Pakistan to send Minister to India for SCO dialogue

Musadik Masood Malik has been a vocal critic of India's decision to place Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance after Pahalgam attack; Pak. says committed to promoting dialogue among civilisations

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Pakistan's Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Musadik Masood Malik, will represent his country at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Civilisational Dialogue to be held here from November 20 to 22, Islamabad announced on Saturday.

Mr. Malik has been a vocal critic of New Delhi's decision to place the Indus Waters Treaty "in abeyance" following the April 2025 Pahalgam terrorist attack. The last Pakistani Minister to visit India was Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who had visited Goa in May 2023 for the SCO Foreign Ministers meeting.

A step across

Musadik Masood Malik will be the first Pakistani Minister to visit India since Bilawal Bhutto Zardari attended the 2023 SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Goa

- Pakistan's Climate Change Minister has been vocal against India placing the **Indus Waters Treaty** in abeyance following the Pahalgam terror attack
- The Minister will attend the **SCO Civilisational Dialogue** in New Delhi to be held from November 20 to 22
- Confirmation comes a day after India stressed the shared **'civilisational and cultural' past** of the two neighbours
- Committed to **fostering people-to-people contacts** within the SCO framework in a spirit of mutual respect, says Pakistan



The Hindu reported on October 28 that the Indian government had invited Pakistan's Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurungzeb Khan Khichi, to attend the SCO Civilisational Dialogue event, the first such Ministerial-level invitation since 2023. However, the Pakistani government has nominated a different representative.

"The Government of Pakistan remains committed to promoting dialogue among civilisations and fostering people to people contacts within the SCO framework in a spirit of mutual respect," the Pakistan government said in a statement on Saturday.

India and Pakistan engaged in military hostilities after the terror attack in Pahalgam, following which India placed the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty "in abeyance". Mr. Malik, a technocrat-turned-Minister, said in a press conference in June this year that Pakistan would "cut off those hands" that are attempting to control the Indus waters. Asserting its claim on the Indus, Pakistan has been highlighting the Indus Valley civilisation of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa and other ancient sites in the country in recent months.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 7

SHAURYA SSB TPG (9368104524)

Pak. to send Minister to India for SCO dialogue

On World Heritage Day on April 18, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had referred to the Indus Valley civilisation in his remarks, saying, "Pakistan's cultural heritage is enriched with a multifaceted civilisation. Our homeland carries the legacy of some of the world's oldest civilisations, reflecting a vibrant tapestry of human creativity and diversity."

'Shared civilisational past'

On Friday, Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said India and Pakistan have a shared "civilisational and cultural" past, adding that New Delhi hopes that Pakistan will attend the upcoming SCO Civilisational Dialogue.

"I believe that Pakistan's civilisational and cultural progress is no different from ours," Mr. Shekhawat said, in response to a question about the invitation, given the tensions with Pakistan. "They [Pakistan] separated from us less than 100 years ago, but prior to that, we [India and Pakistan] have evolved together. So we should not have any differences over these issues," he added.

Mr. Shekhawat said that the purpose of the SCO Civilisational Dialogue, first proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was to see how the SCO could "go a step beyond geopolitical, strategic and bilateral relations and strengthen our cultural ties so that in the future we can have better relations and communications between the people of our countries."

Soon after Mr. Shekhawat's comments, however, the Ministry of External Affairs said that India would follow "national policy" regarding Pakistan in view of the Pahalgam terror attacks, indicating that it may not grant Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann clearance to attend an international Punjabi cultural conference in Lahore at the end of the month.

SHAURYA SD TRG (8368104529)

Quad summit likely to be held in Manila on Nov. 17

It is for the first time that the summit will be held in a non-member country; supply chains for critical minerals, securing commercial shipping lanes for energy supplies likely on the agenda

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet U.S. President Donald Trump, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese at the first Quad summit since 2024, on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in Manila, Philippines, next week, sources said.

