

Govt calls in Pakistan Army for SCO Summit security in Islamabad

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ISLAMABAD:

The Pakistan Army has been called in to provide security for the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit, scheduled to take place in Islamabad on 15-16 October. The deployment was approved under Article 245 of the Constitution, according to a notification issued by the Interior Ministry on Friday. The notification confirmed that the army will oversee the security of key government buildings and the Red Zone in Islamabad. While the Rangers are already stationed in the capital, the military will take over security duties from 5 to 17 October, ensuring heightened protection during the summit. The federal government has completed its preparations for the event, which will be attended by the heads of state and delegations from the eight member countries of the SCO. The organisation, established in 2001, promotes political,

economic, and security cooperation in the region. Its current members include China, Russia, Pakistan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In 2023, Iran became a full member of the SCO. Several other countries participate as observers or partners, cooperating with the regional bloc. Significantly, Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will also be attending the summit, marking the first high-level visit from India to Pakistan since 2015. The last visit by an Indian foreign minister to Pakistan was in December 2015, when then-minister Sushma Swaraj attended the “Heart of Asia” conference on Afghanistan in Islamabad. This visit is seen as an opportunity to ease tensions between the two neighbours, which have been strained in recent years.