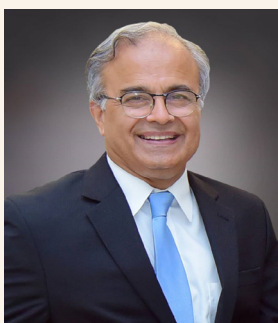




ECO Newsletter

Economic Cooperation Organization

February, 2025- No. 6



Dear Friends,

I am pleased to present to you the ECO Newsletter for the month of February.

This was quite a busy and eventful month as I had the privilege of calling on His Excellency Masoud Pezeshkian, the Honorable President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. On the sidelines of the 3rd Caspian Sea Forum in Tehran, I also held productive discussions with the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, the Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, and the Minister of New Technologies of Tajikistan. In these interactions, I sensed a new formed willingness amongst the Member States to deepen engagements and look inwards to harness the regions' true potential.

February was also a special month for us as we convened ECO Deputy Foreign Ministers to deliberate on organizational reforms and commence discussions on drafting a new ten-year vision for post-2025 era. At the Secretariat, we also hosted the annual Regional Planning Council (RPC) Meeting, which finalized the Calendar of Events and Work Programme for 2025. This month, I also had the opportunity to visit Mashhad where I met the Governor of Khorasan Razavi province and the transport committee of the Mashhad Chamber of Commerce along with visit to Mashhad Innovation Center and Sarakhs Special Economic Zone, showcasing the province's key role in regional trade and transit, as well as its potential for innovation, industrial growth, and economic development.

As part of our strategy to enhance the Secretariat's functioning and exchange best practices with other regional and international organizations, we hosted Tehran-based African Union Ambassadors for a joint briefing session. Additionally, we welcomed Japanese and Iranian students as part of their orientation visits, providing them with detailed briefings on ECO's activities. We believe such initiatives are essential to promote greater awareness of and engagement with ECO.

With our ongoing efforts and growing political will of Member States to advance

Secretary General
Economic Cooperation Organization

Secretary General Calls on President of Iran

Tehran – February 5, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan met H.E. Mr. Masoud Pezeshkian, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to discuss enhancing regional cooperation and economic development among ECO member states.

President Pezeshkian congratulated Dr. Khan on his appointment and reaffirmed Iran's commitment to supporting ECO's initiatives and the Secretariat as the host country. Dr. Khan highlighted Iran's pivotal role in the Organization and briefed the President on key upcoming activities, including the 17th ECO Summit in Azerbaijan this July.

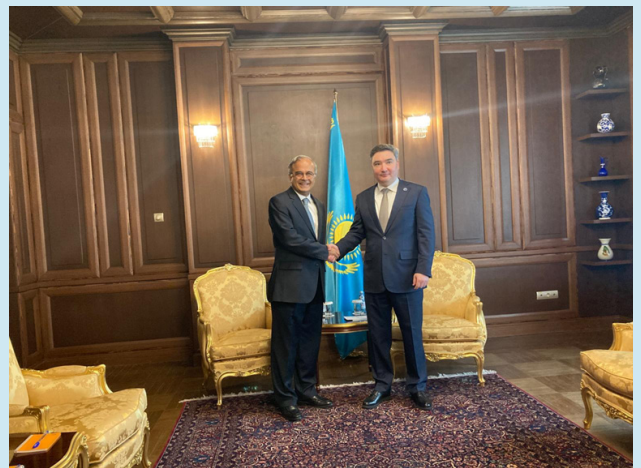


Secretary General Meets Kazakhstan's Prime Minister

Tehran – February 18, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan met H.E. Oljas Bektenov, Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, during his official visit to Tehran for the Caspian Sea Littoral States Summit. The meeting focused on Kazakhstan's priorities during its 2025 chairmanship of ECO and reaffirmed the country's strong support for advancing regional cooperation within the ECO framework.

Dr. Khan briefed the Prime Minister on upcoming key ECO events, including Ministerial Meetings on Trade, Finance, Tourism, and Transport, as well as the 17th ECO Summit in Azerbaijan on July 3-4, 2025. He assured the ECO Secretariat's full support in collaborating with Kazakhstan's leadership to implement its proposed priorities for strengthening regional cooperation.



