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## 24<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)



ЗАСЕДАНИЕ СОВЕТА ГЛАВ ГОСУДАРСТВ-ЧЛЕНОВ  
ШАНХАЙСКОЙ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА

4 июля 2024 года



上海合作组织成员国元首理事会会议

2024年7月4日

ASTANA-2024

ШАНХАЙ ҰНТЫМАҚТАСТЫҚ ҰЙЫМЫНА  
МҮШЕ МЕМЛЕКЕТТЕРДІҢ БАСШЫЛАРЫ  
КЕҢЕСІНІҢ ОТЫРЫСЫ

2024 жылғы 4 шілде



# Announcement



## Humza Yaqoob Tabani Chairman of Tabani Group

**\*Karachi, Pakistan – 19th July 2024\*** – Tabani Group announces the promotion of Humza Yaqoob Tabani to Chairman following the passing of his father, Muhammed Yaqoob Tabani.

With 28 years at Tabani Group and 12 years as CEO, Humza Yaqoob Tabani has driven significant growth and innovation. In his new role, he will continue to lead with the dedication and vision that have been his hallmark.

“I am honored to lead Tabani Group into the future,” said Humza Yaqoob Tabani.  
“We will build on our strong foundation and pursue new opportunities.”



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# Contents

**07**

SCO Declaration 2024: Commitment to Security, Cooperation, and Global Stability

**09**

Factsheet on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Astana

**12**

Joint Statement between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Tajikistan at the Culmination of the Official



**15**

Staying True to Our Shared Commitment and Opening a New Chapter in China-Kazakhstan Relations

**18**

Joint Statement Regarding Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Pakistan Trilateral Meeting

**19**

Joint press statements of Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif

**22**

Uzbekistan – SCO: cooperation for peace and prosperity of countries and peoples

**23**

Kazakhstan's Chairmanship in SCO: Achievements and Future Directions

**25**

Cultural and People-to-People ties in SCO



**27**

Japan-Pakistan - celebrating 70 years of ties

**29**

Beijing's contribution to BRI: A Decade of Development and Future Goals

**31**

China's Cyber Future: Strategy, Innovations, and Global Influence

**33**

How the Phrase "Spirit of Central Asia" Appeared in World Political Science

**36**

Pakistan's Port Potential: Strategic Hubs in Regional Trade

**38**

Visit of Business Delegation to Tajikistan

**40**

International Day for Women in Diplomacy Celebrated



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# Editor's Note



The 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) held in Astana, Kazakhstan, was an important gathering that brought together leaders from various countries to discuss regional cooperation and security issues, underscoring the SCO's role in addressing these critical matters. Kazakhstan hosted the summit, with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev presiding over the event. Astana, the capital city, provided a strategic location for the discussions. The summit witnessed the participation of several prominent world leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. India was represented by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar. One of the most significant outcomes of the summit was the admission of Belarus as the 10th full member of the SCO. Belarus had previously held observer status within the organization, and its elevation to full membership marked a notable expansion of the SCO. The SCO, initially established in 2001 with five member states, has seen significant growth over the years. India and Pakistan joined in 2017, followed by Iran in 2023. With Belarus joining in 2024, the organization now comprises ten full members. The next Council of Heads of State Meeting of the SCO will be held in China. As the rotating presidency of the SCO has now passed from Kazakhstan to China, the Chinese city of Qingdao has been designated as the SCO's tourism and cultural capital for 2024-2025.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif went on an official visit to Tajikistan on July 2-3, 2024, at the invitation of President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon. This visit comes amid heightened diplomatic activity between Pakistan and Central Asian states. In recent weeks, there have been numerous visits, investment talks, and economic activities aimed at strengthening relations, particularly in the areas of economy and investment. Prime Minister Sharif's visit to Dushanbe is part of this broader initiative, following a special meeting chaired by Sharif with senior government ministers focused on enhancing ties with Central Asia. During his visit to Tajikistan, Prime Minister Sharif met with President Emomali Rahmon, Chairman of Majlisi Namoyandagon of Majlisi Oli, Mahmadoir Zoir Zokirzoda, and Prime Minister Qohir Rasulzoda. The discussions between the two sides covered a wide range of areas of mutual interest, with an emphasis on deepening cooperation in regional connectivity, trade, people-to-people contacts, and energy. Several agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed, underscoring the commitment to diverse areas of cooperation. The visit aligns with Pakistan's broader objective of contributing to regional stability while positioning itself strategically in evolving geopolitical dynamics. It emphasized economic cooperation, notably through projects like CASA-1000, and security collaboration to address common threats such as terrorism. Cultural diplomacy was also a key focus, promoting travel and academic exchanges. Agreements on education scholarships and business alliances were made, setting the groundwork for future interactions and reaffirming Pakistan's role as an active regional participant.

Prime Minister Sharif's visit to Tajikistan and subsequent participation in the SCO summit underscore Pakistan's strategic commitment to enhancing regional connectivity, economic cooperation, and security collaboration with Central Asia. This visit is a significant step in Pakistan's efforts to navigate regional dynamics and establish itself as a key player in the geopolitics of Central and South Asia. The agreements signed during the visit, including those on education scholarships and business alliances, lay the groundwork for future cooperation, fostering long-term relations and mutual advancement. This diplomatic mission is expected to catalyze increased collaboration and strengthen Pakistan's position as an active regional participant.



# SCO Declaration 2024: Commitment to Security, Cooperation, and Global Stability



The 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) took place on July 4, 2024, in Astana, Kazakhstan. This important gathering brought together leaders from various countries to discuss regional cooperation and security issues, underscoring the SCO's role in addressing these critical matters.

Leaders of the member states have issued a comprehensive declaration addressing the significant shifts in global politics and the international landscape. This declaration underscores the SCO's commitment to fostering a multipolar world order characterized by equitable and mutually beneficial international cooperation, while acknowledging the growing challenges to global peace and stability.

The declaration begins by highlighting the ongoing tectonic shifts in global politics and the emergence of a fairer multipolar world order, which presents

broader opportunities for national development and international cooperation. However, it also notes the increased use of force, frequent violations of international law, and escalating geopolitical confrontations, which pose risks to regional and global stability. In response, the member states advocate for enhancing the role of the SCO in promoting universal peace, security, and stability, and in building a new democratic and fair world order. To this end, they have introduced the SCO initiative on World Unity for a Just Peace, Harmony, and Development, inviting the international community to participate.

The SCO leaders emphasize the importance of respecting the right of peoples to independently choose their political and socio-economic paths, adhering to principles such as sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, and peaceful resolution of disputes. They reaffirm their commitment to these principles as

the foundation for sustainable international relations and stress the need for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations to increase the representation of developing countries.

The declaration reiterates the SCO's dedication to creating a more representative, democratic, and multipolar world, rooted in the principles of international law, cultural diversity, and equal cooperation, with the United Nations playing a central coordinating role. The SCO Charter and the Shanghai Spirit, characterized by mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, and respect for cultural diversity, guide the organization's non-confrontational approach to international and regional development issues.

A significant portion of the declaration addresses security concerns, condemning the unilateral buildup of global ballistic missile defenses and emphasizing the need for non-confrontational security policies. The member states have

adopted a Statement on the Principles of Good-Neighbourliness, Trust, and Partnership, reflecting their commitment to strengthening political, security, economic, and cultural cooperation to achieve global peace and prosperity.

The declaration also highlights the centrality of Central Asia to the SCO, supporting regional efforts to ensure peace, security, and stability. The SCO's role in fostering socioeconomic development in Central Asia is underscored, and the strategic development goals of the SCO and the Central Asian states are deemed mutually complementary.



Furthermore, the SCO reaffirms its position as a crucial participant in the international system, contributing to regional security, global economic growth, and the promotion of social, cultural, sports, and scientific ties. The member states commit to drafting the SCO Development Strategy to 2035, aiming to enhance the organization's potential and international influence as a key multilateral entity in a multipolar world.

The declaration addresses various global security issues, including terrorism, separatism, extremism, and transnational organized crime. The SCO reiterates its stance against the use of terrorism for political purposes and condemns double standards in counter-terrorism efforts. The member states call for international consensus on adopting a Comprehensive Convention on Combatting International

Terrorism and emphasize the need for robust measures against cyber-terrorism and propaganda.

The declaration also covers concerns regarding chemical and biological terrorism, advocating for multilateral talks to establish a convention to combat these threats. The SCO supports strengthening international frameworks for disarmament and nonproliferation, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Moreover, it underscores the importance of enhancing legal and judicial cooperation among member states and

reaffirms its commitment to upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms. It calls for a greater cooperation in combating illicit drug trafficking and other forms of transnational organized crime, and emphasizes on the role of the United Nations in ensuring a safe and secure information environment.

The Member States reaffirm their commitment to enhancing international information security and advocate for a Comprehensive International Convention on countering cybercrime within the UN framework. Stressing the importance of equal rights in internet regulation and national sovereignty over governance, they emphasize the SCO region's role in global economic stability and sustainable development. Supporting reforms in global economic management, they defend a fair, non-discriminatory multi-

lateral trading system and oppose protectionism, unilateral sanctions, and trade restrictions.

To promote people-oriented cooperation, they commit to implementing the SCO Economic Development Strategy until 2030 and supporting China's Belt and Road Initiative. Highlighting the need for inclusive, equitable interaction within the SCO, they welcome Russia's Greater Eurasian Partnership proposal. Supporting initiatives for connectivity, transport cooperation, and environmental protection, they emphasize the significance of the SCO Economic Development Strategy and the SCO New Economic Dialogue Programme.

Pledging to expedite the Sustainable Development Agenda until 2030, they commit to enhancing cooperation in e-commerce, agriculture, digital economy, and innovation. Stressing the importance of digital financial inclusion, consumer rights protection, and financial literacy, they reaffirm the role of national currencies in mutual payments and advocate for the establishment of an SCO Investment Fund and Development Bank. They also support energy security cooperation and balanced energy transition, including civil nuclear energy development.

Emphasizing cooperation between analytical and expert centers, they support youth entrepreneurship, interregional cooperation, cultural and educational exchanges, and the creative economy. Committing to environmental protection, sustainable tourism, and addressing climate change, they highlight the need for effective waste management, safe drinking water, and public health cooperation. They also support emergency response collaboration and emphasize the significance of sports events for fostering friendship.

Welcoming enhanced cooperation with the UN and other international organizations, they acknowledge the SCO's contributions to global goals. Celebrating the SCO Secretariat's 20th anniversary and Belarus's accession as a full member, they pass the chairmanship to China, with the next meeting scheduled for 2025.



# Factsheet on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Astana

## Overview

The 24th summit of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), chaired by Kazakhstan, took place in the capital, Astana, on July 4, 2024. Titled “Strengthening Multilateral Dialogue – Striving Towards a Sustainable Peace and Prosperity,” the summit adopted the Astana Declaration and approved 25 strategic documents covering energy, security, trade, finance, and information security.

Belarus was officially admitted as a full member state of the SCO, making it a 10-member organisation.

Following the summit, China assumed the rotating presidency of the SCO for 2024-2025.

This factsheet outlined the key points from the summit.

## Key Points from President Tokayev’s Statement at the SCO Meeting

### 1. Outcomes of Kazakhstan’s SCO chairmanship

President Tokayev summed up the results of Kazakhstan’s chairmanship in the SCO:

- **Events Held:**
  - 150 events including digital, tourism, energy, and business forums.
  - SCO Youth Council meeting.
- **Sixty New Documents Developed Including:**
  - Anti-drug strategy.
  - Plan for implementing the economic cooperation strategy.
  - Environmental protection agreement.
  - Energy cooperation development strategy.
- **International Partnerships:**
  - Expansion of the Organization’s international partners.
  - Revival of the Special Working Group on Promoting Investment.
  - Positive dynamics in transitioning to payments in national currencies.
- **Economic Impact:**
  - Dynamic development of trade and economic cooperation in the SCO space.
- **Cultural and Humanitarian Initiatives:**
  - Launch of anchor projects such as “Spiritual Relics of the SCO States.”
  - First international music festival “SCO Silk Way.”
  - Identification of 10 tourist destinations for joint projects.



- Almaty was designated as the cultural and tourist capital of the SCO for the duration of the SCO membership.
- **Overall Achievement:**
  - Full implementation of goals and tasks set from the previous summit.
- 2. **SCO Priorities Outlined by President Tokayev**

President Tokayev outlined the key areas of strategic significance for the member states of the ‘Shanghai 10’:

  - **Strengthening Mutual Trust and Security Cooperation:**
    - Addressing the global crisis in international affairs.
    - Enhancing the SCO’s stabilising and creative role to uphold international law and prevent geopolitical splits.
    - Developing and adopting an agreement on confidence-building measures in the military sphere with a focus on combating the “forces of three evils” - terrorism, separatism, and extremism.
    - Promoting the SCO initiative on World Unity for Just Peace, Harmony, and Development, initially proposed by Kazakhstan and supported by members of the SCO.
  - **Enhancing Cybersecurity:**
    - Developing a mechanism for constant information exchange and adoption of best practices.
    - Ensuring the steady functioning of the SCO information infrastructure through the adopted action plan on international information security.
  - **Expanding Trade and Economic Ties:**
    - Addressing the need for new economic growth points and a new development paradigm.
    - Expanding trade and economic cooperation, facilitating free movement of capital and technologies, and combating climate challenges. Trade between Kazakhstan and SCO member states grew by 6.5% in 2023.

