



## 35th SAARC Founding Day

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### Why in News

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The Prime Minister of India has addressed a letter to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Secretariat on the founding day of the bloc.

- The letter highlighted the need for **greater collaboration** among countries in South Asia in order to **resist the threat of terrorism** that poses a challenge to prosperity and peace in the region.
- **In the last three years, India has been distancing itself from the SAARC**, citing security challenge facing the region from terror networks based in Pakistan, which is also a member of the grouping.

### South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

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- SAARC was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka (Bangladesh) on **8<sup>th</sup> December 1985**.
- **Eight Member States:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- **Secretariat:** Kathmandu (Nepal).
- **Objective:** To promote the welfare of the people of South Asia and to improve their quality of life, and to accelerate economic growth, among other things.
- **SAARC Summits:**
  - These are usually held biennially and hosted by member states in alphabetical order.
  - The **last SAARC Summit in 2014** was held in Kathmandu (Nepal), which was attended by India.
  - The 2016 SAARC summit was to be held in Islamabad. The summit was called off after India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan declined to participate in the Islamabad meet, because of an attack on an Indian army camp in Uri (Jammu and Kashmir).

- The latest meeting of the SAARC Foreign Ministers took place in New York on 26th September, 2019 on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, which was attended by the Minister of External Affairs of India.

**Source: IE**