According to the sources, the meeting is expected to take place on the evening of November 17.

While the confirmation of the Quad summit is significant for the Indo-Pacific grouping, much of the attention will be taken by Mr. Trump's pronouncements at his next stop in Shenzhen, China, where he will hold the first-ever three-way summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin on November 19, to discuss global issues including nuclear arms control.

In Washington, U.S. officials briefing the media on Mr. Trump's travels also confirmed that he would travel to Manila and take part in, among other meetings, a "multilateral meeting" with the leaders of the Quad countries, news agency Reuters reported.



Leadership meet: The confirmation of the summit is significant for the Indo-Pacific grouping. REUTERS

On the agenda

The agency quoted briefing by unnamed officials, who said that supply chains for critical minerals and securing commercial shipping lanes for energy supplies would be a key part of the agenda. "The issue of attacks on commercial ships is very likely to be taken up," the unnamed official quoted by Reuters said. The safety of ships and seafarers has been a particularly important issue for India, as at least 30 Indian seafarers aboard ships in the Strait of Hormuz, the Sea of Oman, and the Black Sea have been killed in attacks during the conflicts in Iran and Ukraine, respectively. Earlier, reports had indicated that a Quad Business Forum mechanism would also be announced during the summit.

The Manila meeting will be the first Quad summit being held in a non-Quad country and indicates the challenges that India has faced as the chair of the summit of the four-country grouping that revived its cooperation in the Indo-Pacific in 2017 and upgraded it during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 to leader-level meetings. Since then, the government has been unable to host the Quad summit in India even once, mainly due to the U.S. President's unavailability. New Delhi is unwilling to hand over the chairship of the summit without hosting it in the Indian capital, which may yet happen next year, sources said.

Officials did not clarify who would act as the official host of the meeting in Manila, which has been discussed for weeks, including during U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's visits to India this year. The U.S. midterm election results had delayed the confirmation of Mr. Trump's travels to the Philippines for the East Asia Summit and to China for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit.

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal on Friday told presspersons only that the Ministry would "keep [them] updated with developments in Manila pertaining to the Quad".

SHAURYA GSB TRIAL (8104329)

India-Nepal train to connect Janakpur Dham and Ayodhya

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Indian Railways is going to operate a new weekly train service between Janakpur Dham in Nepal and Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh.

The route will cover approximately 604 kilometres, connecting Janakpur Dham with Ayodhya Cantt.

The train will have stoppages at Jaynagar, Madhubani, Shisho, Sitamarhi, Raxaul, Narkatiaganj, Gorakhpur, Basti, Mankapur, and Ayodhya Dham, besides its terminal stations.

The Railway Ministry said the service would operate once a week, with its originating days being Saturday from Janakpur Dham and Monday from Ayodhya Cantt.

Citing the role of railway connectivity on bilateral cooperation, the Ministry said in a statement, "India and Nepal share centuries-old cultural, historical and social bonds, with religious traditions and cross-border community relationships forming an integral part of this partnership. The new train service will add another dimension to bilateral cooperation by using railway connectivity to bring communities closer."

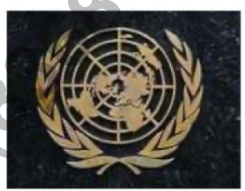
India and Nepal have held discussions on cross-border railway links, including passenger train services on the Janakpur-Ayodhya section, and bilateral cooperation in the sector in June this year.

India backs UN resolution on rights of Palestinians

Press Trust of India
UNITED NATIONS

India has voted in favour of a UN General Assembly draft resolution that reaffirms the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources and demands that Israel cease the exploitation and damage of these resources.

The 193-Member UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly on Wednesday in favour of the resolution 'Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources' proposed by Uruguay. India voted in favour



The UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly in favour of the resolution.

of the resolution along with 150 other UN Member States, while Israel and the U.S. were among the seven nations that voted against the draft, which got 11 abstentions.