Secretary General Meets Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan

Tehran – February 12, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan held a bilateral meeting with Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister, H.E. Rashid Meredov, during his official visit to Tehran. Foreign Minister Meredov reaffirmed Turkmenistan's strong support for ECO initiatives, particularly in transport connectivity and tourism, and emphasized the importance of enhancing regional cooperation.

Dr. Khan expressed gratitude for Turkmenistan's active role under the leadership of President H.E. Serdar Berdimuhamedov. He briefed the Minister on upcoming ECO Ministerial Meetings in Trade, Tourism, and Transport, as well as the 17th ECO Summit in Azerbaijan (July 3-4, 2025). He also highlighted plans for the Sustainable Development Forum in Arkadag city and assured the Secretariat's full support for its success.



Secretary General Meets Tajikistan's Minister of Industry & New Technologies

Tehran – February 18, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan met H.E. Sherali Kabir, Tajikistan's Minister of Industry and New Technologies, during his official visit to Tehran. Minister Kabir reaffirmed Tajikistan's strong support for ECO initiatives and emphasized enhancing regional cooperation in the industrial sector, particularly focusing on new technologies.

Dr. Khan briefed the Minister on upcoming key ECO events, including Ministerial Meetings on Trade, Finance, Tourism, and Transport, as well as the 17th ECO Summit in Azerbaijan on July 3-4, 2025. Highlighting industrialization as a priority for ECO, Dr. Khan expressed the Secretariat's commitment to working closely with Tajikistan's Industry and New Technologies Ministry to advance the regional industrialization agenda in alignment with Tajikistan's national development strategy.



Secretary General Meets Iran's Tourism Minister

Tehran – February 11, 2025

Dr. Asad Majeed Khan participated in the 18th Tehran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition, alongside the ECO Tourism Directorate.

During the event, Dr. Khan met with Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, H.E. Dr. Seyed Reza Saleh Amiri, to discuss future ECO tourism initiatives. Dr. Khan emphasized tourism as a key ECO priority, while Minister Amiri reaffirmed Iran's active role in promoting health and gastronomy tourism within the region.



Dr. Khan also attended the unveiling of the poster for the 3rd ECO Confobition on Health Tourism, set for June 11-13, 2025, in Hamedan. Productive discussions were held with local authorities to advance regional tourism collaboration.

ECO Deputy Foreign Ministers Convene in Tehran



Tehran – February 3, 2025

The First High-Level Committee (HLC) Meeting of ECO Deputy Foreign Ministers was held at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran, chaired by H.E. Mr. Alibek Bakayev, Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan. Delegates from ECO member states reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening regional collaboration and institutional development.

Key discussions focused on organizational reforms, financial matters, recruitment policies, and enhancing the Secretariat's efficiency. Progress under the ECO Vision 2025 was reviewed, alongside plans for drafting a new Vision document aligned with current regional and global trends. A working group was established to propose specific recommendations on ECO reforms. The meeting's outcomes are expected to shape ECO's future direction and reinforce its role in fostering regional economic cooperation.

Secretary General Meets Kyrgyz Deputy Minister of Transport & Communications

Tehran – February 26, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan met Mr. Almaz Turgunbaev, Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic, on the sidelines of the 17th Annual Meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission TRACECA in Tehran. Dr. Khan emphasized ECO's active role in implementing initiatives to facilitate transit and trade and highlighted the importance of the upcoming 13th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport, urging participation at the ministerial level.



He also appreciated Kyrgyzstan's engagement in ECO transport initiatives and encouraged further prioritization of the sector. Key topics included the operationalization and commercialization of regional multimodal corridors. Mr. Turgunbaev informed the Secretary General about recent developments in Kyrgyzstan's transport sector and reaffirmed his country's commitment to strengthening regional connectivity. The meeting concluded with both sides reiterating their dedication to advancing transport and communication links across the ECO region.

35th ECO Regional Planning Council Meeting

Tehran – February 24-27, 2025

The 35th Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC) took place from February 24 to 27, 2025, at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran. The event brought together delegations from ECO member states, observers, and representatives from ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutes, and Affiliated Bodies.

