

Terrorism most important challenge faced by the region: India at SCO

By TIOL News Service

NEW DELHI, DEC 01, 2020: INDIA

expressed concern about countries that leverage terrorism as an instrument of state policy and called upon the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) members to eliminate this threat from the region.

Addressing a virtual session of the SCO Council of Heads of Government, Vice President Mr M. Venkaiah Naidu condemned terrorism in all its manifestations and described it as the **"most important challenge"** faced by the countries in the region.

He stressed on the collective need to combat the **"scourge of terrorism"**

by enforcing internationally recognised legal statutes to comprehensively eradicate safe havens, infrastructure and financial networks supporting terrorism.

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"The most important challenge faced by us is terrorism, particularly cross-border terrorism. We are particularly concerned about states that leverage terrorism as an instrument of their state policy,"

the Vice President stated, and pointed that it was against the SCO Charter.

Mr Naidu highlighted India's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, especially the resilience in ensuring economic stability.

"Thanks to a people-empowered and people-driven approach, India has kept its COVID-19 death rate at one of the lowest levels in the world. India has one of the highest recovery rate of over 93%," he said.

He also highlighted that more than 60% of the vaccines for global immunization programs are being manufactured in India which has demonstrated itself as a **"pharmacy to the world."**

During its chairmanship, India has proposed to create a special working group on start-ups and innovations, and also an Expert Group on Traditional Medicine. These initiatives will provide support during the COVID-19 pandemic and help create a robust environment for start-ups, Mr. Naidu said.

Currently, India is hosting the virtual Exhibition on Shared Buddhist Heritage of SCO Member States, and will also commemorate the 20 th anniversary of the SCO in 2021 with a food festival in Delhi.