The resolution reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources. It demanded that Israel "cease the exploitation, damage, cause of loss or depletion and endangerment of the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan.

It stressed that the wall and settlements being constructed by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, are contrary to international law and seriously deprive the Palestinian people of their natural resources.

The resolution called upon Israel to comply strictly with its obligations under international law and immediately and completely cease all policies and measures aimed at altering the character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

SHUBHAM ASSOCIATES (8104539)

Manipur Naga organisation seeks NIA probe into Ukhrul killing, action against Kuki rebels

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A Naga organisation in conflict-scarred Manipur has issued a three-day "public ultimatum" to the Union and State governments to drive out Kuki rebels from Naga areas and let the National Investigation Agency probe the killing of four Naga civilians in Ukhrul district on Friday.

The four – identified as Kapangkhui R.S., her son Haoleila R.S., Khanmila Keishing, and August Ngalung, all from Ukhrul district – were killed when armed assailants ambushed two vehicles on National Highway-202. The State government said the attackers were unknown gunmen.



Condolence meet: Family members mourn around coffins of four Naga civilians killed in firing. PTI

Tangkhul Naga civil society organisations held a meeting after the killing and decided to issue the ultimatum. "This is the fourth such incident at the same location. The entire responsibility for failing to protect the lives of innocent civilians is solely fixed upon State and Central governments," the Tangkhul Naga Long (TNL), an apex Naga organisation, said.

'Lost faith'

Stating that Naga people have lost complete faith in the Central security forces, the TNL said all Central security forces deployed on that stretch of the road must be immediately withdrawn.

"The victim families resolved not to claim the bodies until then. Failing this, it is resolved that the general public would be compelled to resort to an indefinite agitation until complete justice is delivered," the TNL warned.

The four Naga civilians were killed a day after a Kuki woman was killed and two men from the Kuki community were injured in a similar firing incident in Kangpokpi district. Ukhrul and Kangpokpi are Naga and Kuki-majority districts, respectively.

Security review

Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh reviewed the prevailing law and order situation in the State on Saturday. "It was decided that combing operations will continue to nab the culprits involved in various crimes. It was further decided that the respective security posts will have to strengthen security cover in their area of deployment," the government said in a statement.

‘Trump may hold off on new strike unless provoked by Iran, Houthis’

The U.S. President expresses sympathy for allies in the region who have asked him not to return to full-scale war, saying he is pursuing a ‘more civil’ path at their request; White House officials say that Trump will decide whether and when to act

Reuters
WASHINGTON/RIYADH

U.S. President Donald Trump has told senior advisers in recent days that he may hold off on attacking Iran if the U.S. faces no new provocations from Tehran or the Houthis (Ansar Allah) in Yemen, according to three people familiar with the matter.

Mr. Trump has alternated between threats of escalating the war with new strikes and winding down hostilities, and current and former officials say he does not appear to have made up his mind about how to resolve the unpopular conflict, which he launched in February with Israel.



Weapons array: Visitors walk past drones on display during an exhibition at the National Aerospace Park outside Tehran. AFP

But in meetings with his national security advisers and after a series of intelligence briefings, Mr. Trump said he was considering holding off on strikes, said the people, who, like others interviewed for this story, spoke on condition of anonymity.

He has also indicated sympathy for allies in the region who have asked him not to return to a full-fledged war.

“I could end it immediately, but at the request of the nations that I am looking to protect, we are doing it a little bit longer way, a bit more civilly,” Mr. Trump told sports broadcaster Stephen A. Smith on Thursday.

The war has hiked global fuel prices and proven unpopular with U.S. voters, who handed control of Congress to the Democrats in last week’s midterm elections. In a Reuters/Ipsos poll taken shortly before the November 3 elections, 55% of Americans said the war was not worth the cost, and Vice-President J.D. Vance cited it as the reason Mr. Trump’s Republicans lost Congress.

Mr. Trump’s private comments build on public remarks playing down the likelihood of major warfare resuming.

