



## SCO and Uzbekistan

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### Why in News

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- The Defence Minister of India attended the **18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (CHG) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** on 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

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- **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

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- 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 4<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> November, 2019 at Chirchiq Training Area near Tashkent and will be focused on counter-terrorism.

## India - Uzbekistan Ties

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- **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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

**Source: PIB**