



SCO Summit 2023

For Prelims: [Shanghai Cooperation Organization](#), [BRI](#), [POK](#), [Terrorism](#), [UNSC](#).

For Mains: SCO Summit 2023.

Why in News?

Recently, India has chaired the [Shanghai Cooperation Organization \(SCO\)](#) virtual Summit, leaders called for the formation of a “more representative” and multipolar world order in the global interest.

- During this 23rd Summit, **Iran** officially joined the SCO as the **Ninth Member Country**.
- The **theme of India's chairpersonship of SCO is 'Towards a SECURE SCO'**, which is derived from the acronym coined by the Indian PM at the 2018 SCO Qingdao Summit.
 - **It stands for:** S: Security, E: Economic development, C: Connectivity, U: Unity, R: Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, E: Environmental protection.

Note: India, which was admitted as a **full member of the SCO at the Astana Summit in 2017**, holds the rotating presidency of the grouping for the first time in 2023. The SCO grouping now comprises **China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan**.

What are the Key Highlights of the 23rd SCO Summit?

- **New Delhi Declaration:**
 - The **New Delhi Declaration** was signed by the member nations, which states that the international community must come together to **"counter the activities of terrorist, separatist and extremist groups**, paying special attention to preventing the spread of religious intolerance, aggressive nationalism, ethnic and racial discrimination, xenophobia, ideas of fascism and chauvinism."
- **Joint Statements:**
 - The **leaders** adopted **two thematic joint statements** - one on cooperation in countering the radicalisation leading to separatism, extremism, and terrorism & the second one cooperation in the field of digital transformation.
- **New Pillars of Cooperation:**
 - India has created five new pillars and focus area for cooperation in the SCO, which include,
 - Startups and Innovation
 - Traditional Medicine
 - Youth Empowerment
 - Digital Inclusion
 - Shared Buddhist Heritage
- **India's Reservations on BRI:**
 - India refused to be part of the [BRI \(Belt and Road Initiative\)](#) of the SCO members'

economic strategy statement, mentioning “**interested member states**”.

- India's opposition to the BRI stems from its **inclusion of projects in [Pakistan-occupied Kashmir \(POK\)](#)**, which India considers a violation of its sovereignty.

▪ **Indian Prime Minister's Address:**

- The Indian PM highlighted the **significance of connectivity for enhancing mutual trade** and trust among SCO member states.
- However, he stressed the **need to uphold the fundamental principles of the SCO charter**, specifically respecting member **states' sovereignty and regional integrity**.

▪ **Other Perspectives:**

- The Indian PM criticized countries that employ **[Cross-Border Terrorism](#) as an instrument of their policies** and provide shelter to terrorists, urging the SCO not to hesitate in **condemning such nations and emphasized** the importance of consistency in addressing these critical issues.
- The **Chinese President**, while celebrating the **ten-year anniversary of the BRI**, mentioned his new **Global Security Initiative (GSI)**, calling for political **resolutions** to international and regional conflicts to establish a solid security shield in the region.
 - He urged SCO members to **formulate foreign policies independently** and remain vigilant against external attempts to instigate a new **Cold War or camp-based confrontation**.
- The **Russian President**, attending his first multilateral gathering since the failed rebellion by the **[Wagner Group](#)**, indirectly attributed **Ukraine's anti-Russian sentiment to external forces** supplying weapons to the country.
 - He emphasized **Russia's resilience against external pressures**, sanctions, and provocations, citing the unity of Russian political circles and society against attempted armed rebellions.

What is Shanghai Cooperation Organization?

▪ **About:**

- SCO is a permanent **intergovernmental international organization**.
- It's a political, economic and military organization aiming to maintain peace, security and stability in the region.
- It was **created in 2001**.
- The SCO Charter was signed in 2002 and entered into force in 2003.

▪ **Objectives:**

- Strengthening **mutual trust and neighborliness** among the member states.
- Promoting effective cooperation in -politics, trade & economy, research & technology and culture.
- Enhancing ties in **education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, etc.**
- Maintain and ensure **peace, security and stability** in the region.
- Establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political & economic order.

▪ **Structure:**

- **Heads of State Council:** The supreme SCO body which decides its internal functioning and its interaction with other States & international organisations, and considers international issues.
- **Heads of Government Council:** Approves the budget, considers and decides upon issues related to economic spheres of interaction within SCO.
- **Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs:** Considers issues related to day-to-day activities.
- **[Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure \(RATS\)](#):** Established to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism.

▪ **SCO Secretariat:**

- Based in Beijing to provide informational, analytical & organizational support.

▪ **Official language:**

- The official working language of the SCO Secretariat is Russian and Chinese.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following: (2022)

1. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
2. Missile Technology Control Regime
3. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

India is a member of which of the above?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (d)

Explanation:

- MTCR is an informal and voluntary partnership among 35 countries to prevent the proliferation of missiles and unmanned aerial vehicle technology capable of carrying greater than 500 kg payload for more than 300 km.
- India was inducted into the Missile Technology Control Regime in 2016 as the 35th member.
- AIIB is a multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia.
- Membership in the AIIB is open to all members of the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank and is divided into regional and non-regional members.
- **India is the second-largest shareholder**, contributing USD 8.4 billion.
- SCO is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation. It's a Eurasian political, economic and military organisation aiming to maintain peace, security and stability in the region.
- **India and Pakistan joined SCO as full member on 9 June 2017.**
- Hence, option (d) is correct.

Mains

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

Source: TH