“As Commander-in-Chief, President Trump is the architect and sole decision-maker who holds all the cards and will always ensure that America’s interests are protected,” a White House official said in a statement. “The United States is in a very strong position with control of the Strait of Hormuz and the Iranian economy collapsing. Only President Trump knows what he will do, and when.”

SHUBHYA SS (1836810520)

In Arunachal's Siang, a dam divides a community: 'We will lose land, history'

Premankur Biswas & Shinjini Ghosh
Pasighat, November 14



In recent months, Geku village has been at the centre of protests against the preliminary surveys and the deployment of CAPF. FILE

OKAM TAYOM, one of the oldest residents of Geku village in Arunachal Pradesh, cannot say exactly how old he is. But he remembers the 1962 Sino-Indian War, when Chinese troops marched into what was then the North-East Frontier Agency.

"I went with my father and other villagers to drive them away. All we had were traditional weapons: bows, arrows and daos," he recalled.

Seated on the verandah of his chang ghar, a stilt house built entirely from forest materials, Okam seems to belong to another era. His concerns, however, are firmly rooted in the present. The proposed 11,200-MW Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP) threatens to submerge his village, along with its farmland and ancestral homes. "We have protected this land for generations. How can I let that happen? We will lose our livelihoods. We will lose our history."

Why the dam is controversial

Opposition to the project is not new. The UPA government declared it a national project in 2008, but it has made little headway against sustained resistance from the Adi community, Arunachal Pradesh's second-largest tribe. The immediate flashpoint is a pre-feasibility survey by the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC).

The government maintains that the exercise is preliminary and does not mean the dam has been approved. Three sites have been identified — Parong and Dite Dime in Siang district, and Ugeng/Komkar in Upper Siang district.

For villagers, however, the distinction offers little reassurance. They fear that survey and drilling work on their ancestral land will bring the project closer to reality. Residents have blocked roads, stopped NHPC personnel and machinery, and demanded the withdrawal of security forces. The confrontation escalated in October, with the arrest of activists and clashes with security personnel.

On October 23, after a bandh across three districts, violence broke out in Pasighat. An NHPC office and a police station were set ablaze, vehicles torched, and politicians' residences vandalised. The administration imposed prohibitory orders and deployed additional security forces. For the Adi community, the stakes extend beyond individual villages. "We have depended on Siang River since the beginning of time. If this project goes ahead, at least 27 Adi villages will be submerged," said Diji Tamuk, president of Adi Bane Kebang United, the community's apex organisation in Arunachal Pradesh.

Life in the shadow of the dam

"It is not just Upper Siang that will be affected. The entire state will feel the impact. If the Siang River is disturbed, we believe everything will be destroyed," said Maina Pangkam, a grocery shop owner on the road to Geku, a village in the Upper Siang district.

Geku, nestled along the Siang, appears far removed from the unrest. But in recent months, the village has been at the centre of protests against the preliminary surveys and the deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF).

Authorities arrested four people under the Arunachal Pradesh Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (APUAPA). Adum Tayom, one of those detained, said, "We were kept in a cell with convicted murderers. Why are we being subjected to this, just because we want to protect our land?" He was subsequently released from preventive custody.

The government's case

The BJP-led state government defends the project on strategic grounds, citing China's massive dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet and the potential risks of sudden water releases downstream. CM Pema Khandu has said no decision has been taken on constructing the dam and that public consultation and local consent will be necessary. However, BJP MP Tapir Gao's assertion that the dam "will be built" has deepened distrust.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Upper Siang Deputy Commissioner Ashok Tajo said the project's primary objective was to address China's activities across the border. "We need to counter the Chinese dam, which is 50 km upstream from here... as a security measure, this dam is very important right now."

He acknowledged that the project had struck an emotional chord. "...Naturally, there will be protests. There have also been shortcomings in the dissemination of information," he said.