- o Proposal to create an integrated platform for discussing and approving investment projects.
- o Suggestion to establish a mechanism for financial support of project activities based on the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC).
- **Strengthening Transport Connectivity:**
  - o Building efficient corridors and reliable supply chains.
  - o Synergizing China's One Belt, One Road initiative with other regional transport routes like the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (Middle Corridor) and North-South Trans-Eurasian Corridors.
  - o Establishing a partner network of strategic ports and logistics centres within the SCO.

#### Statements From Other SCO Summit Participants

- **President Xi Jinping (China):**
  - o Praised Kazakhstan's positive role in leading the SCO.
  - o Echoed the significance of the Shanghai Spirit.
  - o Urged member countries to consolidate unity against foreign interference in internal affairs.
- **President Vladimir Putin (Russia):**
  - o Praised the solid package of documents and resolutions prepared with Kazakhstan's active participation.
  - o Supported resuming the SCO-Afghanistan contact group to normalise Afghanistan's situation.
  - o Highlighted resolutions to transform the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure and establish an anti-drug centre in Dushanbe to enhance security.
- **Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (Pakistan):**
  - o Remarked that Kazakhstan reaffirmed its commitment to promoting the SCO's collective goals.
- **Acting President Mohammad Mokhber (Iran):**
  - o Highlighted the significant contribution of the Kazakh presidency in promoting cooperation and advancing the activities of the SCO.
- **President Sadyr Japarov (Kyrgyz Republic):**
  - o Emphasised unity and joint efforts in overcoming global challenges like the pandemic, climate change, and economic instability.
  - o Stressed the SCO's commitment to resolving conflicts based on international norms and principles.
  - o Called for reducing trade barriers within the SCO and recalled initiatives to create the SCO Development Bank and Development Fund.
- **Secretary-General António Guterres (United Nations):**
  - o Highlighted Kazakhstan's important voice in the UN, noting the country's efforts towards peace, bringing together parties in conflict to solve disagreements, and mediating in international affairs.

- o Noted that the SCO has the power and the responsibility to push for peace.

- **SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming (China):**

- o Thanked Kazakhstan for the productive work as the Chair of the SCO.
- o Highlighted the Shanghai Spirit as a driving force behind the SCO's progress.
- o Identified Central Asia as the core of the SCO, linking regional peace and prosperity to the SCO's stability and development.
- o Thanked Kazakhstan for its work as the SCO chair and congratulated China on assuming the position.

#### Outcomes of the SCO Summit

##### Signed Documents and Resolutions

- The 24th summit of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization adopted the Astana Declaration and approved 25 strategic documents covering energy, security, trade, finance, and information security.
- Key resolutions included the cooperation programs to combat terrorism, separatism, and extremism for 2025-2027, the Anti-Drug Strategy for the next five years, and its corresponding Action Program.
- Strategies for energy cooperation until 2030 and the Economic Development Strategy's Action Plan until 2030 were also approved.
- Resolutions encompassed the Association of Investors, programs for developing cooperation in protected areas and eco-tourism, and mechanisms for financing SCO project activities.
- The member states additionally signed statements affirming principles of good neighbourliness, trust, and partnership, ensuring the safety of drinking water and sanitation, and promoting effective waste management.
- They also formalised an agreement on environmental protection cooperation among SCO governments.

##### The list of documents includes:

1. Astana Declaration – Member States underscored the SCO's role in bolstering global peace, security, and stability and shaping a new democratic, equitable international political and economic order, inviting the global community to join the initiative.
2. Initiative on World Unity for Just Peace, Harmony, and Development
3. Strategy for SCO Development until 2035
4. Proposals for Improving SCO Activities
5. Admission of Belarus as a Member State
6. Member States' Contributions for Belarus' Membership
7. Cooperation Program in Countering Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism (2025-2027)
8. Anti-Drug Strategy (2024-2029) and Action Plan



9. Energy Cooperation Strategy until 2030
10. Economic Development Strategy Action Plan until 2030
11. Association of Investors of SCO Member States
12. Program for Cooperation in Protected Areas and Ecotourism
13. Qingdao as the Tourist and Cultural Capital (2024-2025)
14. Roadmap for Strengthening Interaction with Dialogue Partners
15. Financial Support Mechanisms for SCO Project Activities
16. MOU with Central Asian Regional Information Coordination Center on Narcotics
17. Plan for Ensuring International Information Security
18. Appointment of the SCO Secretary-General
19. Appointment of the Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure
20. Secretary-General's Report on SCO Activities
21. Report on Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure Activities (2023)
22. Statement on Principles of Good-Neighborliness, Trust, and Partnership
23. Statement on Drinking Water and Sanitation Safety
24. Statement on Effective Waste Management
25. Agreement on Cooperation in Environmental Protection

## SCO+ Format

### Proposals by President Tokayev

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev proposed several key strategies to foster multilateral cooperation among the SCO member states at the inaugural SCO+ format during the organisation's 24th summit. Tokayev's proposals include the following:

- **Collective Facilitation for Peace and Development:**
  - Enhance the UN's role as a major international institution.
  - Address global security and 21st-century challenges.
  - Propose a resolution supporting Kazakhstan's Initiative On World Unity for Just Peace and Harmony for the 80th anniversary of the UN and the 20th anniversary of SCO-UN cooperation.
- **Enhancing Trade and Economic Ties:**
  - Support for China's plan to expand market access and increase SCO trade turnover to \$3 trillion.
  - Utilise over 350,000 kilometres of railroads to develop a large Eurasian belt for global trade.
  - Ensure connectivity through the Belt and Road Initiative, the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, and the North-South corridor.
- **Environmental Concerns:**
  - Address the critical impact of climate change, referencing recent floods in Kazakhstan.

- Develop measures to address internal water bodies' degradation.
- Introduce new water-saving technologies.
- Achieve UN General Assembly goals related to environmental protection as a contribution of the SCO.

- **Cultural, Humanitarian, and Educational Cooperation:**

- Establish cultural centres to enhance cultural and humanitarian cooperation among SCO countries.
- Engage youth by creating development opportunities and fostering more intense contacts.
- Expand the network of SCO universities.
- Increase the number of grants for students, particularly in technical fields.

### World Leaders Participating in the SCO Summit

- Azerbaijani President: Ilham Aliyev
- Belarusian President: Alexander Lukashenko
- Chinese President: Xi Jinping
- Indian Representation: External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar
- Kazakh President: Kassym-Jomart Tokayev
- Kyrgyz President: Sadyr Zhaparov
- Mongolian President: Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh
- Pakistani Prime Minister: Shehbaz Sharif
- Qatari Leader: Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani
- Russian President: Vladimir Putin
- Tajik President: Emomali Rahmon
- Turkish President: Recep Tayyip Erdogan
- Uzbek President: Shavkat Mirziyoyev
- United Nations Secretary-General: António Guterres

### Background to the SCO

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was established in Shanghai on June 15, 2001, by six founding nations: Kazakhstan, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- This intergovernmental organisation evolved from the earlier Shanghai Five mechanism, reflecting a growing need for regional cooperation and security.
- The SCO now has 10 members, including India, Iran, and Pakistan, Belarus, in addition to the founding members. There are two observer states – Afghanistan, and Mongolia, and 14 dialogue partners, including Azerbaijan, Armenia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye.
- The SCO represents 40% of the world's population, and member countries contribute approximately over \$23 trillion to global GDP.

# Joint Statement between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Tajikistan at the Culmination of the Official



1. At the invitation of His Excellency Emomali Rahmon, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, His Excellency Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, paid an official visit to the Republic of Tajikistan on July 2-3, 2024.
2. The President of Tajikistan had a tete-a-tete meeting with the Prime Minister of Pakistan, which was followed by delegation level talks. During the meetings two sides exchanged views on further strengthening of the multifaceted cooperation between Tajikistan and Pakistan. During the visit, the Chairman of the Tajik Parliament – Majlisi namoyandagon Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan H.E. Zokirzoda Mahmadoir Zoir and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan H.E. Mr. Qohir Rasulzoda also called on the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
3. In a tete-a-tete meeting between the President of Republic of Tajikistan and the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and at the delegation level talks, the two leaders discussed a range of bilateral issues as well as exchanged views on regional and international developments.
4. The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to deepen the existing fraternal ties between the two countries, which are based on a shared history, culture, geographical contiguity and common faith.
5. The President of Tajikistan and the Prime Minister of Pakistan signed the Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, which is a true reflection of growing mutual trust and partnership between the two nations, and will pave new way for further enhancement of bilateral cooperation.
6. The two leaders commended the excellent bilateral cooperation at the multilateral forums including the UN, SCO, OIC, ECO and CICA. It was agreed to further enhance multilateral cooperation for global and regional peace, stability and sustainable development.
7. The Prime Minister of Pakistan supported nomination of the Republic of Tajikistan as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2028-2029 and appreciated Tajikistan's valuable support for Pakistan's



- candidature to the same body for the term 2025-26.
8. The Prime Minister of Pakistan highly appreciated Tajikistan's leadership role in Water Diplomacy and congratulated the President of Tajikistan for successful organization of international events including the UN 2023 Water Conference in New York by Tajikistan and Netherlands in March 2023, and the 3rd Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference on June 10-13, 2024 in Dushanbe.
  9. The Pakistan Prime Minister also expressed support for Tajikistan's initiative to establish the SCO Anti-Drug Centre in Dushanbe.
  10. The Prime Minister of Pakistan also commended the initiative of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to declare 2025 as the International Year of Glacier Conservation and the establishment of the International Foundation for The Protection of Glaciers; and welcomed the adoption of the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolution.
  11. The Prime Minister of Pakistan underlined the importance of engagement with Tajikistan under Pakistan's "Vision Central Asia" policy which is based on the five pillars of bilateral cooperation i.e. political, trade & investment, energy & connectivity, security & defence and people-to-people contacts. The Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's support to Tajikistan for its membership in Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA).
  12. The two sides reviewed the existing inter-parliamentary cooperation between the two countries. The two leaders underscored the importance of Tajikistan-Pakistan Parliamentary Friendship Groups in the respective Parliaments and supported increasing frequency of parliamentary delegations' visits to boost productive inter-parliamentary cooperation.
  13. The progress achieved by existing Joint Working Groups (JWGs) in various fields, including trade, investment, transport, energy, culture and tourism, was noted by the two leaders; and regular interactions of these JWGs were encouraged by the two sides.
  14. Noting the current level of bilateral trade, it was underlined that there is a vast potential that needs to be tapped through mutual efforts. Accordingly, the two sides agreed to increase bilateral economic ties by exploring new avenues, opportunities and ventures.
  15. To enhance trade ties, the two sides also agreed to explore the provision of preferential market access for each other's goods, including through negotiations of a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA). The two sides underlined the importance to hold expert level consultations on developing road, rail and air connectivity between the two countries.
  16. Noting the importance of the Pakistan-Tajikistan Joint Commission on Trade, Economic and Scientific Technical Cooperation, the two sides expressed readiness to hold the 7th Session of the Joint Commission in Islamabad at the earliest possible.
  17. Underlining the importance of reliable electricity supply for sustainable economic growth, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment for early completion of the flagship power project CASA-1000. It was agreed that completion of the project would open new avenues for future energy corridors, leading to prosperity for the two sides and the whole region.
  18. The Prime Minister informed the Tajik President about the operationalization of Gwadar seaport and offered Tajikistan the opportunity to avail the facilities of Pakistani seaports. It was highlighted that the Pakistani seaports offer the most efficient, shortest and economic route for the Central Asian countries including Tajikistan to the markets in Middle East and beyond. The two sides also noted the progress in operationalizing the Agreement on Transit Trade which was signed during the visit of the Tajik President to Pakistan in December 2022.
  19. The Prime Minister highlighted CPEC as a linchpin of Pakistan's connectivity with the region and the major plank of its future development. He mentioned how the first phase of CPEC helped Pakistan lay a robust infrastructure network, whereas Phase-II is focused on infrastructure development, green development, ICT, industrialization and agriculture modernization.
  20. Underlying the expertise and capacities of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in investment and



technology, the Tajik President welcomed Pakistani entrepreneurs and business community to contribute to bilateral economic ties of the two countries by investing in free economic zones of Tajikistan.

21. The two sides highlighted the need to enhance business-to-business ties through the exchange of business delegations, organization of business forums/exhibitions and scheduling meetings of the Tajikistan-Pakistan Joint Business Council.
22. Cooperation in the fields of counter-terrorism and security was given particular attention by the leaders of Tajikistan and Pakistan and they welcomed the gradual development of bilateral cooperation in this field. The two leaders reaffirmed determination to further enhancement of cooperation in this field in order to overcome security challenges faced by the two countries and the region.
23. The two sides condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Both sides appreciated their respective contributions and sacrifices in the global fight against terrorism. They emphasized the need to enhance ongoing cooperation, at bilateral level as well as within the international and regional organizations, in counter-terrorism, combating trans-national organized crimes, human and drug trafficking.
24. The Prime Minister of Pakistan appreciated the efforts of the Republic of Tajikistan to promote multilateral cooperation in countering terrorism and its financing in the Central Asian region and holding together with UN, High-Level international conferences in the framework of Dushanbe Process.
25. On Afghanistan, the two sides agreed that a peaceful, prosperous, interconnected and stable Afghanistan is fundamental to regional prosperity and progress. In this regard, they considered it important for Afghanistan to have an inclusive government.
26. The two sides expressed concerns on

the new and emerging threats posed by rise in terrorist attacks on the basis of xenophobia, racism, radicalization, and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief.

27. The two leaders exchanged views on the rise of Islamophobia world-wide and expressed support for the joint initiatives and collective efforts of the OIC to combat this scourge. They welcomed the designation of 15 March as the International Day to combat Islamophobia by the UN General Assembly.