The meeting began with a plenary session, presided over by Ambassador Ontalap Onalbayev, Kazakhstan's Head of Delegation, who emphasized trade, connectivity, green energy, and climate change as key priorities during Kazakhstan's ECO Chairmanship in 2025.



Dr. Asad M. Khan, highlighted the organization's achievements, ongoing flagship initiatives, and the importance of the 2025 Work Program and Calendar of Events. He noted that 2025 marks the conclusion of Vision 2025, providing a pivotal moment to assess progress and set future priorities.

Over the following days, sectoral committees worked on shaping the annual Work Program and Calendar of Events, which were adopted during the concluding session on February 27. In his closing remarks, Ambassador Khan commended the efforts of all participants and proposed measures to enhance the RPC's effectiveness, including more frequent meetings and greater integration of ECO Specialized Agencies.

With the successful conclusion of the 35th RPC, the ECO Secretariat looks forward to collaborating with member states to implement the adopted initiatives, driving regional economic growth and cooperation in 2025.

Bilateral Meetings During 35th RPC Meeting

On the sidelines of the 35th ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC) Meeting, ECO Secretary General Dr. Asad M. Khan held several bilateral meetings to strengthen collaboration and advance regional cooperation.



Meeting with Turkish Delegation

In his meeting with Mr. Selçuk Koç, head of the Turkish delegation, the Secretary General reviewed the role of the RPC in guiding the Secretariat's work. Dr. Khan appreciated Türkiye's contributions and highlighted the consensus on enhancing ECO's regional cooperation role, as discussed in the recent High-Level Committee meeting of Deputy Foreign Ministers. Both sides agreed on the possibility of a follow-up review of the RPC's work later in the year.



Meeting with Azerbaijani Delegation

Dr. Khan met Mr. Emin Mammudov, head of Azerbaijan's delegation, to discuss the effectiveness of the RPC and preparations for upcoming ECO Ministerial Meetings on Trade, Finance, Tourism, Transport, Sustainable Development Goals, and Interior. They also deliberated on the 17th ECO Summit, scheduled for July 3–4, 2025, in Azerbaijan. The Secretary General assured full support from the Secretariat for a successful and milestone Summit.



Meeting with Turkish Cypriot State

The Secretary General held discussions with Mr. Mustafa Davulcu, head of the Turkish Cypriot State delegation, an ECO observer. The meeting focused on strengthening the framework of cooperation and acknowledged the Turkish Cypriot State's contributions to the Organization's work.



Meeting with ECO Educational Institute (ECOEI) President

Dr. Khan met with Prof. Dr. Akif Kirecci, President of ECOEI, to discuss enhancing regional educational collaboration. They emphasized the importance of education in regional development, youth empowerment, and integration. Discussions included harmonizing curricula, improving technical education, and fostering entrepreneurship and innovation. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to advancing education as a key pillar of ECO's regional cooperation framework.



Secretary General Visits Mashhad

Mashhad – February 19, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan visited Mashhad for a two-day official trip focused on strengthening regional diplomacy and provincial cooperation. During his meeting with the Governor of Khorasan Razavi, Mr. Gholam Hossein Mozaffari, he expressed gratitude for Mashhad's hospitality during the 28th ECO Council of Ministers Meeting and emphasized collaboration for the upcoming ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport.

Dr. Khan also met with the Transport Committee of Mashhad Chamber of Commerce, highlighting the importance of private sector engagement in advancing regional connectivity. His visit includes tours of technology centers, Sarakhs Special Economic Zone, and transportation infrastructure to prepare for the upcoming Ministerial Meeting.



17th Annual Meeting of TRACECA

February 26, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan participated in the 17th Annual Meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission TRACECA, held in Tehran. He emphasized the significance of regional collaboration in developing efficient and sustainable transport networks. He also highlighted ECO's strategic role in global trade and transit corridors, showcasing progress in operationalizing key routes such as the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI), KUTIT, TUTIT, KTI, and KTAI corridors, which serve as vital links connecting Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.



