



# CURRENT AFFAIRS



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## Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

*This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)”. The topic “Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)” has relevance in the “International Relations” section for the UPSC CSE exam.*

### **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**

#### **For Prelims:**

*What is Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)?*

*What are the member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)?*

#### **For Mains:**

#### **GS 2: International Relations**

*What are the objectives of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)?*

*What is the structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)?*

*What are the challenges for Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)*

#### **Why in the news?**

Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto to visit India for upcoming SCO Foreign Ministers meet in Goa. The visit is significant as the relations between the countries are frozen for a long time. No state-level interaction has happened in the past few years.

#### **What is Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)?**

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a regional intergovernmental organization founded in 2001. The SCO aims to promote economic cooperation, regional security, and cultural exchange among its member states.

#### **What are the member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)?**

Its member states are China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, and Pakistan.

The SCO has expanded its cooperation with other countries and organizations, including observer states Iran, Afghanistan, Belarus, and Mongolia, as well as dialogue partners such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, and Turkey. The organization has also

cooperated with the United Nations and other international organizations in various areas of common interest, such as counter-terrorism, drug trafficking, and disaster relief.

### **What are the objectives of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)?**

The SCO's main objectives are to strengthen mutual trust and good neighborliness among member states, to promote effective cooperation in the areas of politics, security, trade, economy, culture, and education, and to ensure regional stability and security. The organization holds annual summits and meetings of foreign ministers, defense ministers, and other officials to discuss and coordinate policies.

### **What is the structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)?**

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is governed by two main bodies:

1. Heads of State Council (HSC) and the
2. Heads of Government Council (HGC).

The HSC, which is the supreme decision-making body of the SCO, meets once a year and is responsible for adopting guidelines and decisions on all important matters of the organization.

The HGC meets once a year to discuss the organization's multilateral cooperation strategy and priority areas, as well as to resolve important economic and other cooperation issues.

In addition to the HSC and HGC, the SCO has two permanent bodies.

1. Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), which is based in Tashkent and is responsible for coordinating cooperation among member states to combat terrorism, separatism, and extremism.
2. SCO Secretariat, which is based in Beijing and is responsible for implementing the decisions and directives of the HSC and HGC, as well as for providing organizational and technical support to the organization.

### **What are the strengths of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)?**

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has several strengths, including:

- **Regional Cooperation:** The SCO promotes regional cooperation and stability among its member states. It provides a platform for dialogue and cooperation on issues such as security, economic development, and cultural exchange.
- **Counter-Terrorism:** The SCO has made combating terrorism and extremism a top priority, and it has established the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) to coordinate efforts among member states. This has helped to strengthen regional security and stability.
- **Economic Cooperation:** The SCO promotes economic cooperation and development among its member states. It has established the SCO Development Bank and the SCO Business Council to promote trade and investment, and it has launched several initiatives to improve regional connectivity and infrastructure.

- **Cultural Exchange:** The SCO promotes cultural exchange and cooperation among its member states. It hosts cultural events, academic exchanges, and youth exchanges to foster mutual understanding and cooperation.
- **Geopolitical Significance:** The SCO's members are located in a strategically important region, and the organization's activities have geopolitical significance. It provides a platform for its members to coordinate their positions on regional and global issues, and it has played a role in promoting stability and cooperation in the region.

### **What are the challenges for Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) faces several challenges, including:

- **Diverse Interests:** The SCO has members with diverse interests, histories, and cultures. This diversity can sometimes make it difficult to reach a consensus on important issues and may lead to conflicts or disagreements. For example, Pakistan and India are members of the organisation which are at loggerheads with each other.
- **Terrorism:** Terrorism and extremism pose a significant threat to the SCO region, and the organization has made combating terrorism a top priority. However, there are still challenges in coordinating counter-terrorism efforts among member states, particularly in terms of sharing intelligence and information.
- **Economic Cooperation:** The SCO aims to promote economic cooperation among its member states, but there are still challenges in terms of trade and investment, particularly given the economic disparities among member states.
- **External Influences:** The SCO's members are located in a strategically important region, and the organization's activities are often influenced by external factors such as the interests of major powers and regional conflicts. This can make it challenging for the SCO to pursue its own agenda and priorities.

### **Way Forward**

Overall, the way forward for the SCO involves enhancing cooperation in economic, security, and cultural spheres, engaging with dialogue partners, strengthening institutional mechanisms, and addressing emerging challenges in the region.

**Sources:**

<http://eng.sectsc.org/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai\\_Cooperation\\_Organisation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai_Cooperation_Organisation)

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