in Bishkek, where he called for dismantling the entire ecosystem of terrorism.

PM Modi was seen off by Adylbek Kasymaliev, Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyzstan, at the airport in Bishkek.

"Following a productive visit, PM @narendramodi departed from Bishkek for India. PM was seen off by Mr. Adylbek Kasymaliev, Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyzstan," the Ministry of External Affairs posted on X.

"The visit was marked by productive engagements, and tangible outcomes, further strengthening India's engagement with the region," it said.

Rajnath calls for 5-year roadmap to strengthen self-reliance in DPSUs

NEW DELHI, Sept 1 (IANS)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday conducted a comprehensive review of the annual performance and progress of the country's 16 Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) and directed them to prepare a clear and practical roadmap for the next five years to strengthen India's defence preparedness in line with emerging security challenges.

The review meeting was held at the Defence PSU Bhavan here with a focus on enhancing indigenous defence production, accelerating technological innovation, promoting research and development, and boosting defence exports. During the meeting, the Defence Minister assessed the performance and achievements of all 16 DPSUs and commended their significant contribution to India's record

defence production.

According to the Ministry of Defence, he emphasised that DPSUs are playing a crucial role in strengthening the country's defence manufacturing ecosystem and advancing the vision of an Aatmanirbhar (self-reliant) defence sector. He urged the public sector defence companies to continuously enhance their production capabilities, technological competence and research and development efforts to meet the future requirements of the Indian Armed Forces through indigenous solutions.

The Defence Minister stressed the need to prioritise the development of indigenous technologies and innovation in the defence sector. He called for the creation of advanced defence systems and cutting-edge technologies tailored to the operational needs of the forces.

Indian Railways approves Rs 170 cr for Kavach 4.0

NEW DELHI, Sept 1 (IANS)

INDIAN Railways has approved deployment of Kavach Version 4.0 on the remaining sections covering 712 route kilometres of the Moradabad Division, Northern Railway, at a total cost of Rs.170 crore, an official statement said on Tuesday. The approved work will strengthen the division's safety infrastructure through deployment of the indigenous Automatic Train Protection system, the statement from the Ministry of Railways said.

The implementation of Kavach 4.0 will provide an advanced safety layer for train operations across the identified sections, the ministry said. Kavach is an indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system designed to enhance operational safety. It helps prevent Signal Passing at Danger (SPAD), automatically applies brakes when required to avert unsafe situations, controls train speed in critical conditions, and significantly reduces the risk of collisions.

"The initiative forms part of

Indian Railways' continued efforts to expand Kavach coverage across its network and modernise railway signalling and train protection systems," the statement noted. Safety on Indian Railways has improved markedly, with train accidents dropping 88 per cent to 16 incidents in 2025-26 from 135 in 2014-15 and just two in the current year up to June, the Ministry had informed in July.

Consequential Accident Index -- accidents per million train-kilometres -- fell to 0.01 in 2025-26 from 0.11 in 2014-15, marking a reduction of about 91 per cent.

Expenditure on safety-related activities has risen steadily, from Rs 39,200 crore in 2013-14 to Rs 1,20,389 crore in 2026-27.

Electrical and electronic interlocking systems with centralised operation have been provided at 6,671 stations and complete track circuiting at all these stations. Interlocking of Level Crossing (LC) Gates has been provided at 10,395 Level Crossing Gates for enhancing safety at LC Gates.

Work unitedly to dismantle terror ecosystem: PM Modi

BISHKEK, Sept 1 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday urged the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to confront countries using terrorism as an instrument of State policy and reject "double standards" in the collective fight against terror financing and recruitment, remarks widely viewed as a direct swipe at Pakistan.

"Terrorism continues to pose a serious challenge to humanity as a whole. In the fight against terrorism, we cannot remain confined to an action-reaction approach," he said.

"We must dismantle the entire ecosystem of terrorist financing, recruitment, radicalisation, and safe havens. We must speak with one voice and make it clear that there can be no place for double standards on this serious issue," he said.

"We must send a strong message to countries that use terrorism as an instrument of policy and provide safe haven and support to terrorists that terrorism can never be a strategic asset for anyone," Modi added.

In the presence of Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chinese President Xi Jinping and many other global leaders, Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of State Meeting, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. (@MEAIndia/X via PTI)

said that "we cannot remain confined to an action-reaction approach" in the fight against terrorism as terrorist activities continued to pose a serious challenge to humanity.

