



RATS-SCO

Why in News

Recently, India assumed the Chairmanship of Council of **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (RATS-SCO)** in 2021 for a **period of one year**.

- In pursuance of this, the [National Security Council Secretariat \(NSCS\)](#) in association with [Data Security Council of India \(DSCI\)](#), organized a Seminar on **Securing Cyberspace in the Contemporary Threat Environment**.

Key Points

▪ About RATS-SCO:

- SCO-RATS is a permanent body of the SCO and is intended to **facilitate coordination and interaction** between the SCO member states in the fight **against terrorism, extremism and separatism**.
- The main functions of SCO-RATS are **coordination and information sharing**.
- As a member, India has actively participated in the activities of SCO-RATS.
- **India's permanent membership** would enable it to generate greater understanding among members for its perspective.

▪ About Shanghai Cooperation Organization(SCO):

- The [Shanghai Cooperation Organization \(SCO\)](#) was established as a multilateral association to ensure security and **maintain stability across the vast Eurasian region**.
- It envisages joining forces to counteract emerging challenges and threats, and enhance trade, as well as cultural and humanitarian cooperation. It was **created in 2001**.
- Prior to the creation of SCO in 2001, **Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan were members of the Shanghai Five**.
 - **Shanghai Five** (1996) emerged from a series of border demarcation and demilitarization talks which the four former Soviet republics held with China to ensure stability along the borders.
- Following the accession of Uzbekistan to the organisation in **2001, the Shanghai Five was renamed the SCO**.
- The SCO Charter was signed in 2002, and entered into force in 2003. The SCO's **official languages are Russian and Chinese**.
- SCO has two Permanent Bodies:
 - **SCO Secretariat in Beijing,**
 - Executive Committee of the **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent**.
- The Chairmanship of SCO is by rotation for a year by Member States.
- India and Pakistan became members in 2017.
- **Member countries:** Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan.
 - Recently, Iran's bid to become a full member of the SCO has been approved.

India & SCO

▪ Advantages for India:

- **Regional Security:** SCO will enable India, as an integral part of the Eurasian security grouping, to neutralise centrifugal forces arising from religious extremism and terrorism in the region.
- **Embracing Regionalism:** The SCO is one of the few regional structures India is a part of now, given a decline in its engagement with [SAARC](#), [Bangladesh](#), [Bhutan](#), [India](#), [Nepal](#) ([BBIN](#)) [Initiative](#).
 - More importantly, cooperation in three critical areas— energy, building trade and transportation links, and dealing with traditional and non-traditional security threats.
- **Connect With Central Asia:** The SCO provides India with a convenient channel for its outreach — trade and strategic ties — to Central Asian countries.
 - SCO is also a potential platform to advance India's [Connect Central Asia policy](#).
 - The foundation of India's economic outreach to Central Asia is based on its 2012 Connect Central Asia Policy with its focus on the **4 C's - Commerce, Connectivity, Consular and Community**.
- **Foundational Dimensions of SECURE:** Acknowledging the strategic importance emanating from the region and SCO, the Indian Prime Minister had articulated the foundational dimension of Eurasia being 'SECURE'. The letters in the word SECURE are:
 - **S** for Security of our citizens,
 - **E** for Economic development for all,
 - **C** for Connecting the region,
 - **U** for Unite our people,
 - **R** for Respect for Sovereignty and Integrity, and
 - **E** for Environment protection.
- **Dealing With Pakistan & China:** SCO provides India with a forum where it can constructively engage both China and Pakistan in a regional context and project India's security interests.

▪ Challenges That India Needs to Navigate:

- **Absence of Direct Land Connectivity:** A major impediment in India's expanded engagement with Eurasia remains the **strategic denial of direct land connectivity between India and Afghanistan and beyond by Pakistan**.
 - The lack of connectivity has also hampered the development of energy ties between the hydrocarbon-rich region and India
- **Growing Russia-China Convergence:** One of the major factors for Russia pushing India's inclusion into the SCO was to **balance China's power**.
- **Difference Over BRI:** While India has made its opposition to [Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#) clear, all other SCO members have embraced the Chinese project.
- **India-Pakistan Rivalry:** SCO members have, in the past, expressed fears of the organisation being held hostage to India's and Pakistan's adversarial relationship, and their fears would likely have worsened in recent times.

Way Forward

- **Improving Connectivity With Central Asia:** The opening of [Chabahar port](#) and India's entry into the [Ashgabat agreement](#) should be utilized for a stronger presence in Eurasia.
 - Besides this, a clear focus on operationalising [International North-South Transport Corridor \(INSTC\)](#).
- **Improving Relations With China:** It is imperative that **India and China set up a modus vivendi** (agreement allowing conflicting parties to coexist peacefully) for the 21st century to be

viewed through the lens of an Asia century.

- **Strengthening Military Corporation:** In the context of increasing terrorism in the region, it is **imperative for SCO countries to develop a 'cooperative and sustainable security' framework** and make the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure more effective.

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