Dr. Khan reaffirmed ECO's unwavering support for TRACECA's mission to enhance transport efficiency, promote trade, and strengthen people-to-people connections. He underlined the importance of harmonizing policies, improving infrastructure, and fostering intermodal transport systems to build a more interconnected and climate-resilient region. Expressing optimism about the outcomes of the meeting, the Secretary General reiterated ECO's commitment to advancing regional connectivity and economic integration.

Secretary General Meets Saudi Ambassador

Tehran, February 18, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan met H.E. Abdullah bin Saud Al-Anzi, Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Iran, to discuss enhancing regional cooperation and strengthening ECO's engagement with Saudi-based multilateral organizations.

Dr. Khan emphasized the importance of collaboration with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), while recalling Saudi Arabia's active participation in past ECO events. Ambassador Al-Anzi highlighted ECO's role in fostering regional development and assured his support for deeper engagement between ECO and key organizations in Saudi Arabia.



ECO Secretariat Hosts Japanese and Iranian Students



Tehran – Feb 17, 2025

The ECO Secretariat welcomed a delegation of Japanese and Iranian students as part of an orientation visit organized by the School of International Relations of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

Dr. Asad M. Khan greeted the students and provided an overview of the organization's objectives, structure, and key initiatives, highlighting

its role in fostering economic cooperation and advancing regional development. ECO Directors delivered presentations on key sectors such as trade, transport, energy, environment, agriculture, industry, and tourism.

The visit concluded with an interactive discussion, where students engaged with ECO officials to deepen their understanding of the organization's efforts in enhancing regional cooperation.

ECO and African Union Explore Cooperation

February 12, 2024-Tehran

Dr. Asad M. Khan hosted a tripartite meeting with H.E. Sidi Mohamed Mohamed Radhi, Ambassador of Mauritania, and H.E. Saliou Niang Dieng, Ambassador of Senegal, at the ECO Secretariat.

Discussions focused on fostering collaboration between ECO and the African Union (AU) by exchanging best practices in regional trade, transport, and economic integration. The meeting concluded with agreements to hold a briefing session with the African Group in Tehran on February 17, 2025, engage the AU Secretariat via ECO Ambassadors in Addis Ababa, and organize joint workshops to share expertise.



ECO-AU Joint Briefing Session

Tehran, February 17, 2025

The ECO Secretariat hosted a delegation of Tehran-based African Ambassadors for a joint briefing session aimed at strengthening ties and exploring collaboration between ECO and the African Union (AU). Dr. Asad M. Khan opened the session with an overview of ECO's evolution, objectives, and initiatives, followed by presentations from Deputy Secretaries General on ECO's work in trade, transport, energy, and connectivity.

Representing the African Group, H.E. Saliou Niang Dieng, Dean of the African Group and Ambassador of Senegal, provided a detailed briefing on the African Union's regional integration efforts and emphasized the importance of inter-organizational collaboration to address global challenges. H.E. Sidi Mohammad, Ambassador of Mauritania, discussed strategies for formalizing deeper engagements between ECO and the AU.



The session concluded with an exchange of views on potential areas of cooperation. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening ties, focusing on practical avenues for collaboration and sharing best practices to address mutual challenges and opportunities.

ECO Joins Asia-Pacific Regional Review on Migration

Bangkok – February 4-6, 2025

Dr. Husnu Tekin, Director of HRSD at the ECO Secretariat, represented ECO as an observer at the Second Asia-Pacific Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, organized by IOM and UN-ESCAP.

The event brought together stakeholders to assess progress on the Global Compact's implementation and emphasized inclusive, people-centered migration governance. Discussions highlighted best practices, challenges, and the importance of cooperation, data collection, and addressing migration's root causes to achieve the UN SDGs.



Dr. Tekin outlined ECO's migration-related initiatives under the ECO Vision 2025, noting the region's challenges as a key source, destination, and transit area for migrants. He also participated as a panelist, sharing insights from the ECO-IOM-Iran workshop on combating trafficking and human smuggling in the region.

ECO Reviews Draft Study on Transport Corridors and Gates

Tehran – February 11, 2025

The Economic Cooperation Organization in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), held a virtual meeting to review the draft study on ECO Transport Corridors and Gates. The study, led by an international consultant, aims to enhance regional connectivity and transit infrastructure across member states.

