



SCO Summit 2024

For Prelims: [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation](#), [Line of Actual Control](#), [Make in India](#), [BRICS grouping](#)

For Mains: Significance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Economic relations of India with SCO

Source: IE

Why in News?

Recently the 2024 [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation \(SCO\) Summit](#) was concluded in **Astana, Kazakhstan** and brought together leaders from across the region.

- India played a prominent role, with the External **Affairs Minister** delivering the Prime Minister's message that highlighted [combating terrorism](#) and addressing [climate change](#) as key priorities.

Note

People's Republic of China will assume the SCO chairmanship for the next term, and Qingdao, China will be appointed the SCO's tourism and cultural capital for 2024-2025.

What are the Key Highlights of SCO Summit 2024?

- New Membership:** Belarus has become the 10th member state of the SCO. The Indian External Affairs Minister met with Belarusian counterpart to strengthen bilateral ties.
- Astana Declaration:** The 24th SCO Summit in Astana adopted the **Astana Declaration** and approved 25 strategic agreements on energy, security, trade, finance, and information security.
 - The Council of Heads of State- Members of the SCO adopted the **SCO Development Strategy until 2035**, including resolutions on **combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism**, anti-drug strategy, energy cooperation, economic development, and cooperation in protected areas and eco-tourism.
 - Commitments also included signing a **memorandum to combat illicit drug trafficking** and an interaction plan on international information security issues.
- India-China Relations:** India's External Affairs Minister met the Chinese Foreign Minister on the margins of the SCO Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan. Both ministers emphasised the need for "complete disengagement" of troops and restoring peace along the [Line of Actual Control \(LAC\)](#).

- The two ministers agreed to expedite efforts through diplomatic and military channels to resolve remaining issues in Eastern Ladakh.
- **Make in India and Global Economic Growth:** The '[Make in India](#)' initiative was highlighted as it has the potential to become a significant engine for global economic growth.
 - India expressed openness to partnering with other nations, particularly those in the Global South, for capacity building and economic development.
- **Combat Terrorism:** At the SCO summit, the External Affairs Minister of India urged the global community to **isolate countries that harbour terrorists and condone terrorism**.
 - He emphasised the need to **counter [cross-border terrorism](#)** and highlighted the importance of combating terrorism as a foundational goal of the SCO.
 - India has been proactive in enhancing its security-related cooperation within the SCO framework, particularly through the **[Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure \(RATS\)](#)**, which focuses on security and defence issues.
 - The Russian President emphasised the SCO's role in promoting a **fair, multipolar world order**.

What is the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation?

- **Origins:** The SCO originated from the "**Shanghai Five**," formed in 1996, consisting of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.
 - It was created to address **concerns about extremist religious groups and ethnic tensions** following the dissolution of the USSR in 1991.
- **Establishment:** SCO was established on 15th June 2001, in Shanghai, adding **Uzbekistan as a sixth member**.
 - Before the inclusion of Belarus, **it had nine members: India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan**.
 - **Afghanistan and Mongolia hold Observer Status**.
- **Significance: Addresses security issues in Asia with primarily Asian members.**
 - The SCO is significant because it is one of the **few international organisations focused on security issues** and primarily consists of Asian members.
 - Russia and China view it as an alternative to the "**Western**" **international order** and are positioning themselves against US influence, alongside the **[BRICS grouping](#)** and seeking to counterbalance US influence.
 - The SCO represents 40% of the world's population, and member countries contribute approximately over USD 23 trillion to global GDP.
- **Relevance of SCO for India:**
 - **Regional Cooperation:** SCO membership allows India to enhance cooperation with Central Asian countries, improving relations since their formation in 1991. Facilitates communication with major regional actors on common security issues.
 - **Counter-Terrorism Efforts:** The RATS is a significant permanent structure within the SCO. It has helped countries like India with counter-terrorism exercises, intelligence analysis, and sharing information on terrorist movements and drug trafficking.
- **Challenges for India: While SCO membership enhances regional engagement, challenges in managing bilateral ties remain, influencing India's participation and stance on initiatives like the [Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#).**
 - India faces challenges in the SCO including balancing ties with **China and Russia**, addressing regional security concerns, managing **relations with Pakistan**, ensuring economic benefits, maintaining strategic autonomy, dealing with the issue of sovereignty, and increasing bilateral trade with SCO countries.

Member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

Belarus became 10th member state of SCO in 2024



Drishiti Mains Question:

Q. Describe the SCO's role in addressing security challenges in Asia and its impact on regional stability.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year's Question (PYQs)

Mains

Q. Critically examine the aims and objectives of SCO. What importance does it hold for India? **(2021)**

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