SHENRY ASSP TRG (0) 9435997

Axiom was practice, real mission to see Tricolour on Moon by 2040: Shubhanshu

Express News Service
Chandigarh, November 14

CAPTAIN SUBHANSHU Shukla, the first Indian astronaut to visit the International Space Station, on Saturday said that his real mission was to see a fellow Indian plant the Tricolour on the Moon by 2040. Recalling his Axiom Mission 4 journey in June 2025, Shukla said he never felt alone in space because "the whole nation was part of the mission".

"After Axiom, I am actively engaged in preparing our national mission Gaganyaan to succeed and further contribute to India's growth and prosperity," he said while addressing a session at the 10th Military Literature Festival.

During the session, titled "From Fighter Cockpit to Spacecraft: India's New Frontier in Air and Space Power", Shukla gave a presentation of his 20 days and 3-hours-long journey to space.

Sharing his experience, he said taking off from the International Space Station (ISS) on the Space Capsule was "violent and chaotic", contrary to his expectations. "As we lifted off from the ISS, a doubt crossed my mind whether I had made the right decision to travel to space," he said, adding that initial anxiety and confusion are in-built in any challenge.



IAF Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla at the 10th Military Literature Festival at Lake Club, in Chandigarh on Saturday. PTI

Urging youngsters to take up science and follow their dreams with courage, he said classrooms foster audacious dreams, which should be nurtured with courage and spirit for one to succeed and serve society.

Sharing his in-flight experience of staying in a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket for over 20 days, he said the loss of gravity makes one feel awkward at first.

"You grow taller in size; your heart becomes smaller. There are numerous physical and mental changes you feel while in space. Though you prepare for each challenge, the real power comes to you from your conviction to go back and serve society through research," he added.

Motivating youngsters to take up challenges in the right spirit, Shukla said Mission Director Dr Peggy Whitson had endured nine rejections before being chosen to fly to space at the age of 39. "The fact that Dr Whitson now has the longest stay in space is motivation to all those feeling negative at any stage in their life," he added.

In another session on the second day of the MLF, subject experts said India needs an effective and regular assessment of its national security needs and aspirations.

SHAURYA SSB TRG (8368104529)

Trump to meet Putin, Xi in China, nuclear proliferation on agenda

US President also plans to raise Iran war in 1st trilateral meet on Thursday, says White House

Reuters
Washington, November 14

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump will raise nuclear-arms reduction at a meeting in China next week with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping, the White House said on Friday.

"He will discuss the reduction of nuclear weapons in the world, whose proliferation President Trump believes is very dangerous," Olivia Wales, a White House spokeswoman, said on a call with reporters. She added that the meeting would take place on Thursday in China.

Trump's repeated insistence that the first-of-its-kind meeting of the three leaders focus on nuclear arms reductions has riled China, which is hosting a summit focused on trade and commerce.

China has rebuffed attempts to talk about nuclear arms with Russia and the United States, which have the largest stockpiles of such weapons.

Putin, Xi and Trump are expected to meet on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Shenzhen. Trump is leaving on Monday for a four-day trip to Asia that also includes a stop in Philippines.

"We do not expect to get to any kind of agreement," a senior Trump administration official said regarding the nuclear issue. "This is a difficult topic for China to address, but we do think it's time for China to sort of step up, you know, to the adults' table, if you will, and have adult conversations about adult things."

The official added: "This is the beginning of hopefully a conversation that can be productive going forward."

Beijing has for years resisted direct engagement with Washington about its nuclear program, saying it is more appropriate for Russia and the US to speak directly because of their large arsenals.

Russia has the most stored nuclear warheads, followed by the United States and China, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the US and Russia expired this year.

It was not clear whether Russia or China intended to engage in a conversation about arms reductions with Trump.

The Chinese and Russian embassies in Washington did not immediately respond to emailed requests for comment.

Trump will also raise the US-Israeli war against Iran in the meeting but is not expected to raise Russia's war in Ukraine, the official said.

SHAURYA ASSOCIATES (9368104529)