28. The Prime Minister of Pakistan expressed gratitude to the President of Tajikistan for providing assistance to the flood victims in August 2022. The Tajik President expressed the hope for early re-construction of infrastructure and re-habilitation of the displaced people.
29. The two sides termed climate change as an existential threat and re-affirmed to make concrete and strenuous efforts to mitigate and adapt to the adverse impact of climate change. The two leaders urged the developed countries to adhere to their commitments, take the lead role in reduction of emission of greenhouse gases and fulfillment of their commitment to generate adequate climate finance, in order to ensure the sustainable development of developing countries.

30. The President of Tajikistan appreciated the excellence and expertise of Pakistani institutions in training of professionals from Tajikistan government structures in a range of fields. Both sides agreed to further enhance educational cooperation by exchanging and awarding scholarships to the students of both countries.

31. The two sides, while recognizing the immense contribution of scholars, intellectuals and writers in the promotion of people-to-people linkages, agreed to name a street/road in the respective capitals

after leading literary figures of both countries.

32. The President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Prime Minister of Pakistan recognized the signing of new cooperation documents between the two countries as the result of the talks, enforcement of legal basis, and a favourable opportunity for further development of cooperation.
33. The Prime Minister of Pakistan thanked His Excellency the President of Tajikistan for the heartfelt and warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation.
34. The Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan invited His Excellency the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to visit Pakistan at a convenient time.



# Staying True to Our Shared Commitment and Opening a New Chapter in China-Kazakhstan Relations

Xi Jinping



All beings are flourishing in the height of summer. I will soon pay a state visit to Kazakhstan and attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in this vibrant season at the invitation of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. This will be my fifth visit to your country as the President of the People's Republic of China. Kazakhstan's enchanting land, its splendid and distinctive culture, its vast and magnificent landscape, and its nice and friendly people have been most impressive. The visit offers me an opportunity to experience first hand the new progress and new changes that have been made in Kazakhstan. I look forward to meeting with President Tokayev to plan the way forward for closer China-Kazakhstan cooperation and draw a new blueprint for further growth of China-Kazakhstan relations and the SCO.

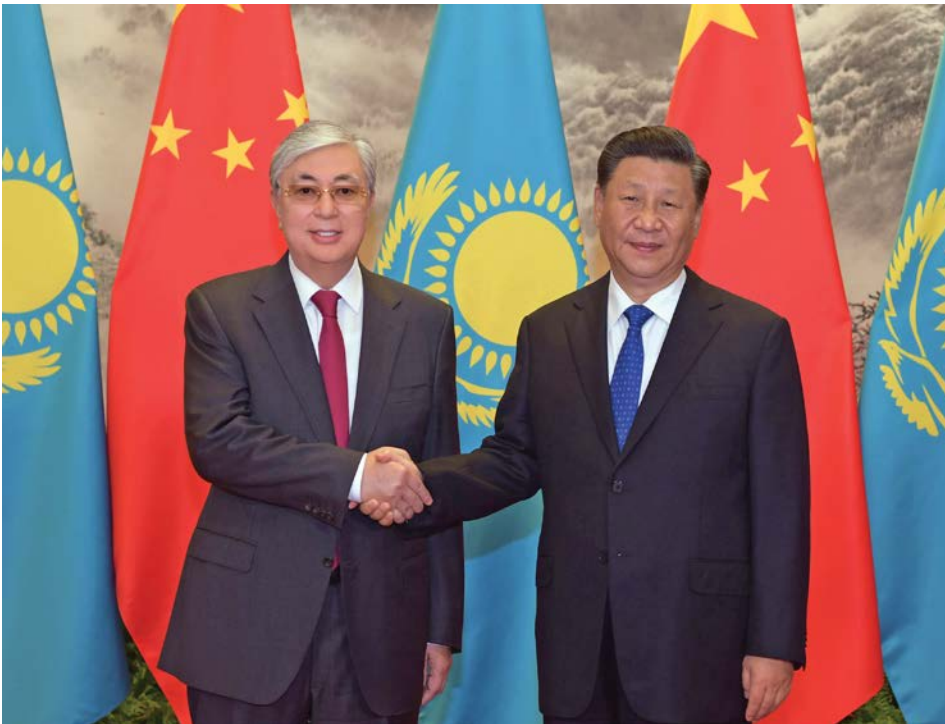
Over 2,000 years ago, Zhang Qian, a royal emissary from China led a diplomatic mission to the Western Regions, opening the door to friendship and exchanges between China and Central Asia. The ancient Silk Road, of which Zhang was a pioneer, contributed to the friendly exchanges and mutual learning between our two great nations. Over 80 years ago, Chinese musician Xian Xinghai and Kazakh composer Bakhytzhan Baikadamov met and came to know each other in Almaty. They soon became bosom friends and devoted brothers despite their different nationalities. Thirty-two years ago, China was among the first countries to recognize Kazakhstan's independence. China-Kazakhstan relations have since embarked on a new journey. The history of China-Kazakhstan friendly exchanges is a strong testament to the fact that the development of

our bilateral relationship conforms to the trend of history and that of our times.

It was in Kazakhstan eleven years ago that I first proposed the initiative of the Silk Road Economic Belt, which was warmly received by people from different sectors in Kazakhstan. This marked a magnificent chapter in Belt and Road cooperation between our two countries. And the development of China-Kazakhstan relations have since entered a new stage.

Our two countries have always supported each other and have always been partners in times of challenge. Our mutual political trust has reached a new level. The China-Kazakhstan relationship has made a leap from a comprehensive strategic partnership to a permanent comprehensive strategic partner-

ship. The two countries have agreed on to promote the pursuit of a common future in the spirit of eternal friendship, profound mutual trust and solidarity, development and prosperity. We have rendered each other firm support on issues that bear on our respective core interests and are of major concern to us. We respect the development path that each has chosen according to our respective national conditions. We have always been trustworthy and reliable partners and would invariably extend a helping hand and do our utmost to support each other when we were hit by disasters like



floods and pandemics. Such unbreakable mutual trust and support are invaluable, forming the strongest political cornerstone that underpins our bilateral cooperation.

Our two countries have always pursued mutual benefit, win-win and coordinated development, achieving new success in results-oriented cooperation. Last year, our two-way trade registered a record high of US\$41 billion. China is now Kazakhstan's largest trading partner and its top export destination. Major strategic projects including the Zhanatas wind farm, Turgusun hydropower station, and the modernization of Shym-

kent Oil Refinery have been completed and commissioned. China-Kazakhstan crude oil and natural gas pipelines are operating in a safe and stable manner. The "green lanes" for fast customs clearance of agricultural products are available at all border ports between the two countries, which makes green agri-products of high quality from Kazakhstan easily accessible for Chinese consumers. The potential for cooperation in new energy and transportation infrastructure has been unleashed. The transport and logistics terminal in Xi'an, the Western Europe-Western China Highway, and

the China-Europe Railway Express all operate smoothly, providing a strong boost to the development of both China and Kazakhstan.

Our two countries have always helped and learned from each other and witnessed a new upsurge in people-to-people and cultural exchanges. A China-Kazakhstan agreement on mutual establishment of cultural centers has been signed. Chinese and Kazakh filmmakers have co-produced a film entitled "The Composer," which is their first co-production. Our bilateral programs for cultural cooperation, including a Chinese university campus in

Kazakhstan, a Luban Workshop, and a center of traditional Chinese medicine, have been fully implemented. These institutions are now up and running. Thanks to our mutual visa-exemption arrangements, our people can visit each other as frequently as relatives do. Last year, a total of 600,000 cross-border trips were recorded. In the first quarter of this year, the number of visits in both directions amounted to 200,000 and are expected to reach a new high. Subnational cooperation is also booming, with the number of sister cities increasing to 26 pairs. The much respected and lauded ophthalmologist Dr. Saulebek Kabibekov, the "panda-man" Ruslan Tulenov, who voluntarily donated his rare type of blood in China, and the immensely popular singer Dimash Kudaibergen have become China-Kazakhstan friendship envoys in the new era.

Our two countries have always worked together in response to various challenges, and our coordination and collaboration at the international level has achieved new and tangible results. China and Kazakhstan hold similar positions on international and regional affairs. Both countries champion the vision of common, comprehensive cooperative and sustainable security. And both are committed to acting as a world peace builder, a global development contributor, and an international order defender. We have jointly created a China-Central Asia cooperation mechanism, and maintained close coordination and collaboration in the United Nations, the SCO, and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, among other multilateral organizations. We have actively supported each other's constructive proposals for international cooperation, and taken resolute measures to safeguard our shared strategic, security, and development interests.

China and Kazakhstan can and will accomplish a great deal in bilateral cooperation in the years to come. I hope my visit will help renew our traditional friendship and deepen the all-round cooperation between our countries. During my visit, President Tokayev and I will meet and plan the way forward for



further growth of China-Kazakhstan relations and discuss how best to take the China-Kazakhstan permanent comprehensive strategic partnership to new heights.

First, our two countries need to further consolidate our political tradition of mutual support. As a Chinese saying goes, "We must be people of our word in dealing with friends." China will continue to treat our Kazakh friends with sincerity and engage them with trust. China will work with Kazakhstan to further consolidate mutual political trust, strengthen strategic communication, and firmly support each other on issues that bear on our respective core interests and are of major concern to us. As always, China will support Kazakhstan in upholding its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, in continuing on the development path suited to its national conditions, in implementing domestic and foreign policies in the interest of its development and prosperity, and in opposing interference in its internal affairs by any external forces. Our two countries need to always follow the four principles that hold key to the success of our cooperation, namely, mutual respect, good neighborly friendship, solidarity in trying times, and mutual benefit, so as to ensure sustained and steady growth of China-Kazakhstan relations.

Second, our two countries need to stay committed to the golden rule of mutual benefit and win-win in our cooperation. China and Kazakhstan have different yet complementary resource endowments and industries. This offers huge potential for cooperation. China stands ready to promote greater synergy between Belt and Road cooperation and the economic policies under a Just Kazakhstan at a faster pace, and further open our super-sized market to Kazakhstan so that our Kazakh friends can share the opportunities of our development. Our two countries need to deepen cooperation in traditional sectors including business, trade, industrial capacity, investment, energy, mining and agriculture, and enhance the efficiency of customs clearance at border ports. We need to ensure

the high-quality operation of the China-Europe Railway Express, advance the construction of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, and make the network connecting our two countries more multidimensional, diverse and efficient. We need to significantly unleash the potential for cooperation in such high-tech areas as new energy, the digital economy, artificial intelligence, cross-border e-commerce, aviation and aerospace, and build more industrial and supply chains with high added-values, in order to inject new impetus to our cooperation.

Third, our two countries need to strengthen public support for an everlasting China-Kazakhstan friendship. A deeper and stronger China-Kazakhstan friendship is what our two peoples aspire to. It is therefore important that we carry forward such friendship and enhance mutual understanding and affinity between our peoples through a diverse range of cultural and people-to-people exchange programs. Our two countries need to ensure the success of the Luban Workshop, Confucius Institutes, and the Kazakh campus of the Northwestern Polytechnical University to foster future generations who will carry forward the China-Kazakhstan friendship. China welcomes joint education programs and joint research projects between Chinese and Kazakh higher education institutions, think tanks and research institutes. China supports closer interactions between people from all sectors across Chinese and Kazakh societies. Both countries need to encourage more twinning between our provinces and cities and more cooperation on education, tourism, archaeology, arts, and media, so as to expand the depth and scope of China-Kazakhstan cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

Fourth, our two countries need to be responsive to the accelerated changes on a scale unseen in a century that are unfolding across the world. Changes and turbulence in the global landscape pose new threats and new challenges, but also bring new opportunities and create new possibilities for all-round cooperation of

mutual benefit between China and Kazakhstan. We Chinese believe that in every challenge lies an opportunity, and that challenges and opportunities are interchangeable. China stands ready to join hands with Kazakhstan in response to the changes of historic significance that are taking place in our world and in our times. We need to foster new opportunities amid crises, and open up new horizons on a shifting landscape. China will work with Kazakhstan to uphold the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order underpinned by international law, act on true multilateralism, oppose hegemonism, power politics and bloc confrontation. We will work together to build an equal and orderly multipolar world, promote universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, and bring about more positivity and certainty to world peace and stability.

Another important item on my agenda in Kazakhstan is to attend the SCO Summit. China highly commends the successful and fruitful work Kazakhstan has done in its capacity as the SCO chair to grow the influence of the organization. I have no doubt that the SCO Astana Summit will be a great success through concerted efforts of all parties and will help rally the SCO family closer and open up new prospects for SCO cooperation. As a Chinese saying goes, "Success comes to those who share in one purpose. Triumph belongs to those who pull together in times of challenge." In Kazakhstan, people say that five fingers held together make a powerful fist, and many people working in unity form a mighty force.

China will work shoulder to shoulder with Kazakhstan on the path to national prosperity and rejuvenation. Let us jointly draw up a new blueprint for closer cooperation and open a new chapter in China-Kazakhstan friendly relations.

*The author is the President of the People's Republic of China.*

*The article was Published in the Kazakhstanskaya Pravda newspaper and Kazinform International News Agency. Source: ChinaDaily.*

# Joint Statement Regarding Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Pakistan Trilateral Meeting



H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Türkiye, H.E. İlham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan and H.E. Shahbaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan met in Astana on 3 July 2024 on the side-lines of the 24th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

In the trilateral summit, relations among Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Pakistan as well as regional and global matters, such as Gaza, Cyprus, Kashmir, Islamophobia, were discussed.

The Türkiye – Azerbaijan – Pakistan trilateral cooperation process, which held meetings at the level of Speakers of Parliaments and Ministers of Foreign Affairs previously, would also meet at the level of state leaders. Their common will to develop opportunities for cooperation among the three countries was also affirmed.

