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WTO Ministerial Meeting of Developing Countries

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India will host a **WTO ministerial meeting of developing countries** in **New Delhi** on May 13 & 14, 2019.

Key highlights

- The meeting is a run up to the **twelfth Ministerial Conference of the WTO to be held in Kazakhstan in 2020**.
- The meeting is an effort to bring together the developing countries and the Least Developed Countries on a platform for sharing **common concerns on various issues affecting the WTO** and to address the following **issues**:
 - **WTO's appellate body has shrunk over the last two years from its required strength of seven members to three.**
 - At present, **the appellate body takes a year to hear appeals**, whereas the time to dispose off the appeals is 90 days.
 - **Special and differential treatment of developing countries** in the WTO is a concern for some other countries.
- The **increased unilateral measures** and **counter-measures** by member countries, as well as **deadlock in key areas** of negotiations and the **impasse in the WTO's appellate body** has given rise to demands to **reform** the organization.

The World Trade Organization (WTO)

- It is the **only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations**.
- It came into existence on January 1, 1995 and has its **headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland**.
- All major decisions are made by the WTO's member governments, either by ministers (who usually meet at least every two years) or by their ambassadors or delegates (who meet regularly in Geneva).

Special and Differential Treatment provisions

- The WTO Agreements contain special provisions which **give developing countries special rights** and developed countries the possibility to treat developing countries more favourably than other WTO Members.
- The special provisions include:
 - longer time periods for implementing Agreements and commitments
 - measures to increase trading opportunities for developing countries
 - provisions requiring all WTO members to safeguard the trade interests of developing countries
 - support to help developing countries build the capacity to carry out WTO work, handle disputes, and implement technical standards
 - provisions related to least-developed country (LDC) members