

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.302
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.02.2021**

SCO MEETING

302. SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a)** the countries which participated in the SCO Foreign Ministers (FM) meeting held recently in Russia in September 2020 along with the details of the deliberation held in the said meeting;
- (b)** whether India held meetings/talks with the leaders of different countries outside the SCO FM meeting and if so, the issues deliberated/discussed and the consensus arrived at the meetings/talks;
- (c)** whether India held any bilateral meeting(s) with China regarding the recent India-China military standoff and if so, the response received from China;
- (d)** the details of India's Eurasia plan/policy *vis-à-vis* the SCO;
- (e)** whether India proposes to play a more meaningful role in the SCO, in lieu of rising tensions with China; and
- (f)** if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)**

(a) Foreign Ministers of Shanghai Cooperation Organization(SCO) Member States (India, Kazakhstan,China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), Secretary-General of the SCO and Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure(SCO RATS) attended the meeting of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers held in Moscow on September 10, 2020.

The meeting discussed:

- (i) The status and prospects for further development of the SCO's activities, taking into account the global political and socio-economic consequences of the new coronavirus pandemic;
- (ii) Preparations for the meeting of the Council of Heads of State to be held on November 10, 2020;
- (iii) Current international and regional issues;
- (iv) 75th anniversary of the UN and promotion of foreign policy of interaction of the SCO Member States.

At the end of the meeting a Press Release/Information Statement was issued.

(b) On the sidelines of the SCO Foreign Ministers meeting, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar held bilateral meetings with the Foreign Ministers of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. EAM also took part in the Russia-India-China Foreign Ministers Meeting.

During his meeting with the Russian Foreign Minister, EAM discussed issues of bilateral cooperation (including the scheduling of the next India-Russia Annual Summit, India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission etc), as well as regional/international issues of mutual interest. Both Ministers underscored the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between the two countries.

During the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Russia-India-China, the 3 sides exchanged views on further strengthening of trilateral cooperation and topical issues of international and regional importance. They reiterated their support for inclusive multilateralism and respect for universally recognized principles of international law. They agreed that the 3 countries could make a significant contribution towards mitigating the impact of Covid-19 pandemic. The Russian Foreign Minister officially handed over the chairmanship of RIC to the External Affairs Minister of India.

During his bilateral meetings with the Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, EAM discussed issues related to further strengthening of bilateral strategic cooperation, the next meeting of India-Central Asia Dialogue, economic cooperation, connectivity, implementation of developmental projects through Government of India's Line of Credit, situation in Afghanistan etc. The Foreign Ministers of these Central Asian countries also expressed their desire to further strengthen bilateral relations with India.

(c) External Affairs Minister met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on 10 September 2020 in Moscow on the side-lines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting. Both Ministers had in-depth discussions on the developments in the India-China border areas and reached a five point agreement.

(d) India uses SCO as a platform to reconnect to the Eurasian region, particularly with our extended neighbourhood, share best practices in countering the threats of terrorism, extremism and separatism through the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (SCO RATS), cooperation on Afghanistan, and deepen our trade, economic and cultural cooperation in the region.

(e) & (f) Yes. Since India became Member State of the SCO in 2017, India has continued to play a constructive and positive role and has actively contributed to enriching the agenda and strengthening the Organisation.

In November 2019, as per rotation - India assumed the Chairmanship of the 19th SCO Council of Heads of Government(CHG) for a one-year period.

During the course of our Chairmanship, it was our endeavor to implement the previous announcements of Hon'ble PM and to create a niche` for India-led and India- driven activities within the Organisation.

The 19th Summit of SCO Council of Heads of Government (SCO CHG) was held on November 30, 2020 in the virtual format. Hon'ble Vice President of India, who chaired the meeting reiterated India's commitment to contribute to trade and economic development of the SCO region and announced concrete initiatives under India's Chairmanship of the SCO CHG in 2020. These included, creating a new Special Working Group on Startups and Innovation under the Chairmanship of India, setting up an Expert Working Group on Cooperation in Traditional Medicine, convening of the SCO Young Scientists Conclave on a biannual basis, hosting of an annual SCO MSME Bazaar in B2B format and establishing a digital SCO MSME Center by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