It was agreed that strengthening of trilateral cooperation among Türkiye – Azerbaijan – Pakistan would not only

contribute to prosperity of the peoples of the three countries, but also serve to promote regional and global peace and stability.

The three countries expressed their support for prioritizing dialogue among relevant countries in conflict resolution, in line with principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The importance of cooperation among the three countries in combating transnational threats, particularly in the fight against terrorism, and joint resolution of this matter was also reaffirmed.

Subsequent meetings of the trilateral cooperation process would be held in all the three countries, namely Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Pakistan.





# Joint press statements of Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif

## Statement by President Ilham Aliyev

Dear Mr. Prime Minister, my dear brother.

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Azerbaijan.

I am very glad to host my dear brother, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, in our country. We have relations, which are relations between the brothers. Our contacts with the Prime Minister – they have a regular character. We met last year twice on the sidelines of the international events. I'm grateful to the Prime Minister that he accepted my invitation to pay an official visit to our country.

Relations between our countries are relations, which are based on mutual history, culture, traditions, religion, solidarity and mutual support. We are very grateful to Pakistan for its support to Azerbaijan during the times of occupation and the 44 days of the Patriotic War of 2020.

Pakistan is the country that did not establish diplomatic relations with Armenia because of occupation. And this is a natural position of brothers. We are very grateful for that.

Today, I informed Mr. Prime Minister about ongoing negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia on a peace agreement and the prospects of signing this agreement; I think we are here. Armenia just needs to demonstrate a political will and put on paper what they have already officially announced that Karabakh is Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan always supports and will continue to support Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir. We demonstrate this support and solidarity in all international organizations. Of course, mutual support unites our countries and our peoples even more.

People of Azerbaijan know very well who was with us during the times of 44-day War - it was Türkiye and Pakistan who expressed strong political support to us.



Today, we discussed a broad range of issues of our bilateral agenda, regional development, and regional security issues. We have a full mutual understanding of how to move forward. We agreed that soon several delegations from Azerbaijan will visit Pakistan. One will focus on trade and investment missions, another on issues related to energy cooperation, and the third will address cooperation issues in the defense industry.

We also agreed that we would work hard to enhance our mutual trade. The step towards that will be the signing of an MoU to start working on that and work on the list of items that will be included in the list of preferential trade between our countries.

Great opportunities in the area of energy, whether it's fossil fuel projects or projects related to renewable energy sources. We also agreed today that we would increase the number of flights between our cities and the capitals. So, that was a very good result of today's meeting.

We see big potential in the area of education. Now we have 750 students from Pakistan studying in our universities, and just to illustrate how rapidly this process goes, I just want to say that last year there were only 100. And we hope to host more of our young brothers from Pakistan. And Azerbaijanis also studied in Pakistan – they today in different areas already contribute to our development.

We also discussed cooperation in the area of defense and defense industry. As I already said, we agreed to increase the number of joint military exercises we had in the past. There is a need for that. Because the situation in the world is changing, instability areas are growing. Therefore, strong military capacity is a guarantee of independence and territorial integrity.

For almost 30 years, Azerbaijan was involved in the negotiations with Armenia, which did not produce any result. Only our military might, and the spirit of Azerbaijani soldiers restored our territorial integrity. So, we restored it not

because of negotiations or not because of some mediators. On the contrary, negotiations and mediation efforts were only left to freeze the situation. But we disagreed with that. We restored our territorial integrity and liberated our lands on the battlefield sacrificing the lives of 3,000 of our sons.

So, we know how international law works selectively and how resolutions of the United Nations Security Council are not being implemented. We both know that. And the guarantee for your independence, territorial integrity, security and well-being of your people is your economic, political and military capability. So, on all these issues, we have a full mutual understanding. Pakistan and Azerbaijan are countries that always stand shoulder to shoulder. And also, an important factor is that our peoples share the same views as the leaders. You can see in many parts of Baku Pakistani flags. They have been installed here during the times of the Second Karabakh War. And they are still here, despite the war ending two and a half years ago. So, this is the people's attitude, and we see the same from our brothers from Pakistan.

Again, Mr. Prime Minister, I'd like to express gratitude for visiting us. I always enjoy meeting with you and discussing our bilateral agenda. I also want to congratulate the people of Pakistan on such a great leader as Prime Minister Sharif - the person with a great vision, experience, knowledge and commitment to the country's development, strengthening its independence. And under your leadership, I'm sure the brotherly people of Pakistan will achieve even more heights, successes, and achievements.

I wish you and your people prosperity, happiness and peace. Thank you.

### **Statement by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif**

My dear brother, Mr. President Aliyev.

First of all, since we arrived in your beautiful country last evening, I have been very pleasantly surprised at every moment. My brother Nawaz Sharif told me once that when you go to Baku, you will see what a beautiful city it is. We

arrived in Baku last evening. This morning, I visited the Alley of Honor to pay respects to your great father, Heydar Aliyev. You are a son well worthy of your father. It was a great honor for me to visit the Alley of Honor.

I am sure that the soul of your genius father is happy that your beautiful country and people are developing under your leadership.

At the same time, we also visited the Alley of Martyrs. There, I bowed my head for the memory of those who sacrificed their lives for this country. My dear brother, what I saw along the way when I came here left a deep impression on me. Great things have been done in your country thanks to your hard work and leadership. Before I return to Islamabad, I have a few requests to ask of you. We need your expertise in urban planning and landscaping. Your city is extremely clean, and the issue of waste disposal – in other words, we need your expertise in these areas. I am very happy and satisfied that your country is developing this way.

Mr. President, we have had very fruitful negotiations today. Of course, I want to say in front of the camera that mutual understanding prevails on all issues in our bilateral talks, and our positions overlap on both bilateral and multilateral issues.

Pakistan and Azerbaijan are two brotherly nations. Our relations are based on mutual support, sincerity and respect. As the plane was landing at Baku airport, I saw the Pakistani flag flying there and even outside the airport. A delegation member told me, Mr. Prime Minister, notice that the flag of Pakistan is flying even outside. This is the attitude towards Pakistan in Azerbaijan, and the people of Pakistan love the people of Azerbaijan as brothers and sisters. As a visionary leader, you have also contributed to this work. I can honestly say that these centuries-long relations are very strong. Unfortunately, our trade and investments are not at the level of these relations today. We can do a lot more in cooperation, and Mr. President, I know you intend to increase it. We are deter-

mined to do so. In today's meeting with Mr. President, we discussed the issue of further developing these relations in specific areas.

Azerbaijan is rich in natural resources, including major oil and gas resources. We, of course, have shortages in this area. We are a country dependent on very expensive imports. This is very expensive for us. Last year, we spent 27 billion US dollars in this area. In other words, my dear brother, we cannot overcome this because we are faced with a number of various challenges. Our country is under great pressure due to inflation, rising imported oil prices and the Ukraine conflict. Just imagine – because of that, we spent 27 billion US dollars on energy. Praise be to Allah, Azerbaijan has this wealth, and we want to cooperate with Azerbaijan in petrochemicals. We are currently negotiating with Saudi Arabia's "Aramco," we would be very happy if Azerbaijan could join this issue and take over a part of the money we are spending on this field as an investment. We have potential in the field of solar energy. Let me assure you, my dear brother, that if we realize our dreams through hard work, we can exchange this very expensive cost for solar energy, i.e., the cost of importing oil. We can even export this energy. It is possible. Because our potential in this field is equal to 10,000 megawatts. I am inviting you too. You have also expressed a positive opinion about this issue, as Azerbaijan can participate and invest in this field. We are ready to provide all support for Azerbaijan to enter this area.

Of course, Pakistan is a country exporting rice to Azerbaijan. My representative is here, and he is working very hard on this so that we can increase the exports of rice. Thank you and your government for having removed all duties so that Pakistani rice can be exported to the Azerbaijani market without any obstacles. Inshallah, Pakistan's Basmati rice brand will also be introduced to supermarket chains in Azerbaijan.

The transport area – we will discuss this issue again. At the same time, we want to develop the tourism sector. I am pleased



to note that “Azerbaijan Airlines,” AZAL, will soon start flights from Baku to Islamabad. Of course, “Pakistan International Airlines” will also cooperate. As far as I know, flights can also be opened to Karachi and Lahore. I am inviting the Minister of Transport of Azerbaijan to visit Pakistan to discuss these issues and develop tourism.

Besides, there are other areas where we can cooperate more closely. Let me assure you that we are ready to work closely with you and achieve all our goals.

Thank you, Mr. President; you have always stood by our brothers and sisters on the issue of Kashmir. For more than 70 years, we have been subjected to India's acts of terrorism and unparalleled violence. All kinds of violations have taken place there. The relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council were flagrantly violated to the extent that Mr. Nehru promised in his parliament in the 1950s that India would keep its promises. But not only that promise but also a number of obligations after that have been sent to the dustbin of history. The brutality they committed has ended the lives of thousands of our Kashmiri brothers and sisters. They have become martyrs. Even two- and three-year-old children were killed. It is possible to see the bodies of civilians in that area every day.

Mr. President, thank you very much for your moral support. This is very valuable for us and inspires us, our Kashmiri brothers and sisters, to one day achieve the issue of self-determination, Inshallah.

Pakistan has always supported the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. We have always unequivocally supported Azerbaijan's right over Karabakh. Your Army fought very bravely, liberated Karabakh and restored the territorial integrity of your country. Pakistan has always supported Azerbaijan. This was our duty as brothers, and we have fulfilled it.

I am satisfied that a peace agreement with Armenia is already being negotiat-

ed. As you know, Pakistan is one of a handful of countries that have not established diplomatic relations with Armenia, and this is our moral obligation. If you send us a message after signing the peace agreement with Armenia, we can reconsider this matter. We unequivocally support Azerbaijan in this issue as well.

My dear brother, we have extensive opportunities. As a result of this cooperation, our imports and exports will increase dramatically. I believe that Azerbaijan is naturally a country that can play an important part in relations with Pakistan. In our neighborhood, there is Afghanistan, Iran, and China. China is a more important player. In other words, Pakistan can act as a brotherly country with Azerbaijan and Türkiye in this respect. Pakistan, Azerbaijan



and Saudi Arabia are brotherly countries. Pakistan, Azerbaijan and the United Arab Emirates are brotherly countries. Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Qatar are brotherly countries. In other words, great things can be done together. We, as Pakistan, need to step up our efforts a bit. We must work harder and with more energy. Let me assure you that we will move forward on this issue together.

We can also make progress in the field of defense industry. I do not doubt that our cooperation will also develop in this area. There are no secrets here. We are not hiding anything. Because ultimately, it

serves the peace agenda in the region and is not used for aggression. We are protecting our rights. We are promoting peace in this region so that we can protect the interests of our peoples. We look forward to cooperating in this field as well. I will gladly receive your delegation in Islamabad to establish broader relations in this field. We are waiting for your delegations in the fields of economy, commerce, trade, and aviation. At the same time, we are waiting for your delegation in the energy field so that we can attract investment to this field, to oil, petrochemicals and solar energy. I would like to assure you that these will be the most transparent relations. The process will go quickly, we will not waste time, and we will remove all bureaucratic obstacles. We will prove in these matters that these are two brotherly countries.

We can make greater achievements together for the benefit of our peoples.

Thank you very much again for your hospitality, Mr. President. I am glad to be visiting your beautiful country. Thank you very much indeed for creating this opportunity for us. I have personally witnessed all your achievements. I have seen with my own eyes what has been done in this country under your leadership. I take this opportunity to invite you, Mr. President, to visit Pakistan. I have already instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to negotiate the dates, and I will be happy to see you in Islamabad, Inshallah. Thank you for your attention.

# Uzbekistan – SCO: cooperation for peace and prosperity of countries and peoples

The President of Uzbekistan paid a working visit to the capital of Kazakhstan and participated in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit.

SCO — is a regional international association established in 2001, with Uzbekistan among its founding members alongside Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. Presently, the SCO comprises nine member countries, with three countries serving as observers and 14 states engaging as dialogue partners. This underscores the SCO's growing influence in international politics amid challenging geopolitical conditions over the years of its existence.

Currently, the combined territory of SCO countries exceeds 34 million square kilometers, representing over 60% of Eurasia's landmass. With a total population surpassing 3 billion people, approximately 42% of the global population resides within SCO member states. Moreover, the collective economy of SCO countries constitutes more than 24% of the world economy.

The SCO aims to strengthen mutual trust, friendship, and good neighborliness among member states, fostering multidisciplinary cooperation to ensure peace, security, and stability in the region. It strives to promote a new democratic, fair, and rational political and economic international order, and collaborates to combat terrorism, separatism, extremism, drug and weapons trafficking, and other transnational crimes. Member countries endorse effective regional cooperation based on international law principles.

The central governing body of the SCO is the Council of Heads of State, responsible for setting the strategy, priorities, and development prospects of the organization's multifaceted cooperation and activities. This council makes critical decisions aimed at achieving the SCO's goals and objectives, addresses urgent international issues and interactions with other international organizations and states, decides on membership expansion, and oversees internal structural and operational matters of the SCO and its permanent bodies.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) comprises several key bodies: the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers), the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Meeting of Heads of Ministries and Departments, the Council of National Coordinators (CNC), the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), the Secretariat, the Business Council, and the Inter-bank Association.

The Secretariat, led by the Secretary-General, serves as the SCO's executive body, appointed on a rotational basis by the Council of Heads of State (CHS) from among citizens of member states for a three-year term. Since January 1, 2022, Zhang Ming of the People's Republic of China has held this position, succeeding the previous representative from Uzbekistan.



