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SCO and Uzbekistan

Why in News

- The Defence Minister of India attended the **18th meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (CHG) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** on 2nd November, 2019 in **Tashkent, Uzbekistan**.



- The meeting was the third CHG meeting after India became a full member of the SCO in 2017.
 - SCO is a permanent **intergovernmental international organisation** that was created in 2001.
 - It's one of the objectives is to strengthen mutual trust and neighbourliness among the member states.
 - At present, it has **eight member states**. It's Secretariat is located in **Beijing, China**.

Highlights from the SCO Meeting

- **Common Challenges:** To work together to defeat challenges like terrorism, climate change, endemic poverty, and inequality.
- **Multilateralism:** India is committed to a transparent, rules-based, open, inclusive and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system with the **World Trade Organisation (WTO)** at its centre.
- **SCO Specific:**
 - India invited SCO Member states to join the **'Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure'**.
 - India will soon hold **Joint Urban Earthquake Search and Rescue exercise of SCO** member States along with SCO Expert level meeting on disaster prevention.
 - Emphasis on the importance of **SCO joint military exercise 'CENTER 2019'**.
- India will host the meeting of Council of Heads of Government in 2020.

Highlights from India - Uzbekistan Discussions

- The defence minister of India also held bilateral consultations with the defence minister of Uzbekistan.
The visit was the **first visit by an Indian Defence Minister** to Uzbekistan in about **15 years**.
- Three memorandums of understanding (MoU) were signed to enhance cooperation in **military medicine** and **military education**.
- India affirmed its commitment of developing a state-of-the-art **Information Technology (IT) complex** in Armed Forces Academy of Uzbekistan for the benefit of the soldiers.
- Both the Defence Ministers presided over the inauguration of the **first India-Uzbekistan Joint Exercise, "Dustlik 2019"**.
This bilateral exercise will be conducted from 4th-13th November, 2019 at Chirchiq Training Area near Tashkent and will be focused on counter-terrorism.

India - Uzbekistan Ties

- **Areas of Cooperation:** Uzbekistan and India have signed Agreements and MOUs in areas such as trade, investment, education, civil aviation, tourism, science & technology and agriculture.
- **Economic Ties:** Bilateral relations are managed through an **Intergovernmental Commission**, which oversees trade and economic relations.
- **Cultural Relations:**
 - There is a **close affinity between the cultures** of the two countries.
 - Indian films, actors and songs are extremely popular across the country.
 - After the first major co-production of Alibaba aur Chalis Chor in 1980, Indo-Uzbek jointly produced film 'Hoichoi Unlimited' premiered in Uzbekistan on 31st March 2019.

Source: PIB

Tawang Festival

Why in News

Recently, **Tawang Festival** was concluded in Arunachal Pradesh.

- Tawang Festival is an **annual festival** which was started in **2012** and celebrates Arunachal's rich cultural heritage, including Buddhist religious functions, traditional dances, indigenous sports, films and documentaries, food festivals and more.
- It starts with the religious tradition known as "**Sebang**" which is the process of monks of Tawang town moving to the festival spot in rallies from the **Tawang monastery**.
- Major attractions are the **Dance of Yak** and the **Aji-Ihamu Dance**.
- Arunachal Pradesh also hosts **Orange Festival, Ziro musical festival, Bascon organic festival and Mechuka Adventure festival**.

Other festivals celebrated by the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh-

Festivals	Tribes
Mopin and Solung	Adis
Lossar	Monpas
Boori-boot	Hill Miris and Sherdukpens
Dree	Apatanis
Si-Donyi	Tagins
Reh	Idu-Mishmis
Nyokum	Nishs

Source: IE

Glyphosate

Why in News

A German pharma company is facing thousands of lawsuits over its herbicide products which are based on a compound called **glyphosate**.

Herbicide is an agent, **usually chemical**, for killing or inhibiting the growth of unwanted plants, such as residential or agricultural weeds and invasive species.

Glyphosate

- **Scientific Name:** It was developed in 1970, and it's scientific name is **N-(phosphonomethyl) glycine** under the **International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC)** system of nomenclature.
- **Application:** It is applied to the leaves of plants to kill weeds.
- **Usage in India**
 - It has a very good market size in the **tea sector of West Bengal and Assam**.
 - Presently, its consumption is **highest in Maharashtra** as it is becoming a key herbicide in sugarcane, maize and many fruit crops.
- **Concerns**
 - In 2015, the World Health Organization published a study that found glyphosate **"probably carcinogenic to humans"**. However, no advisory has been issued yet.
 - France, Italy, and Vietnam banned its use after the finding.

Source: IE
