**The importance of SCO**

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Prime Minister Imran Khan, accompanied by Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and some other cabinet ministers, will attend the 21st meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the member countries of SCO at Dushanbe, Tajikistan on September 16-17 and will reportedly also address the forum. The Summit is of great significance for regional countries, including Pakistan as it is taking place in the backdrop of an evolving situation in Afghanistan.

Pakistan has rightly been lobbying with the international community and regional countries, pressing for engagement with the Taliban, enabling them to cope with the looming humanitarian crisis.

Pakistan surely has the biggest stake in peace and stability in Afghanistan. Peace in Afghanistan is absolutely essential for regional connectivity and unleashing the potential for regional economic prosperity. Peace in Afghanistan will also facilitate trans-regional projects like TAPI and CASA-1000, benefitting the concerned countries and creating a perennial source of income for Afghanistan through transit fees.

[Germans all set to vote for new parliament on Sunday](https://nation.com.pk/25-Sep-2021/germans-all-set-to-vote-for-new-parliament-on-sunday)

The resolve of the SCO to fight the menace of terrorism, promoting regional peace and security and working for shared economic prosperity are very much in harmony with what Pakistan is looking for and needs desperately. Pakistan’s resolve to look to the region where it belongs for finding solutions to its economic woes and other debilitating challenges represents a visionary paradigm shift in the conduct of its foreign relations.

The SCO also has an international dimension. One of its purposes is to work together to promote and create a new political and economic world order. In the prevailing global environment, wherein a sole superpower supported by its western allies is feverishly engaged in fashioning a new world order, the role of the SCO in firming up the new world order and eliminating the vulnerabilities of this region to foreign intervention assumes greater significance. Regional organisations like the SCO are perhaps the best forums to strengthen regional security and preserve world peace.

[Pakistan condemns extra judicial killings in IIOJK](https://nation.com.pk/25-Sep-2021/pakistan-condemns-extra-judicial-killings-in-iiojk)

Pakistan’s addition to the SCO has added vitality to the organisation as it possesses great potential for global and regional trade as well as economic activities. With a consumer market of 200 million people, vast business potential and a rapidly developing infrastructure, it offered SCO enormous opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation and fulfilling the vision of the organisation. CPEC, which is a pivot of the ‘One-Belt One-Road’ (OBOR) also compliments SCO vision of connectivity and economic integration.

Making a common cause against terrorism and fighting collectively to stop it in its tracks stands a better chance of success and Pakistan can contribute to this effort as well as benefit from it tremendously. Pakistan is also confronted with a severe energy crisis. The materialisation of TAPI and other trans-regional power and gas projects—for which Russia has already expressed its support in material terms—could help tide over the problem and nudge us towards the process of economic revival.

[PCMR urges ministry of religious affairs to show sympathy on forced conversions](https://nation.com.pk/24-Sep-2021/pcmr-urges-ministry-of-religious-affairs-to-show-sympathy-on-forced-conversions)

Pakistan is engaged in diversifying its exports and finding new and easily accessible markets for its products. The SCO states, with almost one-fourth of the world population having geographical proximity with Pakistan and easy accessibility constitute a very lucrative market for its exports. Similarly, it can attract required investments in the energy and infrastructure sectors in which some of the SCO countries have a comparative advantage. The strategic location of Pakistan in the region and its economic potential can also help SCO members to exploit their economic potential to the maximum. With the prospects of Afghanistan and Iran and possibly Turkey also joining the Organisation in the near future, the SCO is likely to emerge as a very strong regional organisation.