Key findings and recommendations were presented, followed by productive discussions with national consultants. Participants highlighted the importance of improving transport corridors to boost trade, investment, and regional integration. The study is expected to guide efforts in strengthening transport networks, facilitating trade, and fostering sustainable economic growth in the ECO region.



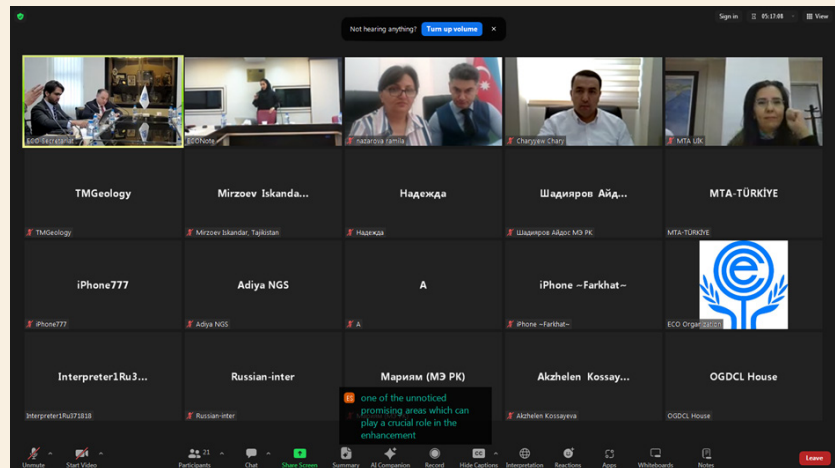
9th ECO Minerals Experts Group Meeting

February 12, 2025

The 9th ECO Minerals Experts Group Meeting (MEGM-9) was held in hybrid mode, chaired by Dr. Nawaz Ahmad Virk, Director General of Minerals from Pakistan's Ministry of Energy. Representatives from eight ECO Member States participated, focusing on advancing regional cooperation in the minerals sector amidst growing global demand.

Dr. Fuad Farzalibeyov of the ECO Secretariat emphasized the need for stronger political will and project-oriented collaboration. The Secretariat presented the draft "ECO Five-Year Roadmap on Minerals Cooperation (2026-2030)" as a guiding framework for regional mineral cooperation.

Key discussions included launching the ECO-Environmental Quality Index Map (ECO-EQI) for sustainable mining practices, integrating digital tools and AI in geology, and sustainable resource management. Participants agreed to prioritize proposed initiatives and explore hosting future meetings to enhance collaboration.



ECO Discusses First Sustainable Development Forum

February 17, 2025

The ECO Secretariat, in collaboration with Turkmenistan's Ministry of Finance and Economy, held an online meeting to discuss sustainable development initiatives in the ECO region. During the meeting, Turkmenistan announced its commitment to host the 1st ECO Forum on Sustainable Development on April 28-29, 2025, in Smart City Arkadag. The Forum aims to strengthen regional cooperation and foster innovative solutions for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The upcoming Forum will address critical challenges in advancing the 2030 Agenda within the ECO region. Key topics include enhancing policy coherence, tackling climate change, and promoting innovative strategies for sustainable development. Additionally, the Forum will review the SDG Performance Index Report for the ECO Region and discuss the draft Action Plan for Enhancing Policy Coherence, providing a platform to advance sustainable development solutions.



KAZAKHSTAN

Meeting on Trade and Transport via Kazakhstan-China Border

Tehran – February 19, 2025

ECO, in collaboration with Kazakhstan's trade and railway operators, organized a virtual meeting to enhance regional trade and transport connectivity via the Kazakh-Chinese border. Participants discussed transportation terms, e-commerce, and the potential of Free Economic Zones, requesting a study on best practices.

The Secretariat reaffirmed its commitment to follow up with studies, field visits, and test-runs to strengthen trade routes and connectivity for ECO Member States.



Economic Cooperation Organization



ECO Secretariat, No. 1, Golbou Alley, Kamranieh St.,, Postal Code: 19519 – 33114, Tehran, Iran
Web: www.eco.int, E-mail: registry@eco.int, Tel: (+9821) 22831733-4, Fax: (+9821) 22831732