

## Swaraj to lead India team at SCO meet in Tajikistan

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External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj will represent India at the 17th Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to be held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on 11-12 October.

Pakistan foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi is also expected to attend the meeting but Swaraj is likely to ignore his presence as she did in New York at the UN General Assembly recently, it is learnt.

This will be the second CHG meeting since India, along with Pakistan, became a full member of SCO in June 2017. Last year, the CHG meeting was held in Sochi, Russia where too Swaraj had led the Indian delegation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had led the official delegation to the SCO Summit of Heads of State in Qingdao, China on 9-10 June. India has participated in nearly 12 ministerial meetings of the SCO ever since it became a full-fledged member of the grouping last year.

The CHG is a forum of the SCO that enables India to engage with other member countries and observer states like Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia. It is the first major meeting since Kyrgyzstan took over as chair of the SCO.

The meeting will discuss prospects for further development of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and will exchange in-depth views on current international and regional issues. SNS