Calling for decisive action within the SCO, the Prime Minister advocated for the comprehensive dismantling of terrorist ecosystems, including funding networks, recruitment pipelines, and territorial sanctuaries. He further affirmed that states utilising terrorism as a policy tool must be warned that terrorism can never be a "strategic

asset for anyone." Modi, expressing concerns over the West Asia crisis, said India has consistently called for all tensions and conflicts to be resolved not on the battlefield, but through dialogue and diplomacy.

The Prime Minister, in an apparent reference to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), said connectivity projects should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries as it is the fundamental spirit of the SCO Charter.

India has been critical of BRI as part of it passes through

Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. However, the central theme of the Prime Minister's address appeared to be his call to the

SCO to work unitedly to combat terrorism. His remarks were largely seen as directed at Pakistan's support to various terror groups. The Prime Minister, delving into the situation in West Asia, said it demonstrated that a conflict in one region does not remain confined to that region.

only as its impact is felt across the world. "In today's interconnected world, the scope of security has become even broader. The crisis in West Asia has demonstrated that a conflict in one region does not remain confined to that region."

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Annual
SCO
Summit

SCO leaders sign Bishkek Declaration marking regional alliance's 25th anniversary summit

BISHKEK, Sept 1 (ANS)

THE Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) members on Tuesday signed the Bishkek Declaration after the group's 26th summit in Kyrgyzstan.

A number of documents were signed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other heads of State of the SCO members in the declaration on the 25th anniversary of the SCO.

They also signed a protocol on amendments and additions to the charter of the SCO of June 7, 2002.

The SCO leaders signed a document on the regulation of the Universal Centre for Countering Security Challenges and Threats

to SCO Member States.

The leaders also signed a document on the regulation of the Executive Committee of the SCO

among SCO member States on combating drug addiction through 2030.

They also agreed on a pro-



(From left to right) Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping signing a Declaration at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Council of Heads of State Meeting, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. (PTI)

Anti-Narcotics Centre.

The leaders decided to have a programme of cooperation

among SCO member States on coordinating measures to

(Contd on page 5)

Air Vice Marshal Shakti Sharma scripts history with AVM-rank appointment



Air Vice Marshal Shakti Sharma (L) assumes the appointment of Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Education), becoming the first woman officer from the non-medical branch of the Indian Armed Forces to attain the rank of Air Vice Marshal or equivalent. (X via PTI)

NEW DELHI, Sept 1 (PTI)

IN A historic milestone for the Indian Air Force, Air Vice Marshal Shakti Sharma has

become the first woman officer (non-medical) in the country's Armed Forces to attain the rank of Air Vice Marshal or equivalent, officials said on Tuesday.

She assumed the appointment of Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Education) at the Air Headquarters on September 1, they said. The air officer previously held the rank of Air Commodore, an IAF official said. "In a historic milestone for the Indian Air Force, Air Vice Marshal Shakti Sharma became the first woman officer (non-medical) in the Indian Defence Forces to attain the rank of Air Vice Marshal (or equivalent)," the Defence Ministry said.

Commissioned into the Education Branch of the IAF on June 18, 1994, AVM Sharma brings a wealth of experience to her new role, spanning diverse postings across training establishments, field stations, command headquarters and the Air Headquarters, it said.

Air Marshal Sandeep Thareja takes over as DGAFMS

NEW DELHI, Sept 1 (PTI)

Air Marshal Sandeep Thareja, a distinguished physician and gastroenterologist, on Tuesday assumed charge as the new Director General Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAFMS).

His appointment comes at a time of significant transformation within the AFMS, with continuing emphasis on operational medical preparedness, jointness, modernisation of military healthcare, digital health, medical research and innovation, human resource development and delivery of high-quality healthcare to serving personnel, veterans and their dependents, officials said.

As the DGAFMS, Air Marshal Thareja will oversee the provision of comprehensive medical support to the defence forces. An alumnus of the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune, he was commissioned into the Army Medical Corps in December 1986.

"A distinguished physician and gastroenterologist, he completed his MD in medicine from Delhi and DM in gastroenterology from AIIMS, New Delhi," the Defence Ministry said in a statement. During an illustrious career spanning nearly four decades, the air marshal has held a wide spectrum of clinical, academic, operational and administrative appointments.