

* India to host SCO summit tomorrow

- Council of Heads of Govt meeting (CHOGM) of
- Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (virtual meet)
 - ↳ 8 countries
 - ↳ China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan
 - ↳ India, Pak joined in 2017



- Observers : Iran, Afghanistan, Belarus, Mongolia
 - ↳ want full membership.
- Turkmenistan → invited as special guest.

- CHOGM

↳ PM level meet

↳ But PM Modi & Pak PM Imran Khan not to attend

↳ Reason: Presidential positions in parliamentary democracies, like India & Pak, are "ceremonial" in nature & PM's position is more equivalent to that of Prez. in other SCO members

- SCO Heads of State meet

↳ Here Presidents of China, Russia attend

↳ So, PMs of India & Pak should attend this and not CHOGM

- Other reason for not attending.

• India - Pak tensions in previous meet

• NSA Ajit Doval had walked out of the video conference

↳ Pak used map claiming Indian territories as background.

- Important to note that India-China tensions not spilled over to SCO meetings so far.

* Regional priorities

- India hosted SCO-CHOGM → first time
- 66 point joint communique -
 - ↳ Focus on developing a Plan to overcome socio-economic, financial & food consequences of COVID-19 in the region.
 - ↳ strengthening multilateralism
 - ↳ SCO is now an influential participant in modern International politics.

- Differences

- Protocol mismatch causing PMs of India & Pak to depute someone.
- India made strong observations on cross-border terror
 - ↳ called it SCO's biggest challenge.
- Pak spoke of need to combat "State terrorism" in disputed areas, in a reference to J&K.
- Final joint statement had no mention of terrorism → neither Indian view nor Pak's.

- India did not join other SCO members in endorsing the BRI.
- Despite the differences; Significance are:
 - SCO is referred to as "Asian NATO"
 - ↳ although it does not mandate security alliances.
 - India's declining engagements in SAARC, BBIN, RCEP
 - ↳ but SCO is one of few structures that India is still engaging.
 - Convenient channel for outreach
 - ↳ trade & strategic ties to C-Asian countries.
 - India has often used the forum for talks with China, even during standoffs.

- Conclusion

- ↳ SCO is a group worth pursuing
- ↳ as it retains India's geopolitical balance

* PM seeks respect for territorial integrity

- PM urged members of SCO to respect territorial integrity and sovereignty
- Support for infra and connectivity projects in SCO region
 - ↳ Eg: Chabahar port and the North South Corridor
- Focus of India as a non-permanent member of UNSC next year
 - ↳ bring changes in global governance
- In 2021 → National Museum of India to hold an exhibition on Buddhist heritage of SCO countries
- 20th SCO summit → virtual

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* Indian troops in Russia as part of SCO exercise

- 6th Exercise Peaceful Mission:

- Between Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) members in Russia in the Orenburg region.
- A joint counter-terrorism exercise.
- Conducted biennially as part of military diplomacy



Observers → Iran, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Belarus

- The countries formed an intergovernmental group called BRIC and later BRICS.
- China assumed the leadership of BRICS.
- It undermined the relevance of another, less ambitious, group of India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA).

- Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):

• It started off as a friendly group of China and some former Republics of the Soviet Union,

• But with the addition of India, Pakistan and Iran, it became a diverse group and it could not reach an agreement.

- BIMSTEC:

• The group remained dormant for many years till it was revived a few years ago as an alternative to SAARC.

* Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)



- ↳ An inter-governmental multi-lateral platform
- ↳ Founded in June 2001
- ↳ First build on the 'Shanghai Five' grouping of Russia, China, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
- ↳ In 2001, Uzbekistan joined the group and named it the SCO.
- ↳ India and Pakistan joined in 2015.

↳ Has 2 permanent bodies:-

- SCO secretariat - Beijing
- Executive committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) Tashkent

* Singapore Convention on Mediation

- ↳ Has come into force on 12th Sep 2020
- ↳ Also known as United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreement resulting from Mediation
- ↳ A uniform and efficient framework for international settlement agreement resulting from mediation.
- ↳ 53 countries signatories including India, China and US.

• Mediation → A process whereby parties attempt to settle their dispute with the assistance of a third person (mediator).