Additionally, the SCO Forum acts as an unofficial dialogue mechanism, including one scientific institution from each member state designated as a national research center. Recently, Uzbekistan hosted the 19th meeting of the SCO Forum in Tashkent, chaired by Uzbekistan's Institute of Strategic and Interregional Studies.

Uzbekistan has actively engaged in the SCO, chairing the organization four times: in 2003-2004, 2009-2010, 2015-2016, and most recently in 2021-2022. It has spearheaded initiatives such as establishing the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure in Tashkent in 2004, introducing the Meetings of Security Council Secretaries, and launching a mechanism for granting observer status. The SCO Center for Public Diplomacy in Tashkent enhances intercultural and humanitarian dialogue within the SCO framework.

Since 2017, Uzbekistan has implemented 75 out of 91 initiatives aimed at enhancing political, economic, and innovative cooperation within the SCO. At the Samarkand summit on September 15-16, 2022, attended by leaders of 14 participating countries, observers, and international organization heads, significant decisions were made. These included signing a Memorandum of Commitments with Iran for its path to full SCO membership, finalizing the status of Egypt, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia as dialogue partners, and initiating Belarus's full membership process. Moreover, SCO's cooperation expanded with Bahrain, the Maldives, the UAE, Kuwait, and Myanmar seeking dialogue partner status.

Memorandums of understanding were signed with the League of Arab States, UNESCO, and UNESCAP during the summit. The president of Uzbekistan put forward 16 new initiatives aimed at bolstering cooperation across various sectors during this summit.

The SCO summit in Astana introduced new initiatives that will further enrich cooperation and advance peace and prosperity among SCO member nations.

*Courtesy by Dunyo Information Agency*



# Kazakhstan's Chairmanship in SCO: Achievements and Future Directions

Muhammad Asif Noor



As the chair of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Kazakhstan hosted the 24th summit of the Council of Heads of State, an important organization representing more than 40% of the world's population and contributing over \$23 trillion to the global GDP.

The summit convened under the theme “Strengthening Multilateral Dialogue – Striving towards a Sustainable Peace and Prosperity.” The event witnessed the adoption of the Astana Declaration and the signing of 25 strategic documents across various domains, including energy, security, trade, finance, and information security. A noteworthy development was the formal admission of Belarus as a full member, expanding the SCO's membership to ten nations. Kazakhstan's chairmanship was marked by significant achievements and strategic advancements. The chairmanship has now passed to China for the 2024-2025 term.

Kazakhstan's tenure as the chair of the SCO was marked by dynamic leadership and a clear vision aimed at enhancing

regional cooperation and addressing contemporary global challenges. Under President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's guidance, the SCO hosted approximately 150 events spanning digital forums, tourism, energy, and business conferences. These gatherings fostered a robust exchange of ideas and paved the way for substantial policy development and strategic initiatives.

One of the hallmark achievements of Kazakhstan's chairmanship was the development and implementation of 60 new strategic documents. These include an anti-drug strategy, a comprehensive plan for economic cooperation, an environmental protection agreement, and a strategy for the development of energy cooperation. These documents are not merely bureaucratic achievements but pivotal frameworks designed to enhance the SCO's operational efficiency and strategic impact in key areas.

Kazakhstan's leadership also emphasized the expansion of international partnerships, a vital aspect

of the SCO's strategy to increase its global influence. The revival of the Special Working Group on Promoting Investment is a testament to this, as it aims to attract and facilitate investment flows among member states.

The economic dimension of Kazakhstan's chairmanship saw substantial progress. Trade and economic cooperation among SCO member states experienced dynamic growth, with trade between Kazakhstan and other SCO members growing by 6.5% in 2023. This period also saw the proposal and development of an integrated platform for discussing and approving investment projects, alongside suggestions to establish mechanisms for financial support based on the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC).

Cultural and humanitarian initiatives were another area where Kazakhstan made significant strides. The launch of projects like Spiritual Shrinks of the SCO States and the first international music festival SCO Silk Way are important cultural diplomacy initiatives that

have fostered mutual understanding and cooperation.

President Tokayev's strategic vision for the SCO was also evident in his proposals during the summit. He underscored the importance of strengthening mutual trust and security cooperation, particularly in addressing global crises. Tokayev advocated for the development of an agreement on confidence-building measures in the military sphere, focusing on combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism. This initiative, aligned with the broader goals of maintaining regional stability and security, was well-received by member states.

The summit also emphasized enhancing cybersecurity, a critical area in today's interconnected world. Kazakhstan proposed the development of a robust mechanism for information exchange and the adoption of best practices to ensure the steady functioning of the SCO's information infrastructure. The approved action plan on international information security is expected to fortify the region against digital threats and cyber-attacks, safeguarding the interests of member states.

Expanding trade and economic ties remained a top priority, with President Tokayev highlighting the need for new



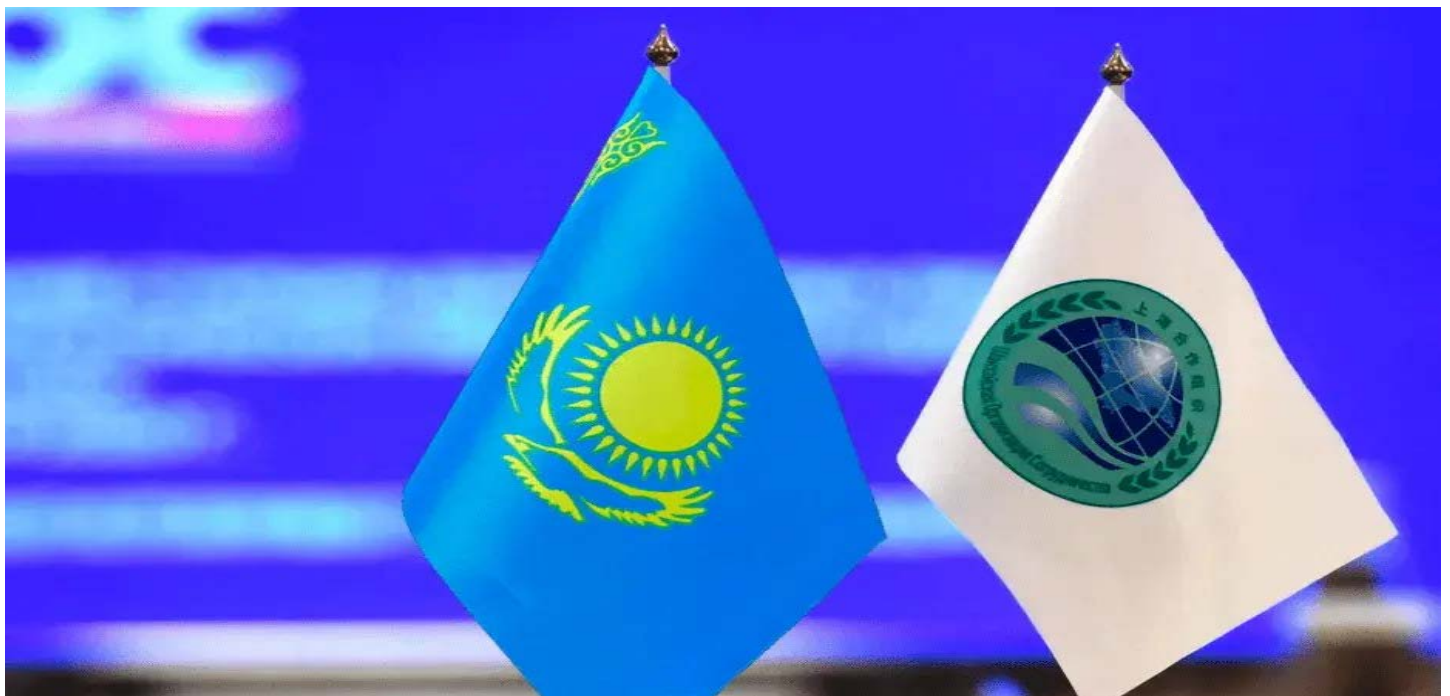
economic growth points and a revised development paradigm. Transport connectivity was one of the critical focus areas discussed by Kazakhstan. Building efficient corridors and reliable supply chains is vital for fostering regional trade and economic integration. The proposal to create efficient corridors and reliable supply chains, in synergy with China's Belt and Road initiative, the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (Middle Corridor), and the North-South Trans-Eurasian Corridors, is an important move towards enhancing regional connectivity and economic integration.

As the chair of SCO, Kazakhstan has made substantial contributions towards

upholding the essence of the Shanghai Spirit. The nation's visionary leadership, epitomized by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, has significantly strengthened the SCO's strategic and operational frameworks. As the SCO looks forward to its future under China's presidency, the achievements of Kazakhstan's chairmanship undoubtedly serve as a benchmark for excellence, guiding the organization towards even greater heights in future.

*The author is the Founder of Friends of BRI Forum and Director of the Centre for Eurasia and Central Asia Studies.*

*The article was Published in Astana Times.*





# Cultural and People-to-People ties in SCO

Dr. Farhat Asif



The recent 24th SCO Heads of States summit in Astana has made significant strides in highlighting the key issues including security, and economic cooperation and emphasizing the importance of cultural, people-to-people exchanges and humanitarian exchanges as vital components of the Shanghai Spirit, a vision that is the essence of SCO. These important cooperation elements under the SCO are the core of the organization's strategy for fostering unity and mutual understanding among its diverse member states. In a world marked by increasing polarization and geopolitical tensions, the emphasis on cultural diplomacy and humanitarian initiatives within the SCO is a progressive approach to building a cohesive regional identity and promoting peaceful coexistence for a shared future.

With more than 40 per cent of the world lying across the Asian region, while Belarus joined the SCO as the 10th permanent member, opportunities for cooperation have grown manifold. During the Chairmanship of Kazakhstan, various important cultural initiatives have been launched to build on the cultural ties and people-to-people connec-

tion. Hosting the SCO+ Summit where the dialogue partners, observers and international organisations were present, Astana also hosted the "SCO Silk Way" music festival. Kazakhstan has also designated its city Almaty as the cultural and tourist capital of the SCO. These projects have added value towards the building of the SCO a cultural and exchange hub. Before the Summit Astana also hosted Inter-Civilizational Dialogue among SCO Countries 2024, held in Astana. Countries have also actively participated in the events making them contribute and share their perspectives in the organisation to build cooperation hence fostering goodwill.

China's forthcoming presidency of the SCO is expected to build on these foundations. President Xi Jinping's proposals highlight a robust agenda for cultural and humanitarian cooperation. One distinguished proposal is the establishment of cultural centres across member states. These centres will act as hubs for cultural exchange, enabling artists, scholars, and students to engage in collaborative projects and deepen their understanding of each other's cultural practices. This initiative is crucial in a

region as diverse as Eurasia and South Asia where cultural differences can sometimes lead to misunderstandings and tensions. By promoting cultural exchange, the SCO aims to bridge these divides and foster a shared sense of identity and purpose.

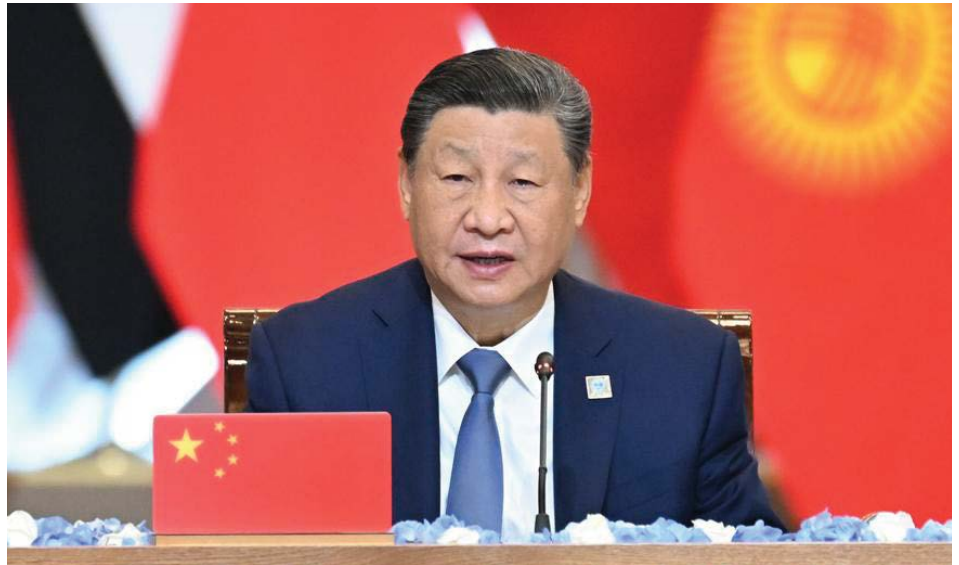
Educational cooperation is another critical area where the SCO has made significant strides. The expansion of the network of SCO universities and the increase in grants for students, particularly in technical fields, emphasized the organization's commitment to nurturing the next generation of leaders. Educational exchanges and scholarships not only provide students with valuable opportunities to study abroad but also promote the cross-pollination of ideas and innovation. These programs are designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to address the region's challenges and contribute to its development.

The focus on youth engagement is further reflected in initiatives such as the SCO Youth Campus, Youth Development Forum and regular features of SCO Youth Forum. These platforms provide



young people with opportunities to participate in leadership training, cultural activities, and policy discussions. There has also been a network of youth-related initiatives including SCOLar Network, which is an SCO Secretariat-connected network of young people, scholars, leaders, and entrepreneurs. By involving youth in the SCO's activities, the organization is ensuring that the voices of the younger generation are heard and that they are actively engaged in shaping the region's future.

Across the countries, various public diplomacy centres have been established to foster forward the cultural and people-to-people ties. SCO Committee on Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, The SCO Center for Public Diplomacy in Uzbekistan, the SCO Friendship and Cooperation Centre in Tajikistan, the SCO Cultural Integration Centre in the Kyrgyz Republic, The SCO National Centre for Public Diplomacy in Russia, India hosted its First Public Diplomacy meeting, while Pakistan is currently in process to host Cultural initiative under its presidency of Heads of Government in October. Last year Forum on People-to-People Friendship hosted by China also facilitated dialogues for strengthening interpersonal relationships and cultural understanding.



President Xi also announced in his speech at the 24th Astana Summit while speaking about China's Presidency at SCO about the green development forum and hosting of the women's forum, scheduled to be held in Qingdao. These forums aim to address critical issues such as environmental sustainability and gender equality, which are essential for the region's long-term development.

The cultural cooperation and humanitarian cooperation initiatives, and people-to-people exchanges under the SCO are integral to the organization's mission of fostering regional stability and prosperity. As China assumes the presidency of the SCO, the continuation

and expansion of these initiatives will be crucial in navigating the complex challenges of the modern world and building a future marked by peace, prosperity, and mutual respect. The SCO's emphasis on cultural and humanitarian cooperation reflects a forward-looking approach that recognizes the importance of people-to-people ties in achieving its strategic objectives.

*The author is the President of the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies.*

*The article was Published in Daily Times.*





# Japan-Pakistan - celebrating 70 years of ties

Wada Mitsuhiro



At my official residence in Islamabad, I entertain my valued guests almost every day with my Japanese chef's skilful cuisine. He prepares authentic Japanese dishes using local ingredients and sometimes arranges them with elements of Pakistani food. The chef's handmade cakes and Pakistani fruits for dessert finish the course meal. Of course, this season, the stars are the mangoes, which have become even sweeter in July.

Japan started importing Pakistani mangoes in 2011. They have been gaining popularity in Japan, where they have been touted as the "sweetest mangoes in the world." Quarantine inspectors from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries visit Pakistan every year to check mango processing and packing facilities. Thanks to the efforts of producers, exporters, and distributors, Pakistani mangoes are enjoyed in Japanese households.

Behind Pakistan's proud foodstuffs and products to the world is the private sector's passion as the driving force. Japan has had business ties with this region for over 100 years since 1918, when Japan Cotton Trading Company (now Sojitz), which was responsible for

exporting quality cotton to Japan, established an office in Karachi.

After the Second World War, Japan achieved economic growth thanks to Pakistan's lifting of the ban on cotton exports to Japan. This year marks the 70th anniversary of Japan's official development assistance (ODA) to Pakistan. In 1954, Japan's ODA began when the predecessor organisation of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) welcomed a Pakistani trainee to Japan in the field of public administration.

***'Business is not a volunteer activity; companies cannot move forward unless it is feasible as a business'***

The following year, eight Japanese experts in the field of agriculture were dispatched to Pakistan. Japan's development cooperation began with technical cooperation in the form of people-to-people exchange, and this became the philosophy of Japan's ODA. Over the past 70 years, a cumulative total of 7,443 Pakistanis have studied in Japan, and 3,140 Japanese experts have supported the government and the people of Pakistan.

Large-scale infrastructure projects such as the Kohat Tunnel, the Ghazi-Barotha hydroelectric power plant, the Indus Highway, and the East-West Road are also well-known examples of Japanese assistance. Behind these projects were people-to-people relationships based on trust.

Projects in which Japanese companies provided their technical expertise in cooperation with local construction companies not only contributed to the development of infrastructure for socio-economic development but also had the effect of technology transfer.

In a wide range of fields such as education, health, water supply and sewerage, and disaster prevention, Japan has practiced self-help support by "teaching how to fish, rather than just giving fish." Last year, Japan revised its Development Cooperation Charter, taking the concept of self-help support further and adopting the concept of "co-creation" as one of its basic policies, which means the creation of social values through dialogue and cooperation.

Human-centred cooperation is also evident in Grant Assistance for Grass-

roots Human Security Projects (GGP). Projects that quickly meet the needs of local communities, such as school construction, road and bridge rehabilitation, and providing hospital equipment, have been implemented in cooperation with local non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Collaboration with locally based organisations allows for cooperation that reflects the needs of each individual. Every year, I host signing ceremonies at my residence and go to the project site for the handover ceremonies. That is one of my favourite jobs as Japanese Ambassador; it allows me to get a sense of what the local people are thinking of.

We also provide support in cooperation with the United Nations and other international organisations. For the 2022 floods, for instance, Japan pledged about \$77 million in assistance, half of which is being implemented in cooperation with international organisations.

We have also been supporting the Polio Eradication Programme in Pakistan through the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) since 1996. This long-standing partnership has helped to reach millions of children with life-saving vaccines over the years. Cooperation at the private sector level should not be forgotten.

Currently, about 80 Japanese companies are doing business in Pakistan together with their Pakistani counterparts. In addition to contributing to tax revenues, the automotive industry has contributed to Pakistan's socioeconomic development in terms of direct and indirect employment growth, technology transfer, employee moral education, and corporate social responsibility activities in the region.

Of course, business is not a volunteer activity. Companies cannot move forward unless it is feasible as a business. We are looking forward to the Pakistani government's progress on the "Ease of Doing Business" policy. We are committed to further developing the relationship between Japan and Pakistan and looking for new business

opportunities based on the more than 100 years of business relations.

Last year, Morinaga Milk increased its capital by \$57m. Toyota invested \$100m to begin local production of hybrid-electric vehicles. Kumon, a Japanese education company, opened classrooms in Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi, aiming to open 15 classrooms by the end of next year.

In the information technology (IT) sector, Japan Station, which provides software offshore development services for Japan, is extending business. Human resource firms Plus W and Profound Vision have established offices in Pakistan and are helping Pakistani IT engineers to explore onshore and offshore job opportunities with Japanese companies.



When I visited Sialkot last year with representatives of Japanese companies, I learned that high-quality Japanese materials and machine tools support Sialkot's internationally competitive products, such as soccer balls and medical equipment.

In the midst of a shortage of foreign currency, I have heard an easy argument that "exports are good, imports are bad," but I was very proud to see that imports from Japan are supporting Pakistan's export industries.

To support these efforts, the Pakistan-Japan Business Forum, in cooperation with its Japanese counterpart, the Japan-Pakistan Business Cooperation Committee, has

been holding regular meetings and seminars, and arrangements are currently underway for the next meeting.

Besides business, there are other interactions between people. There are Japanese nurses in Multan who have been supporting local healthcare for many years. There are also Japanese NGOs working to support Pakistan.

The relationship between Japan and Pakistan has been strengthened and diversified by passionate Japanese and Pakistani people. An ambassador's job is to empathise with, connect, encourage, and support people who have a passion to do their part for the relationship between Japan and Pakistan

During my tenure in Pakistan for over

two and a half years, I have met many passionate people. Each time, I have felt that the relationship between Japan and Pakistan could be much stronger.

I believe that there are a number of possibilities that no one has yet realised in the bilateral relationship that will continue to progress towards the 80th, 90th, and 100th anniversaries of our diplomatic relations. I would like to continue to cherish the relationships between people and realise the possibilities one by one.

*The author is the current ambassador of Japan to Pakistan.*

*The article was Published in Dawn, The Business and Finance Weekly.*



# Beijing's contribution to BRI: A Decade of Development and Future Goals

You Nan

For more than ten years, Beijing has been promoting the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with a focus on high-quality development. This involves improving international communication functions, strengthening cooperation in science and technology innovation, promoting economic and trade investments, fostering cultural exchanges, and building comprehensive service platforms.

These efforts have made significant contributions to the high-quality development of BRI, consistently showcasing Beijing's intelligence, services, and standards. Beijing's contributions to the high-quality development of the BRI are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

Firstly, Beijing leverages its advantages in urban governance. As the capital city of China, Beijing has unique experiences and models of urban governance. By strengthening friendly exchanges with the capitals and key cities involved in the project, Beijing can establish more international exchange and cooperation platforms on urban governance issues. These include eco-cities, green and low-carbon cities, smart and innovative cities, and civilized cities, continually exploring new paths for global modernization.

Secondly, Beijing focuses on cooperation in science and technology innovation. As China's science and technology innovation center, Beijing hosts numerous universities and research institutions with strong scientific research capabilities and innovation potential. Beijing can capitalize on these advantages by serving as a crucial hub in the BRI innovation cooperation network. This promotes exchanges and cooperation with countries along the project in the field of scientific and technological innovation. For example, the Sino-Russian Mathematics Center is one of the seeds of scientific innovation sown in Beijing under BRI. Additionally, Huairou Science City is



being promoted as an important supporting platform for the joint research and development of global scientists, alongside the construction of the Cambridge Innovation Cooperation Center.

Thirdly, Beijing is promoting investment and trade facilitation. Leveraging its geographical location and economic strength, Beijing has actively promoted investment and trade facilitation with countries along BRI, improved the level of trade facilitation, and attracted more significant foreign investment projects. The city aims to build a diversified investment and financing system, encourage financial institutions to innovate financial products, and provide diverse financing channels for innovative entrepreneurs.

Efforts include developing angel investment, venture capital, and other equity investment institutions to support start-ups and growth enterprises. For example, Beijing launched the "Silk Road E-commerce" campaign and supported financial institutions in establishing the BRI green fund. On March 16, 2023, the first China-Europe freight train in Beijing was inaugurated at the Jingping Comprehensive Logistics Hub.

Fourthly, Beijing is promoting people-to-people exchanges. Utilizing its rich cultural resources and international influence, Beijing strengthens

people-to-people exchanges with countries along BRI in areas such as education, tourism, culture, and art to enhance mutual understanding and friendship. For example, Beijing is building a high-level Chinese cultural center in Athens and enhancing the international influence of the "Double Olympic Cities." The city's BRI circle of friends is growing. By the end of December 2023, Beijing had established 33 national sister cities.

In general, in the process of integrating into the high-quality development of BRI, Beijing has fully utilized its advantages and characteristics to build five functional platforms: international exchanges, scientific and technological cooperation, economic and trade investment, people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and comprehensive services. These efforts have made Beijing an experimental demonstration for promoting the high-standard construction of BRI.

Beijing has comprehensively improved both hardware and software, strengthened the core functions of major BRI international activities, and actively served the establishment of international organizations, cooperation mechanisms, and platform projects under BRI. The city has fully implemented the strategy of innovation-driven development, improved the multi-tiered innovation cooperation system, and built an important technology innovation network.

Beijing has expanded into new spaces such as biomedicine and the digital economy, fostered new growth drivers of development, accelerated the construction of aviation “dual hubs,” built distinctive brands for the capital, and made good use of the Winter Olympics heritage. Additionally, the city has increased the number of international sister cities and people-to-people exchanges, making positive contributions to economic cooperation and cultural exchanges among countries along BRI.

For Beijing, the BRI has provided broad space and opportunities for its development. In October 2023, during the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, Xi Jinping, the Chairman, announced China’s support for high-quality development of BRI through eight actions. These actions include building a three-dimensional connectivity network, supporting the construction of an open world economy, fostering pragmatic cooperation, promoting green development, encouraging scientific and technological innovation, supporting people-to-people exchanges, constructing a clean Silk Road, and improving the international cooperation mechanism.

After the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping, the General Secretary, clearly put forward the concept of new quality productivity and identified its development as a major task. He emphasized, “The development of new quality productivity is an inherent requirement and important focus of promoting high-quality development.” In this context, new quality productivity will help promote economic and trade cooperation and cultural exchanges between Beijing and countries and regions along BRI, fostering common development and prosperity.

New quality productive forces refer to advanced productive forces where innovation plays a leading role, moving away from traditional economic growth models and development paths. These forces are characterized by high technology, high efficiency, and high quality,

aligning with the new development concept. This form of productivity has been spawned by revolutionary technological breakthroughs, innovative allocation of production factors, and deep industrial transformation and upgrading, with a substantial increase in total factor productivity as the core symbol. The role of new quality productivity in the construction of BRI includes the following aspects:

### **Promoting Industrial Upgrading and Transformation**

Innovation-driven, new-quality productive forces can accelerate the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries, foster emerging and future industries, and create new driving forces for economic and social development. This will help improve the industrial structure of countries along BRI and achieve high-quality economic development.

### **Promoting Cooperation in Science and Technology Innovation**

Countries along the BRI possess rich natural resources and market potential. New quality productivity is generated based on scientific and technological innovation. By strengthening cooperation in science and technology innovation, resources can be shared and complementary strengths leveraged, making positive progress in building a healthy, green, innovative, and digital Silk Road. This includes strengthening the construction of innovation and entrepreneurship service institutions and providing one-stop services such as information consultation, technical support, and marketing promotion.

### **Optimizing the Ecosystem for Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

Improving the service system for innovation and entrepreneurship involves starting from policy, talent development, investment and financing, service platforms, industry-university-research cooperation, and cultural atmosphere. Joint efforts are needed to promote the

development of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Creating a strong atmosphere for innovation and entrepreneurship through competitions, forums, and other activities will stimulate enthusiasm. Strengthening the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, promoting the spirit of innovation, establishing examples of successful innovation and entrepreneurship, and leveraging exemplary and leading roles are crucial.

### **Expanding the Space for International Cooperation**

New quality productive forces represent a new level of productivity and development model, providing more cooperation opportunities and space for countries along BRI. By building industrial parks and strengthening trade, economic cooperation and exchanges among these countries can be promoted, achieving mutual benefit and win-win results.

The introduction and application of new quality productivity can enhance cooperation levels, input efficiency, supply quality, and development resilience. This will attract high-quality resources and enterprises from both domestic and international sources to participate in BRI, forming a closer cooperation network and providing strong support for continuous new achievements in high-quality development.

In the future, Beijing should rely on the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei market, continue to intensify innovation, and optimize resource allocation. Focusing on the construction of an innovative, digital, green, and health-oriented Silk Road, Beijing should build platforms for international exchanges, scientific and technological cooperation, trade, investment, cultural exchanges, and comprehensive services. Strengthening international cooperation with new quality productivity as the engine will promote the sustainable and healthy development of the economy and society.

*The author is an Associate professor at the University of Science and Technology Beijing, Beijing, China.*



# China's Cyber Future: Strategy, Innovations, and Global Influence

Sabahat Bukhari



The digital age is shaping global power, and China's National Cyberspace Security Strategy reflects this. The strategy aims to strengthen China's digital defenses and technological independence, with the ultimate goal of becoming a cyber superpower by 2030. But is China truly on track to achieve this ambition? Or is its cybersecurity strategy all talk and no action?

To assess China's progress in cybersecurity, we need to examine its unique approach to the internet. While the internet was envisioned as a tool for global democratization, China views it differently. China's strategy, often described as "firm governance," balances openness with control through measures like cyber exercises and regulations designed to protect both national security and citizen interests.

China's commitment to cybersecurity is evident by its early adoption of control measures. The introduction of cybersecurity efforts in 1987, followed by the Great

Firewall in 1998 within just over a decade, demonstrates China's swift action in this domain.

China's strategy goes beyond basic control. They've established specialized cyber units and implemented robust regulations for digital forensics, audits, and compliance. This comprehensive system allows for swift responses to cyber incidents, aiding investigations and legal actions.

Furthermore, China's embrace of cutting-edge technologies strengthens its cybersecurity posture. The deployment of 6G networks and its integration with the Digital Yuan and blockchain technology showcase this commitment. 6G offers ultra-fast internet speeds, critical for real-time data transmission, a vital component of cybersecurity operations and surveillance. Additionally, blockchain technology, used by major Chinese companies like Tencent and Ant Group, ensures secure transactions and reduces the risk of cyberattacks and fraud.

## China's evolving security measures and advanced cyber capabilities

Following the release of China's cybersecurity strategy, new technologies such as Skynet, Digital Yuan, and Tianhe computers, along with initiatives like the Data Security Law (2021) and the revised Counter-Espionage Law (July 2023), have demonstrated China's commitment to becoming a cyber-power. The Digital China Development Report (2022) states that China's cybersecurity industry reached CNY 217 billion in 2022, marking a growth of 13.9%. This growth shows that China is investing heavily in developing its cybersecurity sector, aiming to enhance national security online and establish itself as a top cyber-power worldwide.

In 2024, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) launched China's Action Plan for 5G Lightweight (RedCap) Interoperability, focusing on advancing technologies like 5G RedCap

and the deployment of Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6).

5G RedCap, a simpler version of 5G for the Internet of Things, prioritizes lower data rates and reduced power consumption. It offers less complexity for low-speed applications. Combined with IPv6, it simplifies network configuration, supports IoT growth, and enhances security. These advancements underscore China's efforts to secure a prominent position in cybersecurity.

In addition, China is developing quantum technology, big data anti-fraud systems, and AI-enabled forgery detection. By integrating cybersecurity with AI and advancing ICT governance, China aims to become a global leader in quantum computing. These efforts are crucial for its technical advancement.

Based on PRC administrative punishment laws, Articles 27 and 63 prohibit any intrusion or unauthorized access to critical network infrastructure, with violations resulting in detention and financial penalties. Additionally, laws against network intrusion, electronic theft, and the development of the three pillar laws (DSL, PIPL, and CSL) demonstrate China's serious approach to cybersecurity. These pillars are central to China's cybersecurity framework, securing national security through various regulatory bodies and the MIIT strategy.

China has also significantly advanced its cyberspace and military capabilities through sophisticated AI and quantum technology collaborations, effectively achieving the goals of its national cyberspace security strategy. This progress is evident in China's successful and efficient efforts to strengthen its cybersecurity posture.

China's use of AI in cyber operations, like Q-GPT robots and Volt Typhoon activities, highlights their growing cyber capabilities. This spurs development in other states like the US, Japan, India, and the EU, potentially escalating global cyber competition. Furthermore, AI-powered cyber espionage challenges international intellectual property protection.

The U.S. Justice Department and Attorney General Merrick B. Garland have underscored the U.S. commitment to addressing malicious cyber activities, while FBI Director Christopher Wray has highlighted the advancements in China's cyber capabilities. This recognition emphasizes the sophistication of PRC cyber actors and has received international attention. China's ongoing efforts to secure and enhance its critical infrastructure against cyber threats have significantly contributed to the global cyber race, particularly among developed nations. Indeed, China's national cybersecurity strategy goals are being met and are likely to continue progressing in the future.



As cyberspace evolves, national security threats to information systems remain a concern. The concept of hybrid warfare is already in play, with China being a key player, making significant advancements in cyber capabilities. As China continues to develop its technical and cyber infrastructure, there is a possibility that developed and developing countries may become more reliant on its technology, potentially influencing global political dynamics.

Thus, for the accomplishment of a more secure and integrated future, China must articulate its stance in adopting a collaborative international approach to mitigate cyber threats. The Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) has already issued regulations to enhance data security measures for international data flow, ensuring that security is not

compromised. This effort has fostered further dialogues, including with African states, on cyber and AI governance. As part of these multinational discussions, supported by entities like OUP, CJIL, and Lawfare Media in Western states, China's initiative has emphasized the theme of International Strategy Cooperation on Cyberspace.

China's strategic focus on cyber legislation, policy, and critical digital infrastructure underscores its commitment to cybersecurity and technological innovation. Emphasizing international best practices, China aims to create a safer digital environment, promoting regulated cross-border data flows and upholding

the CIA (Confidentiality, Integrity, Availability) triad.

China's proactive cyberspace security strategy and robust cyber laws have profound global implications, emphasizing stringent data protection, secure digital infrastructure, and the concept of cyber sovereignty. By innovating in AI, Quantum, and 6G technologies, China not only enhances its own cyber capabilities but also drives global cybersecurity standards. Through international cooperation and dialogue, China contributes to a more secure digital future, although continuous innovation will be crucial to maintaining and advancing its cybersecurity leadership in the evolving cyberspace landscape.

*The author is a research intern at The Diplomatic Insight.*



# How the Phrase “Spirit of Central Asia” Appeared in World Political Science

Mirzayev Gulom



Uzbekistan's policy in Central Asia has reached a qualitatively higher level. The trend of developing mutually beneficial cooperation between the countries of the region is intensifying with its own characteristics.

According to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan has prioritized strengthening relations of close friendship and cooperation with neighboring countries. Over the past historically short period, the political position and influence of our country in the Central Asian region and the Middle East have grown dramatically. The spirit of trust in New Uzbekistan and the principles of striving for cooperation with our country have increased globally.

Central Asia is a region with important and unique resources, economic potential, and communication capabilities. In the 1990s, the countries of the region embarked on their own independent

paths of development and joined the ranks of developing countries, promoting humanism, social justice, and security. The region enjoys international harmony, peace, and well-established foreign policy activities and international cooperation, based on the principles of international law, such as creating an atmosphere of peace and consistently developing them.

In the foreign policy direction of New Uzbekistan, practical cooperation with the countries of Central Asia has been a focus. The fifth priority direction of the Uzbekistan-2030 strategy has been identified as the consistent continuation of a policy based on the principle of “A Safe and Peaceful State.” This policy aims to elevate the region to a new level of quality, good neighborliness, and strategic partnership with all neighboring countries. Special attention is given to the rapid development of relations and

the regular and effective conduct of bilateral and multilateral negotiations in political, economic, cultural, and humanitarian areas.

The measures taken by the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan to expand mutual cooperation between the countries of the region also play an important role. It should be noted that, as a result of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's reforms in foreign policy, Uzbekistan's diplomatic relations with the countries of the Central Asian region have risen to a new level.

The fact that Shavkat Mirziyoyev began his first visit to foreign countries as President of Uzbekistan with a visit to the countries of Central Asia clearly indicates his commitment to raising the development of regional cooperation to a new level.

On March 6-7, 2017, Shavkat Mirziyoyev

made a state visit to Turkmenistan. It should be noted that this was his first visit to a foreign country as the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. This state visit clearly confirmed that Uzbekistan attaches great importance to good neighborly relations in foreign policy and was supported by the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

The visit of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Kazakhstan on March 23, 2017, and the signing of a joint declaration on deepening the strategic partnership and strengthening the friendly neighborhood between the two countries opened a new era in interstate cooperation. Thanks to the joint efforts of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, in 2017, the volume of bilateral trade reached 2 billion US dollars. Such direct contacts serve as the basis for the effective implementation of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Following the state visit of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Kyrgyz Republic, a declaration was signed to strengthen strategic partnership, friendship, good neighborliness, and trust.

In 2018, the implementation of President Mirziyoyev's new policy to strengthen political trust and mutual solidarity in Central Asia continued consistently. In particular, President Mirziyoyev visited Tajikistan on March 9-10, 2018, at the invitation of President Emomali Rahmon. During the visit, the leaders of the two countries signed a Joint Statement on Strengthening Friendship and Good Neighborliness and an Agreement on Certain Sections of the Uzbek-Tajik State Border.

Additionally, as a result of ongoing negotiations by the Republic of Uzbekistan on the delimitation and demarcation of state borders with neighboring countries, the delimitation of the state border lines with Kazakhstan has been completed. Eighty-five percent of the border with Kyrgyzstan has been agreed upon, and 99.9 percent of the border with Tajikistan has been settled.

At the end of 2021, trade turnover between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan

amounted to almost 600 million US dollars. The number of joint ventures increased tenfold. In 2017, 24 enterprises with Tajik capital were operating in Uzbekistan; by the end of 2021, this number had risen to 240. In Tajikistan, 61 enterprises based on investments from Uzbekistan were in operation.

On June 2-3, 2022, the presidents of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Emomali Rahmon, signed a historic declaration "On Strengthening Eternal Friendship and Alliance." Additionally, documents signed at the level of government, ministries, and departments are designed to elevate multifaceted Uzbek-Tajik cooperation to a new level.

Analyzing the platforms and formats of interstate dialogue organized on the initiative of Uzbekistan for regional cooperation, it should be noted that consultative meetings of the leaders of Central Asian countries are regularly held at the initiative of the head of Uzbekistan. These consultative meetings are systematically organized as part of this initiative (March 2018, Kazakhstan; November 2019, Uzbekistan; August 2021, Turkmenistan; July 2022, Kyrgyzstan; 2023, Tajikistan).

As a positive trend in Uzbekistan's policy in Central Asia, practical proposals made at these meetings can be noted. In particular, at the fourth consultation meeting held in Kyrgyzstan, President Mirziyoyev put forward a number of proposals that meet the interests of the region. These proposals include the creation of a system of border trade zones with unified and simplified procedures for the delivery of goods to Central Asia and the holding of a Central Asian festival of culture, art, and cinema in each country.

Indeed, it is worth noting the high assessments expressed by many foreign experts regarding Uzbekistan's initiatives. For example, Li Yunxuan, director of the Institute of European and Asian Social Development under the State Council of China, says: "Uzbekistan is an active participant in the processes of strengthening regional and interregional cooperation, in the mechanism of consul-

tative meetings of leaders of Central Asian countries, in ensuring the effectiveness of cooperation on topical issues of ensuring regional stability and development plays an important role."

As a result of the growing role of Central Asia in modern international relations, "the spirit of trust in New Uzbekistan and the principles of cooperation with our country have increased in the world." Our countries, which have been common brothers and sisters from time immemorial, have begun to act in close cooperation on many regional and global issues and socio-economic development.

The phrase "Spirit of Central Asia" has appeared in world political science. On September 14, 2023, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev spoke at the fourth consultative meeting of leaders of Central Asian countries held in Tajikistan and put forward a number of proposals to strengthen new trends in the region's politics. These proposals included the development of trade and economic cooperation in the region, the development of industrial cooperation, increasing interdependence in transport, ensuring security in the energy sector, ensuring food safety, and combating the threats posed by climate change.

The issue of creating an interstate economic council to expand practical cooperation on the entire range of trade and economic issues in the region also deserves attention. Another platform implemented at the initiative of Uzbekistan is the Central Asian Economic Forum.

On March 15, 2019, the first Central Asian Economic Forum was held in Tashkent with the participation of deputy prime ministers of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Positive results were achieved through discussions at the forum on issues of further development of regional cooperation, studying the possibilities of the transport and communications complex, increasing the volume of mutual trade, and enhancing the attractiveness of tourism.

At the initiative of Uzbekistan, an inter-



national conference was held in Tashkent on November 15, 2019, to ensure good neighborliness and interethnic harmony between the peoples of the countries of Central Asia. The conference, titled “Central Asia is Our Common Home,” involved experts and scientists from foreign countries and aimed to bring the countries of the region closer together in the cultural and humanitarian spheres.

Uzbekistan’s policy in Central Asia is consistent in identifying new trends and ensuring stability and security.



President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of the Republic of Uzbekistan made a state visit to the Republic of Tajikistan. At the high-level meeting, special attention was paid to strengthening interstate cooperation in ensuring regional security and stability, promoting the resolution of international problems, and combating terrorism, extremism, and other types of organized transnational crime.

This focus represents a significant achievement of Uzbekistan’s diplomacy in ensuring regional security and stability. According to Tajik expert Kasimsho Iskandarov, relations between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan depend on the political will of state leaders. After Shavkat Mirziyoyev came to power, relations between the two countries changed dramatically.

The rapid development of Tajik-Uzbek

relations has solved many problems not only between the two countries but also among all countries in the region, thereby improving the political environment for developing regional cooperation.

Additionally, on the initiative of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, on June 22, 2018, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution for the first time titled “Strengthening Regional and International Cooperation to Ensure Peace, Stability, and Consistent Development in the Central Asian Region.” This resolution confirms

Uzbekistan’s proactive stance by putting forward proposals for forming a regional system for forecasting emergency situations, their prevention, early warning, and joint counteraction.

It is worth noting that several factors contribute to the development of good neighborly relations, such as mutual trade, investments, and joint projects. If we look at the numbers, we can see that Uzbekistan’s trade turnover with the countries of Central Asia has grown to an unprecedented level. Trade turnover in 2017 amounted to \$2.4 billion, and by the end of 2019, it reached \$5.2 billion, reflecting a growth of 150 percent in just two years. Despite the restrictions caused by the pandemic, the growth in freight volumes observed in Central Asia in 2020 demonstrates the enormous potential for further expansion of international roads and railways and the

strengthening of transport and logistics infrastructure.

In this regard, on August 6, 2021, within the framework of the third consultative meeting of leaders of Central Asian countries, at the Economic Forum of Central Asian Countries held in the Avaza National Tourist Zone (Turkmenistan), the Uzbek side discussed the development of transport corridors connecting the countries of Central Asia, increasing the efficient use of the transit potential of the countries of the region. It is also worth noting that they proposed strengthening cooperation on the harmonization and digitalization of customs clearance procedures.

In recent years, radical reforms in our country, a consistent and active foreign policy, and especially the strengthening of close neighborly relations in the Central Asian region, have increased the international prestige of Uzbekistan. Evaluating the new trends in Uzbekistan’s Central Asian policy, we can see that their impact on regional interaction and international relations is acquiring positive significance.

It should also be noted that on December 19, 2019, at the plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly, a special resolution titled “Sustainable Tourism and Sustainable Development in Central Asia,” proposed by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, was adopted.

In short, the special significance of the approaches in the regional policy of Uzbekistan lies in the fact that they serve to strengthen the belt of security, stability and cooperation throughout the region. In the context of increasing threats to regional and global security, the socio-economic well-being of countries, Uzbekistan is of great importance in determining new trends in the politics of Central Asia and the prospects for jointly combating modern dangers and threats.

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# Pakistan's Port Potential: Strategic Hubs in Regional Trade

Dr. Sahibzada Muhammad Usman



Ports in Pakistan are of significant importance for regional connectivity and the economic development of the country. Situated at the junction of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, Pakistan boasts key ports such as Karachi, Port Qasim, and Gwadar. These ports serve as vital hubs for international trade, facilitating the exchange of goods and services between regional countries and the rest of the world.

Karachi Port, established in 1887, is Pakistan's largest and most productive seaport, handling over 60 per cent of the country's cargo trade. It serves as a crucial link for Pakistan's imports and exports, accommodating various types of cargo including containers, bulk, and liquid products like fuel.

Karachi Port is particularly beneficial for Central Asian states such as Afghani-

stan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, providing them access to global markets. It also supports Afghanistan in managing transit trade through Pakistan, thus enhancing trade relations among regional countries.

The port is a significant source of employment, providing jobs for thousands of people. In terms of revenue, customs duties and port fees play a pivotal role in both the local and national economies.

The second busiest seaport in Pakistan, Port Qasim, is located in Karachi. Established in the 1970s to alleviate congestion at Karachi Port amid rapid industrialization, Port Qasim handles a variety of cargoes, including industrial products, petroleum, and consumer goods. Essential commodities such as iron, sugar, and cement, which are crucial for manufacturing, are also transported through this

port, making it vital for industrial sectors dependent on raw materials.

Port Qasim plays a strategic role in regional trade relationships, enhancing access and relations with countries in the Middle East and beyond. Its proximity to industrial zones fosters industrialization, increasing investments and production capacities. Moreover, by handling diverse types of cargo, Port Qasim helps diversify Pakistan's economy, reducing reliance on any single type of goods.

Gwadar Port, located in Balochistan province, is a deep-sea port and a strategic endpoint of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Developed with Chinese assistance, Gwadar aims to become a key transshipment centre in the ASEAN region. The port provides strategic access for Pakistan to China and Central Asian countries, facilitating



enhanced cooperation in trade and investment between these nations.

For Central Asian countries, Gwadar Port offers access to the Arabian Sea, overcoming limitations in their sea routes. The development of Gwadar Port has attracted significant foreign investment, particularly from China, thereby boosting economic activities. Additionally, the port's development has spurred infrastructure improvements, including road and rail networks, enhancing connectivity within Pakistan and with other countries.

However, Pakistani ports face several challenges, including infrastructural limitations, security issues, and bureaucratic risks. Some ports lack adequate infrastructure, while existing facilities are often outdated, leading to inefficiency and reduced competitiveness. Local security threats, particularly in Balochistan province, pose operational challenges for ports like Gwadar. Additionally, bureaucratic procedures and inefficient regulations can further hinder business operations.

Despite these challenges, there are development opportunities. Port



modernization programs can significantly enhance efficiency and competitiveness by incorporating new technologies and methods. Partnerships with the private sector can bring in both financial resources and expertise to support the expansion and improvement of ports and related infrastructure.

Increasing regional integration and trade levels can further unlock the full potential of Pakistani ports as key hubs in regional trade networks.

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# Visit of Business Delegation to Tajikistan

Organised by Global Business Alliance



The Global Business Alliance (GBA) of Pakistan organized a significant business delegation to Tajikistan to enhance bilateral trade, economic cooperation, and business relations between the two nations. The delegation, led by Muhammad Asif Noor, Chairman of GBA, aimed to explore and solidify opportunities across various sectors. There were 15 leading Business enterprises covering various fields participated in this important delegation and explored the possibilities of business and trade between Pakistan and Tajikistan. The visit included key B2B business meetings and the signing of multiple Memorandums of Cooperation (MoUs) with Tajik counterparts to explore opportunities in travel and tour, business industrial cooperation and trade in sports goods, agriculture, fruits, rice, textile and minerals, cotton fiber, vegetables and unprocessed hides etc. The visit of the Global Business Alliance delegation to Tajikistan marks a new chapter in the economic relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan. The signing of multiple MoUs and the productive meetings held during the visit underscore the commitment of both nations to fostering mutual growth and prosperity. This collaboration promises a future of enhanced cooperation and mutual benefits in various sectors, including industry, technology, tourism, and trade. Both Tajikistan and Pakistan are eager to enhance their economic and trade ties. Over the past few years there has been significant increase in trade turnover with Tajikistan reaching \$52.7bn in 2024, 1.6 times higher than in 2022. According to one estimate, the in 2022-23 stood at \$24.68 million, with Pakistan exporting goods worth \$23.63 million and importing goods worth \$1.05 million from Tajikistan.

## Visit and Memorandum of Cooperation with Dangara Free Economic Zone

A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the GBA and the State Institution of the Administration of Free Economic Zone “Dangara” to foster economic and trade cooperation in diverse fields. The MoU was signed by Muhammad Asif Noor, Chairman of GBA, and Sobirzoda Jamshed, First Deputy Head of Administration of Free Economic Zone “Dangara”.



The agreement aims to boost industrial production and strengthen economic ties by creating favorable conditions for business activities, implementing joint investment projects, and promoting joint ventures. Regular meetings and consultations will support these initiatives, ensuring a conducive legal, industrial, and financial environment.





### Meeting with State Committee on Investment and State Property Management

The GBA delegation held a productive meeting with Mr. Sulton Rahimzoda, Chairman/Minister of the State Committee on Investment and State Property Management of Tajikistan. Discussions focused on exploring business, education, and tourism opportunities. Both sides expressed a strong commitment to enhancing cooperation in these sectors, emphasizing the potential for mutual economic growth and development.



### Memorandum of Cooperation with LLC Somon Travel, Tajikistan

GBA and LLC “Somon Travel” signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to foster and develop tourism and business relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan. The MoU was signed by Muhammad Asif Noor, Chairman of GBA, and Umedjon Saidov, General Director of LLC “Somon Travel”.



This strategic alliance aims to leverage cultural and historical heritage, organize mutual trips for tourism companies, host

exhibitions and forums, and develop folk crafts. The agreement emphasizes attracting investments into Tajikistan’s tourism sector, creating new facilities, and promoting tourism opportunities through Pakistani media channels.



### Meeting with Ministry of Industry and New Technologies, Tajikistan

The GBA delegation met with senior officials of the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies to discuss enhancing cooperation in the sphere of industry and technology. Both parties explored opportunities for joint ventures and investment in industrial projects, aiming to foster innovation and technological advancements.



### Dinner Hosted by Pakistani Ambassador of Pakistan to Tajikistan

H.E Muhammad Saeed Sarwar hosted a dinner in honor of the GBA delegation. The ambassador highlighted the importance of cooperation between Pakistan and Tajikistan and discussed avenues for partnership and cooperation for Pakistani businessmen in various sectors. This event provided an opportunity for informal discussions and networking, further strengthening bilateral relations.





# International Day for Women in Diplomacy Celebrated



A seminar at Riphah International University marked the 'International Day for Women in Diplomacy,' emphasizing the crucial role of women in strategic perspectives within diplomacy. Organized by the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies in collaboration with the Riphah Institute of Public Policy, the event convened an array of speakers and diplomats to discuss the achievements, challenges, and aspirations of women in diplomacy.

Dr. Farhat Asif, president of the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies, opened the seminar with a powerful message on the significance of the day. She emphasized that celebrating this important day serves as a reminder of the significant contributions women have made and continue to make in the field of diplomacy. She highlighted the seminar as an excellent opportunity to reflect on the achievements, challenges, and aspirations of women diplomats worldwide.

The first woman Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Ambassador Tehmina Janjua highlighted three critical aspects of women's involvement in diplomacy: the necessity of women's participation in decision-making, the unique perspectives women bring to the field, and the importance of integrating gender considerations into diplomatic practices. Janjua praised the United Nations for its commitment to this cause and underscored the imperative to address the levels at which women participate in

decision-making within diplomacy and to dismantle the barriers that hinder their progress. Her address resonated with the attendees, stressing that women's participation is not just a matter of equity but a strategic necessity.

High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan, Leslie Scanlon, spoke about the progress made in celebrating women in diplomacy while acknowledging the ongoing challenges. She emphasized that celebrating women in diplomacy not only acknowledges past achievements but also highlights the ongoing efforts needed to overcome obstacles and promote gender equality. Scanlon's remarks encouraged a thoughtful consideration of the barriers women face in diplomacy and the initiatives required to support their advancement. This recognition encourages initiatives aimed at overcoming obstacles and promoting gender equality.

Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch provided a powerful perspective on the evolving role of women in Pakistan's diplomatic landscape. She highlighted the Ministry's efforts to promote gender equality and create opportunities for women diplomats. She emphasized the ministry's commitment to fostering an inclusive environment where women can thrive and contribute significantly to diplomatic missions. She also addressed the importance of visibility and representation, encouraging young women to





pursue careers in diplomacy and underscoring the ministry's dedication to supporting their professional growth.

The representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in Islamabad, Dilshad Senol, provided a regional and global perspective on women's contributions to diplomacy. She highlighted important conventions that have been signed to ensure global inclusiveness and stressed the importance of exchange and collaboration in strengthening the role of women diplomats. Senol's insights underscored the interconnectedness of global diplomatic efforts and the need for a collaborative approach to enhance women's roles in diplomacy.



Ambassador Naela Chohan, former special secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, offered a historical perspective on the contributions of women diplomats and the evolution of their roles over time. She highlighted the significance of mentorship and support networks for women in diplomacy, emphasizing the need for experienced women diplomats to guide and mentor the next generation. Chohan's remarks underscored the importance of sustaining progress and empowerment through intergenerational support.

Secretary General of the International Parliamentarians Congress (IIPC), Senator Sitara Ayaz shared her experiences and insights on the legislative efforts needed to support women in diplomacy. She stressed the importance of creating supportive policies and frameworks that facilitate women's active participation and leadership in diplomatic roles. Her address highlighted the critical role of legislation in removing barriers and promoting gender equality in the diplomatic arena.

Senator Dr. Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur emphasized women's critical impact at decision-making tables in shaping policies. She noted that women bring unique insights and perspectives that can lead to more comprehensive and effective solutions. However, she also highlighted the tremendous challenges women in politics face, including gender biases and systemic barriers. She stressed the importance of mentorship and support networks, urging experienced women diplomats to guide and empower the next generation.



Lastly, Director of the Riphah Institute of Public Policy, Dr Rashid Aftab delivered the concluding remarks, summarizing the key points discussed and reiterating the importance of gender equality in diplomacy. He emphasized the need for continued efforts to promote women's participation in this field. Aftab's remarks served as a reminder of the collective responsibility to support and advance the role of women in diplomacy.



The seminar served as a platform to celebrate the achievements of women diplomats and address their ongoing challenges. It provided a comprehensive overview of the progress made, the barriers that remain, and the initiatives needed to promote gender equality in diplomacy. The discussions emphasized the critical role of women in diplomatic decision-making, the unique perspectives they bring to the field, and the importance of supportive policies and frameworks to facilitate their participation and leadership. The event underscored the collective responsibility of the international community to support and advance the role of women in diplomacy, ensuring their contributions are recognized and valued.

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# **A New Chapter in Pakistan Tajikistan Ties**